"I JUST NEED THE PLAYERS": HOW URBAN SCHOOL LEADERS NAVIGATE RESOURCE CONSTRAINT THROUGH EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS.

By

Alounso A. Gilzene

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

K-12 Educational Administration–Doctor of Philosophy

2021

ABSTRACT

"I JUST NEED THE PLAYERS": HOW URBAN SCHOOL LEADERS NAVIGATE RESOURCE CONSTRAINT THROUGH EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS.

By

Alounso A. Gilzene

This study examines urban school leaders and their decision-making around external partnership relations in resource-constrained contexts. I employed a case study design guided by sense-making and cultural responsiveness to highlight behaviors that contribute to successful partnership work (Ganon-Shilon & Schecter, 2017; Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016). To do this work, I conducted this research in three predominantly Black schools in the Detroit Public Schools Community District. Using in-depth phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 2007), I worked with three Black school leaders, and four members of the Volunteer Corps volunteer organization to understand the inner workings of the partnership relationship and how different factors influenced implementation school-wide. Volunteer Corps is an organization that works with urban school districts to provide 10-15 full-time volunteers to work in district-identified schools. The school leaders talked at length about their process of incorporating other external organizations into their schools' operational framework.

The findings from this study suggest that school leaders lean heavily on sensemaking processes when working with external partnership organizations. School leaders have to piece together an understanding based on information they gather from both formal and informal sources. Also, school leaders in the study discussed how their preparation to become principals had some gaps regarding external partnership work. Some findings suggest that when school leaders maintain partnerships with organizations that provide volunteers, the racial makeup of volunteers has a variety of effects on predominantly Black school contexts. For example, the

school leaders in the study had to devote additional time to conduct cultural responsiveness training to prepare white volunteers to work with Black students. Last, school leaders named several benefits and costs associated with partnership work. While some benefits seemed obvious (i.e. additional money, additional human capital), there was some complexity and nuance in the benefits and costs. I analyzed these findings through a lens of sensemaking, to understand the process, and Critical Race Theory, to speak to the context of the communities and schools.

Principals can learn from this study because it provides examples of the ways school leaders in urban school contexts have navigated the work of external partnership work. Leadership preparation programs could also benefit from understanding the mechanics of external partnership work to better prepare prospective principal candidates for the work of engaging with and maintaining resources from organizations. This study could also inform policymakers, as the findings have implications for the notion of equity, and the conditions that cause the creation of partnerships with external partnership organizations.

"The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated." – James Baldwin

I dedicate this dissertation to all my teachers and my students throughout different phases of life. My teachers are the ones who helped cultivate my curiosity, and helped equip me with the tools to learn, grow, think, and apply. My students (in City Year and from Summer Camp) are the ones who sparked my passion. I am blessed to have had the chance to work with brilliant, funny, and lively students, who pushed me and strengthened my desire to work towards justice and equity for all students. Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my family, both those who are no longer with us and those who remain. I could not have gotten through this arduous grad school journey without y'all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several people have made this dissertation and this journey possible that I wish to acknowledge.

First and foremost, I am grateful to God for guidance, protection, wisdom, strength, and the resilience necessary to pursue my goals and for the desires that are in my heart.

To my loving parents Patricia Gilzene and Winsome who served as my first ever educators. Your love and support nourished me. Any success I have in life is only possible through your example and sacrifice. Mom, all the lost library books, nights doing homework with you sitting over my shoulder, afterschool and weekend activities and parent-teacher conferences were worth it. And Dad, your constant examples of hard work, dedication to completing a job set the perfect example for me. For all of this, I say thank you.

To my little sister Tyler-Ann Gilzene, your brilliance, dedication, caring demeanor, and drive have always inspired me to reach and dream higher. I always knew that I had to move in the right direction in life because I knew you were always right there behind me. For the inspiration, I thank you.

To my aunties, Ruthlyn Henry and Hyacinth Murray, your support, check-ins, and prayers have helped me weather any situation and for that I am grateful.

To Shawn Lamb, for always being an encouraging voice I can lean on for all these years through our friendship, it is crazy that we have been friends for so many years and I am happy that you have been by my side for so long. Thank you.

To Jordan Wilson, for being a wonderful friend that I could depend on through thick and thin and for providing years of wise words, hearty laughs, and needed challenges when I was trippin', thank you.

To Heriberto Hidalgo and Seth Morones, for always being there to talk, debate, share interests, and wind down after difficult periods of work or school. Both of you have contributed to my life in monumental ways with your friendship and for that I am grateful.

To Courtney Louis, for being the ever-present calm in the storm of these last couple of years. Your kindness, caring, love, a listening ear, encouraging words, reassuring smile, and general presence have made the latter part of this journey, even in tough times, so much easier and pleasant. I am so grateful to you.

To my Michigan State friends, Briana Coleman, Courtney Mauldin, Darrius Stanley, Chris Seals, Eliana Castro, Ronetta Wards, Lauren Johnson, Effat Eideen and Adrianna Crossing. Each of you has inspired me to do the best work I can do and fight for equity and justice in my work. Each of you has taught me important lessons about how to navigate this academic world as a scholar who is determined to create change and work with communities. Also, all of you have been valuable friends who have helped me grow and develop into who I am today. All of the writing groups, kickbacks, meetings, conferences, movies, and debates all made my experiences here at MSU worth it. Thank you

To my wonderful, supportive, incredible advisor Dr. Terah Venzant Chambers, nothing in this journey would have been possible without your expert guidance, and constant encouragement. I really appreciate the way you took us (your grad students) in and helped us develop, grow, and feel like we had a home away from home with the occasion cookout, thanksgiving dinner, or pie baking night. Thank you for helping me navigate one of the most significant accomplishments of my life, I am so grateful for you.

To the person I would often call my second advisor, Dr. John T. Yun, thank you for always helping me think more deeply about my work and the way to make it translatable to the field. I

left your office overwhelmed with methods a lot of the time, but also excited about the next direction of my work, and the possibilities available. But besides that, I am grateful for all of the conversations where you helped calm my worries and anxieties about grad school and life.

To my committee member, Dr. Chezare Warren, thank you for being one of the most critical and encouraging professors on this journey. Your class is the one that taught me how to argue and pushed me to defend and connect every single thing. You also showed me what it means to unapologetically be about research with Black students and communities, and how to not let the academy steal your joy and peace.

To my committee member, Dr. Amita Chudgar, thank you for also being critical and demonstrating the possibility of using academic work to have hard conversations around equity. Your class was one of the most interesting one I got to take here at MSU and it really sparked my interest in understanding issues in school districts. Also thank you for always being willing to chat and talk through ideas, concepts and life. I am so grateful for your support.

To my academic mentors, Dr. Jada Phelps-Moultrie, Dr. Chris Torres, and Dr. Laura Kohn Wood, each of you helped contribute significantly to my success in graduate school in some way. Whether it was encouraging words, a quick check-in, explanation of a method, opportunities to write together or present in a class, or even just emotional support all of it was essential to my survival. I thank you all.

And thank you to my participants in this study, especially the three principals who invited me into their spaces, gave me their valuable time, and shared with me these wonderful and difficult quotes that served as the basis for this dissertation. This work literally would not be possible without any of them. I am grateful that you all trusted me with your stories, and I hope to be a good steward of those stories in this work. Thank you.

There are not enough pages in this dissertation to name and address everyone I am grateful for. However, every single person who has taught me poured into me, built community with me, broke bread with me, laughed with me, counseled me, and generally have been a positive force in my life, know that I am grateful for you, that I love and appreciate all that you have done and that I could not have made it this far without any of you. I only am who I am because of all the blessings that have come into my life by way of the people around me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1.Overview

Education reform in the United States is characterized by cycles of experimentation, which include several years of policy, legislation, and research (Bascia & Hargreaves, 2014; Berkovich, 2017; Cuban, 1990; Meyers & VanGronigen, 2018; Peck 2017; Tyack & Cuban 1995). It often imposes these cycles of reform and change on students who are the most vulnerable, those who exist in communities that have been historically disenfranchised through a system of laws, policies and circumstances affected by race and socioeconomic status (Eastman, Anderson & Boyles, 2017; Flores, 2018; Lipman, 2004; Stich& Cipollonem 2021; Wiener, 2000;). In current educational discourses, we often label these communities as "urban" or "low-income" and serve as the epicenter of reform movements (Singleton & Linton, 2006). While we have dedicated decades of educational research to the improvement of urban schools, there is not a clear answer to what works the best (Lipman, 2004;Payne, 2008). One thing has remained consistent in the literature around reform-- that is the importance of educational leadership as a lever for change (Bush & Glover, 2014; Bryk et al. 2010).

Research in educational leadership has attempted to identify the essential structures that generate sustainable change. Earlier work in educational leadership focused on magnitude of effect school leaders had on student achievement, ultimately defining highly effective leadership as expressed through one's ability to foster quick academic improvement (Branch et al. 2013; Dhuey & Smith, 2004; Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Leithwood et al. (2003), examined existing literature to theorize and outline the school leader behaviors that created change, which included: creating and sustaining a competitive school, empowering others to make significant decisions, providing

1

instructional guidance and developing and implementing strategic school improvement plans (Leithwood et al., 2003, pp.12). This parsing out of behaviors produced leadership theories that centered instruction, strategic delegation, and the leveraging of relationships with building employees (Hallinger, 2010; McClesky, 2014; Spillane & Diamond, 2007).

Horng, Klasik and Loeb (2010), divided principal's responsibilities into six categories; Administration, organizational management, day-to-today instructional, instructional program, internal relations, and external relations. Among these categories, they found that organizational management, day-to-day instruction, and external relations had a significant relationship to student performance, though the authors contend that this relationship might be spurious. Whether it is time-use or specific leadership frameworks, we cannot understate the work of the school leader towards the goal of educational improvement.

While the research concerning the theories and mechanics of educational leadership was important, there was a lack of an explicit focus on race, class, and the intersection of these concepts as it relates to schooling. Within urban school contexts, effective leadership is complicated by a history of structurally inequitable funding mechanisms. Urban schools also carry a context that goes beyond just resource constraint, that being urban city centers and schools are often characterized as having a significant amount of minoritized students. The context of urban schools, (minoritized students, resource scarcity and inequitable funding) provides a set of unique challenges because of the United States' historical disenfranchisement of marginalized populations (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This history is articulated well in Richard Rothstein's 2017 book *The Color of Law* which speaks to this disenfranchisement through creating a historical thread and arguing that policies and events are interrelated, as discrimination in homeownership laws, white flight and segregation are all related to the systematic devaluing of minoritized communities which affects property values, a mechanism often used to fund

schools. When presented in this fashion we can plainly see the influence of history on urban, predominately minoritized schools and school districts.

To account for the unique challenges faced by school leaders who serve within urban, predominantly Black school contexts, many educational leadership scholars began to focus on issues of race, culture, and social justice (Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016; Reed & Swaminathan, 2014; Theoharis, 2007). Some scholars centered the experiences of Black school leaders and the ways they navigate the expression of care and creation of positive environments for Black students (Bass, 2012,2020; Barker & Avery, 2012). It extended this race and social justice orientation in educational leadership to include considerations of community engagement for reform (Bertrand & Rodela, 2018; DeMatthews, 2018, Green 2017), culturally responsive community work (Khalifa, 2018; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012), and culturally responsive family engagement (Ishimaru, et al., 2016; Lopez, Scribner & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Olivos, 2009; Rodela, 2013; Wilson, 2019). This extensive body of work being done in educational leadership research on race shows the complexity of managing schools withing this context and the plethora of opportunities nestled within communities surrounding schools.

This dissertation aims to advance the discussion on school leaders in urban, predominantly Black school contexts. Of particular interest is understanding how school leaders in this context use partnerships with the district and with community-based partnerships to successfully navigate a financially constrained environment. Much of the work that has already been done speaks to race, culture, and community within a context of resource constraint on a macro or theoretical level. This study seeks to understand the multifaceted nature of school leaders' building level decision making, interactions, and behaviors that attend to issues of race, community, and financial context all at the same time. To accomplish this goal, I conducted the

study in the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD), a large urban metropolitan school district which recently underwent significant administrative change.

1.2. Detroit: The Restructuring of an Urban School District

For this study I decided to conduct research in Detroit, Michigan. Detroit is an interesting place to study education, as it provides an education environment affected by traceable shifts due to policy. Understanding the Detroit context is also crucial for understanding the interconnected nature public policies as they relate to black communities. Discourse around education in Detroit, as with any major U.S. metropolitan area, must be couched within history and context. Thomas Sugrue's pivotal work in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, traces a decades-spanning historical arc of industrialization, migration, and racial tension that helped create the segregated conditions in modern Detroit. According to Sugrue, Detroit's steady shift towards segregation and disenfranchisement is attributed to a combination of the following conditions: 1) the flight of high paying, unionized industrial jobs, 2) The persistence of workplace discrimination and 3) intractable racial segregation in housing which led to the uneven distribution of power and resources. Drawing on the research of sociologist Charles Tilly to further explain the conditions Sugrue states:

"The story of American metropolitan areas, like Detroit, is a history of the ways   that whites through the combined advantages of race and residence, were able to   hoard political and economic resources ---jobs, public services, education, and   other goods to their own advantage at the expense of the urban poor." (Sugrue, 1996). Here Sugrue centers Detroit as a key case study for understanding the racial politics of American cities. This quote captures the crux of the issue, power distribution and resource consolidation, and illustrates how the history of the city intersects with educational policy in the city. Ultimately, schooling in Detroit has been

impacted by a legacy of racial segregation and restricted access to resources which disproportionately affects the Black students and families left behind in the city.

Jeffrey Mirel offered observations of Detroit with an educational focus in his book The *Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*. Starting with 1901 and ending in 1980, the book makes all the links between racial segregation, labor discrimination and political strife, to describe why the state could implement funding mechanisms that gradually stripped away capital from DPS. An important takeaway from this work is that the disenfranchisement of Detroit's educational system was initially deliberate and racially motivated.

Another important text on Detroit titled *Dismantled: The Breakup of an Urban School System* written by Leanne Kang continues the story started by Mirel to trace the history of DPS from 1980 to 2016. Kang highlights some significant events that sped up the demise of DPS. She starts with a discussion of Proposal A, a policy that opened the door for school choice and affected enrollment numbers in Detroit because of high numbers of one-way transfers to the surrounding suburbs. This policy also tied funding to enrollment, which had lasting ramifications for financing schools. She also brings attention to a cause-and-effect chain starting with media demonization of the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT), which led to a weakening of public support of the school board, which led to mayoral control of the district which then allowed the state, after enough time, to install emergency financial managers. These shifts which caused declining enrollment, declining funding, instability in leadership, which ultimately left DPS a shell of its former self. Ultimately, this allowed the state legislature to push the district to declare bankruptcy, and split the district into two parts, DPS and DPSCD. This tumultuousness is most unfortunate for the predominantly Black student population in Detroit who had to weather all this change.

With the formation of the DPSCD, there was an installation of a new board and new administration with a variety of goals. Some things included in the restructuring were guidelines for merit-based teacher pay, expansion of school choice pipelines, and strategies for closure to struggling schools. It contained existing debt within DPS to provide DPSCD more financial freedom, funding remains an issue. However, the restructure also brought the opportunity for more community collaboration. In early 2017, the district implemented the Partnership School Plan, which identified "low-performing" schools as places of opportunity to engage in lasting partnerships to stave off school closures. This initiative pushed for school leaders to create partnerships with a variety of community organizations to increase access to material and social services. This has created a scenario where the community can take advantage of policy to invest and create change in schools. This change has led to the creation of partnerships with many federal, state and local organizations, including faith based partners with some partnerships having an explicit focus on justice and community well-being.

While the history of education in Detroit is filled with narratives of turmoil, there has always been an undercurrent of community work that has helped people remain Hopeful. Wilson (2015) detailed the efforts of Black women advocates in Detroit who organize and fight for a better educational future for Detroit. She highlighted ways the women engaged in critical care to combat school closures, critique school choice policies, push for authentic parent engagement, and implement grassroots and institutional resistance strategies. This example important because it shows that the new district's decision to institute community engagement as a part of the model results from the long-standing educational advocacy generated within the community. It is an opportunity for the Detroit schools to benefit from the experiential knowledge of the community.

Figure 1: Snapshot of Snapshot of DPSCD Community Partnership Map (Generated by United Way Southeast Michigan)
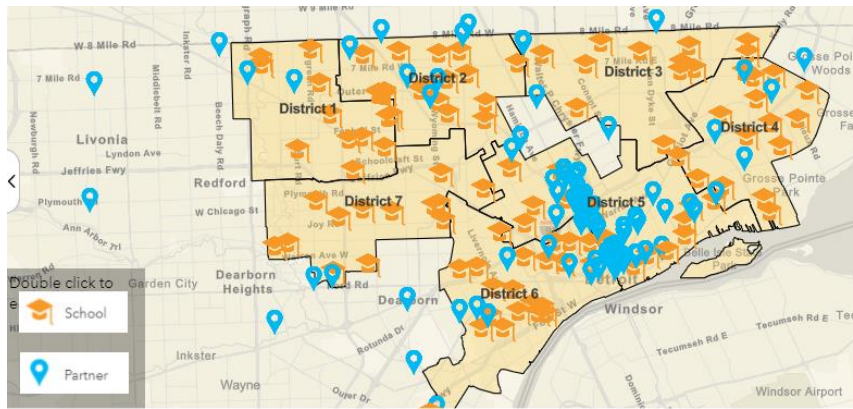
1.3. "Y'all are my safety net!: How my story fits into the research

My interest in this specific topic, urban education reform using external organizations, comes from my background as an AmeriCorps volunteer in my hometown of Miami Gardens, FL. Miami Gardens, formerly known as Opa-Locka, is one area in the city with a high concentration of Black families. Miami has a long history of racial and ethnic residential segregation, and government neglect in the Black neighborhoods through the city all which had deleterious effects on the local schools. One prominent example is Overtown, which prior to "urban renewal" and highway construction projects in the 1950s, was a thriving center of Black commerce, wealth, and entertainment. This community was restructured, depopulated, and neglected by government policies, and the schools in the area consistently rank in the state's bottom. I share all this to say, I can see some parallels in my city, my story, and the work I embarked on for this dissertation in Detroit. To illustrate the parallel, I first want to offer a story from my time as a volunteer in my neighborhood, at the school I graduated from.

There was a stillness as I drove that morning. It was 6:30 am, the streets were, and the sky was still dark, a reminder of the recently changed time. Contrary to my usual morning treks to the school, I wasn't playing the radio, as I was too tired to turn it on. During morning circle with my staff, the other volunteers, the air of tiredness sunk over all of us. The day before we

were at the school until 8 p.m. preparing for the school's winter pep rally and today we were holding an event, Pi day. None of us were looking forward to it because of the problems in our individual classrooms. For me personally, it was tough because my partner teacher had taken an unexpected sabbatical and I was co-teaching the class with a long-term substitute. I was one of three on my staff who were put in similar positions. We all had classes of 30 plus students that we had to manage with no formal training in teaching or classroom management, but our organization had taught us enough to survive. That afternoon was loaded, a pep rally at noon, tutoring session immediately after school, meeting with administrative staff after that and then Pi day that evening. After a long day of dealing with students imbued with a variety of teenage energies in classes, the last thing we wanted was to deal with whole school events, but it was a part of the job.

The pep rally came and went with much fanfare and excitement. With monetary support from our organization and some help from the community, we could put on a fun event for the students. One event down, now on to tutoring. During the after-school tutoring, I made a math breakthrough with one student from my classes. He had been trying for months to understand negative numbers, and after enough careful explanations, diagrams, and practice examples, he got it and could get through a homework assignment unassisted. He beamed at me with pride when he said, "We did it G!" the students called me Mr. G or just G when the Mr. became too cumbersome. I didn't mind either way. His expression changed a little thought after a passing thought. "What's the matter?" I asked. "Mr. G, you aren't going to be here next year, and I might get stuck with a whack volunteer" the student replied. He continued "It's just every year they send a new team of y'all and we have to go through connecting with you and learning about you, and sometimes the new volunteers suck, and sometimes they are great, but all the times y'all wind up leaving after a year" That part struck me. The student added, "Also some of y'all don't

8

get us" he subtly glanced over at one of my white coworkers who hadn't adjusted to the environment or the students yet.

Following our tutoring session, we met the principal and his administrative team. He wanted to check in after the pep rally and to check in on the preparations for Pi day since he had to hire night security for the event. We talked about the money we had raised, the food and prizes we gained and the events and activities we had scheduled for pi day, which was meant to be a family engagement event. We had even gotten a community glasses company to come out and give free eye exams during the event. This impressed the principal but sensed the heavy weight of tiredness that hung over our staff. He offered an opportunity for real talk and told us to ask anything that was on our minds before the meeting was over. One of my teammates asked why we could not get replacement teachers, a question that lingered on all of our minds. The principal smiled and pulled out some budget documents. He explained that the district recently had a shortage of paper and other supplies, and that schools procured those things in bulk. Between this building repairs and maintenance and cost for programs, he showed that he barely had money to hire one full-time staff member. He exclaimed, "I know I asked a lot of you with the rallies, and the classes and events but y'all are my safety net!". He continued "Getting ten bodies at this price is a bargain and y'all help me out in a lot of ways" his honesty was brutal, but earnest. This principal always provided cutting honestly with a cheerful disposition, a trait I knew him for when he was a math coach back when I was a student.

After the meeting we had Pi day. The student and parents came out and had a great time learning and playing together. At our debrief we talked about how fun it was to see the students, and how differently they interacted when with their parents. The feeling of tiredness had diffused, and no longer hung ominously over us. Our events were a success, and we also had a better understanding of how the principal approached our work. Driving home, sky just as dark

as when I drove in my mind remained fixated of the student I worked with in tutoring. I knew we had a success together, but his comments made me question what the value of my presence was. How helpful was it to have random people come in, help and then potentially leave, what affect could that have on students? How differently would this have gone had I not been Black and from the neighborhood.

This story is just one of many that brought me to the work. I enter as someone who has experience working in schools as a volunteer, as an administrator in a charter school, and as a restorative justice facilitator in Lansing. In each experience, I have carried the same questions around impact of positioning external people in schools with predominately Black student populations. I also witnessed the difference in school leaders, and they ways the approached strategically using the human capital and abstract resources from external organizations. I also enter curious about the ways the school leaders carried out these tasks as a function of their own understanding of context. When I started collecting data for this dissertation I could see the parallels between my participants actions, and the leader I worked under during my time in City Year. One of the principals in my study, Dr Childs stated the following: ""I don't have to lead an all-star team in order to have success, I just need the players…..I just need a warm body". Her statement was an endorsement of the same sentiments and contexts that generated my interest in this work. This comment also informed the title and spirit of this dissertation project. In my Miami volunteer context, I was personally familiar with the history of the school, the administrative staff, neighborhood, and city. Though the context is comparable to Detroit regarding segregation, there are several unique historical facts in Detroit that differently influence how school leaders operate and I hope to honor that in this study.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

Districts' pivoting to community-based partnerships for a variety of benefits is not a novel development. Prior research on school leaders in diverse contexts has showed the practice of partnering with non-profit organizations, private businesses, and universities to reach a variety of goals. However, there is not much research concerning this phenomenon. In 2004, the national center for education statistics put out a report that highlighted recent developments in school finance. Brunner and Imazeki (2004), used non-profit expenditure data to compare voluntary fundraising across school socioeconomic categories. The authors stated that tracing monetary contributions for public schools is difficult because they do not report these contributions in their official statements of revenues and expenditures. The authors argued that the way they distribute revenues in the California school system pushes some schools to rely on non-profits to generate more funds. They also found that high-income schools were more successful in raising revenue from non-profits as substantial monetary contributions. On average, high-income schools could generate about 135 dollars per-pupil compared to 32 dollars per-pupil in low-income schools (p.46). While this study does not emphasize the role of school leaders in mediating the fundraising process, the distinction between high-income and low-income schools might suggest that school leaders in an urban setting may not have the networks to engage in fundraising adequately. This shows that schools are creating partnerships for material resources but does not consider the various human capital resources that are gained by schools.

Bridwell-Mitchell (2017), conducted a study including over 200 New York city schools and over 1000 partner organizations who provided access to "school social capital." The author argues that social capital from these organizations manifested as volunteer labor, special services, access to donors, materials, and supplies. Rather than estimate the amount or the impact of these resources, Bridwell-Mitchell analyzed the social networks of both the schools and the

organizations, to determine whether there were disparities in various schools' access to resources from 1999 to 2000. One of the major hypotheses for this work was that schools' probability of partnerships with organizations depended on that school's resource needs. They define resource needs as being driven by the background characteristics of the students. These characteristics include English language proficiency, socioeconomic status, and parent employment status.

Bridwell-Mitchell used a logit model to determine that schools with higher resource needs were less likely to form partnerships. While this went against the hypothesis, it supported the greater argument of the research, which was that certain types of schools (high-income) had greater embedded networks of partnership. The author admits that this project did not examine how principals made that partnership and call for more qualitative work to uncover both partnership creation mechanisms, and the individual school level factors motivating principals to seek partnerships. While both studies emphasized the fact that low-income schools struggle with obtaining resources through external relations, they still represent the fact that principals try to reach out and gain more resources.

Recently, there has been an increase in the research that focuses on the phenomenon of schools creating partnerships to meet academic goals. Many of these studies focus on the use of partnerships to gain social capital, to streamline students of color into specific career tracks, and how school employees (teachers) value partnership organizations (Bridwell Mitchell. 2020; Luaces et al. 2020; McNamara et al. 2020; Tuma, 2020;). While these studies shed light on some benefits on managing external relations, they lack an explicit discussion of the school leaders' specific role in creating these partnerships and managing the resources from different organizations to reach some goal. Many of the studies show the quantifiable benefits of the creation of external partnerships, but what is missing is an understanding of how the school leader decides and conceptualizes the use of these resources. How the school leader thinks about

these things in relation to the context of the school both culturally and economically nestled within an urbanized school context.

In educational administration research there is an extensive body of literature that addresses leadership behaviors that promote racial equity and social justice (Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016; Reed & Swaminathan, 2014; Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Theoharis, 2007). Theoharis proposed a theory of social justice leadership which argued that school leaders enact social justice through raising student achievement, improving school structures, re-centering and enhancing staff capacity and strengthening school culture and community. Reed and Swaminathan (2014), advanced three tenets of Contextually Responsive School Leadership (CRL), that called on the school leader in urban contexts, to be cognizant of that context, relay on creative problem-solving, and using combinations of leadership style with teaching staff. Khalifa, Gooden and Davis, (2016) argued that school leaders needed to not only be aware of context but also critically self-reflect on their own positionalities relative to the context and foster cultural responsiveness in both the teaching staff and the school climate. The authors also made a push for meaningful engagement with students and parents. Shields and Hesbol (2020) expand on most of these ideas by analyzing principal behaviors towards a goal of social justice. All these studies attend to issues of race, culture and community but do not address the trend of external organizational partners and their place in the educational reform framework.

Most of the frameworks above promote socially just or culturally responsive trainings for teachers, which is necessary in school contexts with predominantly minoritized student populations. However, some partnership organization literature speaks of the use of volunteers who interact with students frequently. Given the continued discussion around educational reform, particularly in urban school settings, there needs to be a nuanced understanding of all the agents of change. If external organizations like non-profits or philanthropic foundations are tools

13

of reform, then we need to examine all the ways organizations impact change. If school leadership is a driving factor for school change, and school leaders are strategically leveraging external partnerships to advance their reform agendas, there needs to be more research that explores this phenomenon. So far, research on external partnerships and external community relations have been outcome-based, focusing on what schools can gain from these partnerships, but there is not much on the actual process of obtaining partnerships, and the day-to-day management of these organizations in the school space.

1.5. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to understand how school leaders navigate the unique economic and cultural context of urban schools using external partnership organizations. Current research on school leadership advocates for the use of more culturally responsive practices without taking into consideration the economic conditions of urban schools that may make it difficult to implement or increase services. To get an understanding of specific school leader behaviors that form partnerships, deploy abstract resources from those partnerships, and attend to financial, racial, and community context, this study seeks to understand the qualitative narratives of school leaders who do this work. This inquiry resulted in the following research questions:

1.6. Research Questions

1) How do school leaders successfully partner with and implement resources from external partnership organizations?

2) What social factors (race, class, community content,) influence school leaders decision-making when collaborating with external partnership organizations?

3) What are the school leaders' perceived costs and benefits of partnering with external organizations

1.7. Conceptual Framing

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework Identifying School Leader Decision Process
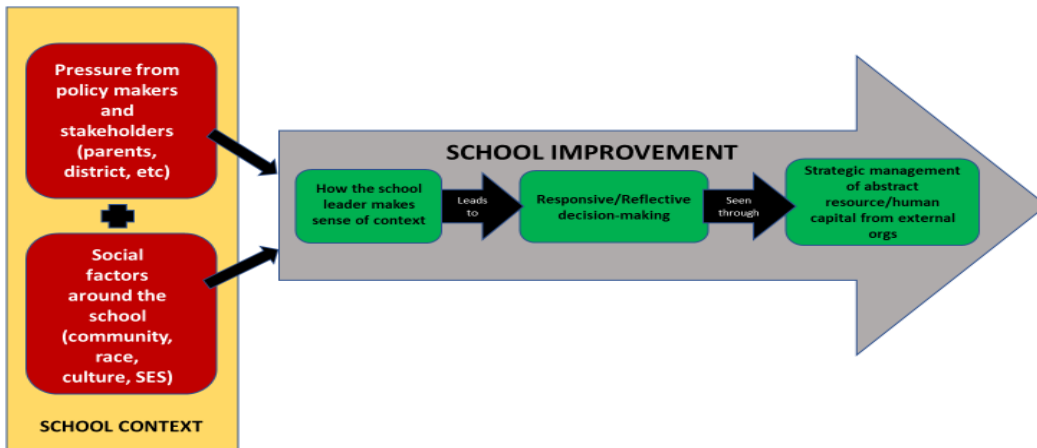
The conceptual framework for this study will aim to examine the ways urban school leadership, whether it be a singular school leader or an administrative team, decide around the acquisition and leveraging of external organizations in school. This framework will outline (through the literature) the leadership, racialized, historical, and economic contextual factors that influence the decision-making process. The framework will begin with school contextual factors that influence the work of school leaders since leadership is continuously touted as being a driver for educational change (Bryk et al., 2010; Horsford, Scott and Anderson, 2019).

Since this work will the school leaders' interpretation and maneuvering of external actors, I will draw on literature that considers the school leader's sense-making around various decisions. Weicke, Sutcliffe, and Obstfield (2009) describe sense-making as the process that links preceding cognition to succeeding action, expressing a deliberateness around the ways individuals or organizations act. For school leaders' sense-making theory has been applied to initiatives in school reform such as inclusion and implementing national policies (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Schechter et al, 2018). Sensemaking could also be useful in school leaders'

understanding of their district's financial situation. This study seeks to understand the school

leader's strategic and deliberate actions around external relations sense making could provide a

stronger understanding of school leader motivations.

I label the middle section of the framework "Responsive/Reflective Decision-making"

which speaks to the combination of leadership behavior theories that may influence the decision-

making process. Most representative is Khalifa, Gooden and Davis' culturally responsive school

leadership which call on school leaders to critically self-reflect and foster cultural responsiveness

in the staff and in the school climate. Other research also calls for similar forms of reflection and

school wide implementation of practices with academic and socially just orientations (Reed &

Swaminathan, 2014; Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Theoharis, 2007) which is why it is positioned as

occurring as a part of the sensemaking process. Critical self-reflection is helpful in discourse

around the relationship between race and funding schools because it allows the school leader to

situate the financial shortcomings within its proper historical context and not advance deficit

conceptualizations of community (Wright & Kim, 2020) but engage with asset based approaches

(Green, 2015).

1.8. Methodological Overview

This study employs phenomenological qualitative and multiple case study methods

(Merriam, 1998; Stake 2000) to advance our understandings of the school leaders' role in the

management of external organizations towards a goal of school improvement. I am taking this

approach because I focus much of the literature that examines external partnerships and

organizations in urban schools on outcomes, particularly testing outcomes. This study is

primarily concerned with processes, and thus it is most appropriate to use qualitative research to

understand how school leaders think about, deploy and sustain partnerships towards a goal of

school improvement and justice for urban youth.

1.9. Significance to the field

School leaders make many important decisions to advance various learning objectives. According to Marzano and Waters (2009), school leader decisions about funding affect student achievement and school culture in a variety of ways. Given the context of urban schools, much of the literature around urban school reform has attempted to address this critical decision-making process. I am interested in the interactions that make up the school leadership teams' decisions around building partnerships with community organizations, non-profits, universities, faith-based institutions, and private organizations for the provision of services. These interactions include structures for partnership use, valuing of effort and effect, and the addition efforts to respond meaningfully to student race and culture. Because the students who are affected by these decisions are often those who have already been historically marginalized in several ways, it is essential for us to understand the reforms being brought into the school context. This research is relevant for leadership preparation. Bertrand and Rodela (2018), offered a critique of contemporary leadership preparation. They argued the field needs to shift to promote social justice, cultural responsiveness and family, youth, and community engagement as essential functions of the school leader. The authors proposed that leadership preparation programs be restructured holistically to incorporate these ideals in promotional material, syllabi, coursework, and field opportunities. Studying the mechanics of school leaders' use of external organizational partnerships can assist in this goal. By understanding the way context informs decision-making, and how a school leader organizes to deploy organizational resources effectively, we can design courses and opportunities that focus on these practices with a special attention to community context.

1.10. Definition of Terms

Human Capital - An intangible asset or quality not listed on a company's balance sheet.

Minoritized–A group of people marginalized by forces outside of their own control, typically for reasons of race, gender, sexuality, or national origin. These groups experience disenfranchisement in White, Capitalist, Colonial, Heteropatriarchal systems in America.

Abstract Resources–services or items provided for schools that are not easily captured or tracked by school budget documents. These things can be estimated but usually go unreported by schools.

Urban Schools–A term that refers to a school within a specific metropolitan geographic location, in contrast to rural, but has strengthened to include notions of race and access to resources and power.

l.11. Conclusion

Increasingly, school leaders are being called on to create change in historically under supported conditions. Partnering with organizations has been an important part of successfully forwarding this work. There are, however, some gaps in our understanding on what organizations bring to the school in their partnership, and how school leaders navigate regarding cultural responsiveness, particularly when organizations are providing volunteers. A desire to understand the extant school leader behavior can be attributed to that success creates the context for this study. As the study progressed, I found that the principals in my study, all of which were Black, leaned on specific racialized lenses to interpret the community context, and the school context and decide. Hence the original framework, which relies heavily on sensemaking, was necessary but incomplete in capturing all the dynamics present in the interactions with organizations. To account for this, the work draws on tenets of Critical Race Theory. In the following sections, the

unique positions of Black school leaders, in relation to predominantly Black school contexts, will be centered in the discussion.

The following chapter will be an intensive review of the literature on urban education, urban school finance, school leadership, external organizations in schools, volunteers in schools and race. Chapter three will include the methodology and methods that will aid in addressing the research questions. Chapter four will introduce the cases and participants included in the study. Chapter five will present the findings and Chapter six will include the analysis, conclusions and implications of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Literature Review Process

This literature review highlights the most relevant scholarship pertaining to urban school reforms and the importance of school leadership in the reform process. It will begin with a discussion that situates the term "urban" within its historical context. It will seek to synthesize definitions from different authors to elucidate the specific context of urban schools. After that, this literature review will consider the impact of human capital in schools. Then the focus will shift to literature that examines the work of human capital providing external organizations in schools, highlighting the prevalence of external organizations as a tool for reform. This review will then turn to school leadership and the different theories around school improvement paying close attention to theories that attempt to address cultural contexts Finally I will address sensemaking and the intersection with school leadership. I hope to make clear an argument why we must have a greater understanding of the external organizations that are a mechanism for reforming urbanized school communities.

2.2. Defining "Urban" Schools

In the earlier years of research, "urban" schools were described through deficit-based understandings about the students and their communities of origin. This thought process gained traction from societal conceptualizations of urban youth reinforced through media and confirmed in the biased ways faculty in schools would engage with urban youth. (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Milner, 2012). In recent years there has been a conscious effort to unpack the term "urban," removing the negative connotation associated with the people who inhabit urban areas and instead generate a list of unique characteristics that define the term itself. Milner (2012) conducted a series of interviews in school settings and created conceptual frames for discussing

urban schools. Milner argued that if educational researchers were going to investigate issues under the label of "urban educational research," there needed to be a shared understanding, definition, and language.

Milner's framing of "urban schooling" is broken into three categories: urban intensive, urban emergent, and urban characteristics. Areas deemed "urban intensive" are characterized by the size and population density of the locale (over 1 million residents in a city area). The density of the population creates issues around resource availability and inequity since there is a limited number of resources for a significant amount of people. Schools in "urban intensive" environments are similarly dense and thus are sensitive to the broader contexts of poverty, housing, and transportation that afflict the city itself. Urban emergent communities are still large metropolitan areas but have less than one million residents in the area. These cities still face a scarcity of resource issues but to a smaller degree to that of "urban intensive" areas. Conversely, the schools within this context also face resource issues. Urban characteristic schools those that may exist in suburban or rural areas but share some struggles associated with urban intensive or "urban emergent" areas. Milner's example of this is schools that have an influx of English Language Learners (ELL) students, which would create a new set of challenges. This definition of "urban" provided by Milner is helpful because it positions the urban context as directly related to issues like resource scarcity, population density, and poverty. Milner's definition also was a response to a study conducted with Midwest teachers, who had constructed their own conceptualization of urban students using deficit framings and used these conceptualizations to generalize Black students.

Khalifa et al. (2015), positions urban centers as racially and ethnically diverse areas, but situates that definition within a historical framing. Khalifa's argumentation is that the issues of urban school stem from "a pervasive inability to overcome the social, political, and economic

21

forces that undermine the educational progress and economic mobility of non-white poor students" (pp.5). Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2013), frames urban contexts in a way that speaks to the geographic location, the connection to commerce and transport, and the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. She highlights the fact that over the years the term urban connotes a historical exodus of the privilege which led to the disenfranchisement of the marginalized groups who remained in urban centers. Taken together, this suggests that the definition of urban can include a discussion of location, population density, and scarcity of resources, but must include race, culture, and identity framed within a larger historical and sociopolitical context.

2.3. Urban Education Research and Social Foundations

Urban education research as field focuses exclusively on the relationship between race, ethnicity, and proximity to "urban" city centers, but more recently scholars have assessed the limitations of this framing. Buendia (2011), critiqued the construction of strict binaries that labeled areas suburban and urban and called for a more comprehensive emphasis on the historical and sociological factors that gave meaning to urban spaces. Irby (2015) employed critical geography, urban studies, and sociology to argue the socially constructed nature of urban spaces. Irby articulates that an emphasis on social construction would allow for more accurate analysis of the structures that produce inequality, which include understanding the interrelated nature of what we consider urban, suburban, and rural. The perspectives presented by Irby and Buendia speak to the idea that the urban labeling can be harmful and limiting when ascribed to a people and not the system of structures and contexts that have created the urban.

Warren and Venzant Chambers (2020) argued that the context needed to conduct urban education research properly is contained within a social foundations approach. Social foundations as field is concerned with the history, sociology and philosophy of education as

important component of understanding school in the U.S. Warren and Venzant Chambers, argue that an understanding of social foundations is necessary for work that involves students from marginalized communities, as history sociology and philosophy often carry the conditions that produced marginalization. If urban education research is focused on marginalized communities, then a social foundations approach is necessary in pinpointing the appropriate levers for change.

2.4. The Factors that Shape Urban Education

Much work has been done on the migratory patterns of people of color following the American Civil war. Specifically, African Americans left rural agrarian communities to seek opportunities in the larger metropolitan cities springing up across the nation (Tyack, 1974). Thomas Sugrue (2005) used Detroit as an example to discuss the racialized creation of that city's urban context. Beginning in the 1940s highlights the plight of African Americans in Detroit following World War II. According to Sugrue, as African Americans migrated in, more whites fled from the large urban center into the suburbs. Racist policies created an environment where only a handful of manufacturing plants would hire African American, and renters would purposely deny access to individual property inevitably creating black "enclaves" (pp.37). Housing and hiring policies were used to create a racial underclass which ultimately affected the schools constructed in those areas.

Lipman (2011), examines a similar phenomenon as it occurred in Chicago. She tracks the migration of African American and Latinx communities following World War II. In this discussion, she highlights the emergence of white flight, which occurred widespread because of changes in real estate practices that encourage whites to move to suburban locales. State governments focused on the development of suburban areas, and as white left, African Americans and Latinx communities moved into the cities.

Due to trade unions and segregationist policies, it relegated minoritized people to specific sectors of the city and paid lower wages. All of this contributed to falling property values, which ultimately affected school funding in those areas.

In 1954 the United States Supreme Court passed the landmark court case Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka Kansas, which ended *de jure* school segregation, and catalyzed ending segregation in many public sectors of society. However, there is a body of literature that details the reification of de *facto* segregation, particularly in housing and schooling (Anyon, 1997; Castro, Presberry & Venzant Chambers, 2019; Sugrue, 2005). Anyon (1997), offers a detailed analysis of the racial isolation that occurs in major U.S, cities through the 1990s. What is most interesting about this analysis is that the cities mentioned included New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, which are typically considered urban areas. Massey and Denton (1993) furthered this discussion on the persistence of segregation in the U.S. by discussing the social factors surrounding the construction of urban areas. Here the authors used surveys to and income data to analyze how racial segregation for African Americans persisted even with increases in socioeconomic status. They argue African Americans are more likely to remain in the areas it relegated them from the 1950s to the 1970s because they still faced residential discrimination.

Sugrue (2005) used racial isolation indices to show the degree to which racial groups were separated from one another from the 1940s through the 1990s. In this analysis, he found cities like New York, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Detroit, and Chicago all maintained elevated levels of segregation. Generally, the trend of racial isolated saw a decrease from 1940 to 1970 and then elevated from the 1980s to the 1990s This phenomenon is further supported by Stroub & Richards (2013), who detailed the process of desegregation which occurred in the late 80s and eventually plateauing of racial isolation during the early 2000s.

All this evidence supports the idea that historically, urban contexts have always been overwhelmingly populated by minoritized groups which extends to the definition of "urban" as constructed by Milner. Urban schooling occurs in large, population-dense locales, but it is also explicitly concerning with issues related to minoritized populations since historically minoritized people have been overrepresented in these areas because of infrastructural factors. It is important to make the distinction that infrastructural policy factors helped create the racialized nature of urban contexts, to avoid attaching the resource issues of urban communities to the people within those communities, instead focusing on the infrastructure and mechanisms that created the context. In this paper, the term "urban schooling" considers both the "population" based definition and well as the "racialized" definition to address the unique issues created by the explicit connection between race and social class.

2.5. Does Money Matter?

The discussion of the economic context of urban schools is largely focused on access to adequate levels of funding. There has been an ongoing discussion on whether financial resources affect achievement in schools. In 1966, the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) was one of the earliest significant studies of school finance. This report concluded that student achievement resulted from family background and home environment and not influenced by access to resources. This argument was taken up later by Eric Hanushek in 1986 when he argued that there was "no strong or systematic relationship between school expenditures and student performance (Hanushek, 1986). Hanushek also argued that schools are inherently inefficient because of their use of traditional models, which did not support using resources practically such as incentives for teachers (1997).

These two arguments were expounded upon by future researchers who found evidence to support the idea that things like background or socioeconomic status had a more

significant effect on student achievement than school expenditures (Coate & Vanderhoff, 1999; Okpala, Okpala & Smith, 2001; Sirin, 2005).

In response to Hanushek's arguments there rose a faction of researchers determined to prove that money did matter in schools. Card and Kruegar (1996), conducted a 30-year study in which they found an association between school spending and adult earnings. There were also two meta-analyzes conducted by Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald that examined significant production function studies that had been published earlier. The first meta-analysis, which was an analysis of Hanushek's production function, found a positive association between spending and student outcomes (Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald, 1994). The second study was a meta-analysis of sixty production function studies, where they used combined significance testing and estimation of effect magnitude to determine seven significant inputs that influenced student achievement. The inputs were: per-pupil expenditure, teacher ability, teacher education, teacher experience, teacher salary, teacher/student ratio, and school size. Similarly, Rice (2004), argued to expand what they considered an input for education to allow for more accurate assessments of their impact on student achievement.

Baker (2017) produced an extensive report that showed how money actually matters in schools. Baker asserts that one average per-pupil spending is positive associated with school outcomes, schooling resources that cost money, like additional instructional supports, small classroom sizes, and early education program, are associated with outcomes and state funding distribution affects outcomes (Baker, 2017. p.1). Baker also argues that these outcomes show up differently across contexts. In the end Baker concludes that money matters but there are stronger positive associations when money is spent on resources that directly affect the learning process.

Grubb (2008) who proposed that research. strengthened this sentiment and conceptualize a broader definition of the term education resources to determine which inputs

matter the most. In expanding this idea, Grubb developed a conceptual framework that sought to enrich the input discussion. Grubb's model defined a "Black Box" that existed in-between resource acquisition in schools and the increase in student outcomes. Grubb posited that the "Black Box" represented the various categories of resources and the diverse ways they could interact with students. These categories include: 1) Compound resources, i.e., teacher experience 2) Complex resources, which includes things like pedagogy and 3) abstract resources, like school climate and stability, both of which include multiple factors.

An important takeaway from the "Does Money Matter" debate is the significance of human capital. They related many of the inputs to teachers and their training, experience, pedagogy, and satisfaction. However, this idea of abstract resources has also been examined in the literature. O'Malley et al. (2015), discussed the importance of school climate, especially for the achievement of African American youth. We have found school counselors to contribute positively to school climate (Croninger & Lee 2000), (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007) and influence on student achievement (Carell & Hoekstra, 2014), (Brigman, 2002). Recently tutors have been incorporated into the overall school climate improvement framework (Nelson-Royes, 2018) because of their opportunity to form relationships with students (O'Malley et al., 2015). This discussion of human capital is also supported by Odden and Picus (2008), who in their chapter regarding staffing for school provided a recommendation for staffing with the goal of producing the best outcomes. They offer a list of critical resources and the suggested per-pupil amount for each resource. This list includes Core teachers (amount dependent on class size), tutors (at least one for every 100 free or reduced-price student), Teachers for ELL, Extended Day, Summer School, Pupil support staff, Non-instructional aides (at least two), and Professional Development (pp.119-120). Odden and Picus (2014) also make mention access to material resources such as library texts, electronic services, textbooks, and other materials.

2.6. The Financial Context of Urban Schools

The unique demographic features and infrastructural constructs within urban areas has generated a plethora of studies, which propose solutions for urban schools. Much of this work has been focused on describing the financial context of urban schools and evokes discussions of concepts like equity and adequacy. Kozol (1991), shed light on some of the resource-based issues occurring in urban schools in his book *Savage Inequalities*. Kozol argued that school funding structures that relied on property taxes were inherently biased against areas with high concentrations of low-income families. The schools Kozol examined over the course of his study were found in urban areas and had student populations that were overwhelmingly represented by minoritized student groups. He found these schools were often overcrowded with students and understaffed, and lacking access to material resources. Kozol's account is corroborated by Slavin (1999), who made similar arguments against the use of property taxes in funding schools. Slavin studied the Baltimore City Public Schools and the East Orange County public schools, two urban school districts. He found that in both cases; the districts had the lowest per-pupil instructional expenses in their respective states, despite having higher taxes than the districts surrounding them, and the property tax funding system was reasonable for that significant difference.

Nathan (2000) found that legislators overwhelmingly do not think that additional funding could help in decreasing the achievement gap. He then gave examples of several efforts that started in different urban areas that came because of increased funding. Buszin (2012), discussed the ways state litigators have perpetuated funding disparities, and how there is an ongoing debate around strategic reform. Buszin's work also discusses the several states that avoid their responsibility to fund school adequately based on the nuances of their state constitutions. Nickerson and Deenihan (2002) explored a similar issue in the state of New York. They examined how litigators in New York used examples of cases across the United States to try to

argue that students deserve adequate funding for their education. These litigators were trying to fight against the discriminatory practices that were taking place in the New York schools.

Another pertinent fiscal issue is the lack of flexibility and autonomy found within urban school contexts. In a paper for the Public Policy Institute of California, Margaret Weston wrote a report that addressed the need to increase the flexibility of spending in California public schools. They break school funding in California down into various categories: categorical and restricted funding. The author argues that the state does not leave much room for flexible spending, which adversely affects under-funded schools. Well-funded schools can maintain over an extended period. Their restricted funding is more than able to meet the needs of school upkeep and other similar expenses, which leaves them with lots of soft money. Under-funded schools, which are typically in urban areas and comprise predominantly minority populations, do not have that luxury and have less room to work with financially.

2.7. Racial Demographics and Funding

Alexander and Jang (2019) introduced the concept of "synonymization" and its impact on funding policy for school districts with high populations of Black students. The authors describe synonymization, as the tendency in research to conflate low-income urban areas, with majority Black urban areas. The authors argue that this approach creates a color-blind policy agenda with funding that creates a scenario where legislators can fund predominantly poor areas while neglecting predominantly Black School districts. Through their analysis of funding in Minnesota schools they found policymakers were less likely to address district level poverty the more that district was associated with Blackness.

The racial disparity in funding is extended by Fitzgerald (2015), wrote extensively about the inequity around school funding by addressing how inequity directly affects urban areas and minoritized populations. Fitzgerald argues that urban school districts cannot raise additional

revenues because of the restrictive nature of state and local school funding structures. This inability to raise funds affects the capacity of urban schools to hire additional support services, something that schools in more affluent districts have access to, creating an equity issue. Fitzgerald provides a simple example of this disparity by citing the Texas Civil Rights Project, a collaborative of Texas lawyers who challenge various civil rights violations. In 2012, the Texas Civil Rights Project conducted a study of the Austin Independent School District and found that the district was allowing the private subsidization of higher income schools, by as much as one-thousand dollars per-pupil. This opportunity was not extended to low-income schools that served high populations of African American students.

Similarly, Condron and Roscigno (2003), found that schools that had minority populations received funding at a lower level than their counterparts. They argued that the political processes around school board elections excluded the voice of people from marginalized communities. This lack of voice led to a scenario where the board would make decisions that would negatively affect marginalized communities with no pushback. Karhl (2016) went into a discussion about the use of property taxes to fund schools. Using Mississippi as an example, he details how minorities were historically blocked out of areas with high property values and how over the years that created more disparities. Since minorities were living in areas with low property values, the tax revenue used for their schools was low. Knight (2017) examined the extent to which school districts were allocating resources equitably. The author found that there was a racial disparity in the way it distributed teaching resources among districts. Much if the research points to the fact that the intersection of racial demographics and financial context has led to legislative neglect.

2.8. Flexibility and "Resource Constraint"

Sometimes, when schools with predominantly minoritized student populations are funded there still is an issue with funding flexibility. Darling-Hammond and Friedlaender, (2008) argue that funding in education is often fragmented and "overly prescribed." Schools must latch on to programs to get the money attached to it, and that leads to a lack of alignment in the schools themselves. The work of Darling-Hammond and Friedlaender is used to make suggestions that we should give urban schools enough funding to take care of all the basic needs of the students. This way the schools could create new supplementary programs that could have a more significant effect on the students.

The discussion of flexibility and the importance of spending is addressed again in Condron and Roscigno, (2003). The authors point to the differences in spending between urban schools and suburban schools. Their finding showed that schools in a suburban setting on average spent more money, which might lead to more achievement. They posit that the urban schools would have more money to focus on the most crucial resource for schools, spending related to instruction. Having more money for building maintenance could eventually lead to increased rates of attendance. Through a series of statistical tests, the authors can show that differences in funding accounted for differences in teacher quality and student engagement and parent surveys of schools. They also use the work of Jonathan Kozol to frame the general argument that schools are funded unequally, and this inequality is rooted in issues of race and class.

The preceding discussion aides in defining "resource constrained" schools. Considering the research on resources, school climate, and essential roles for student outcomes, resource constraint can then be characterized by a schools' lack of adequate traditionally provided funding (federal, state, and local) for the acquisition of necessary human capital and other critical

material resources. As discussed earlier, Urban schools tend to either not have access to enough financial resources to adequately staff in the way Odden and Picus suggest, or not have the freedom to staff their school properly (Darling-Hammond and Friedlaender 2008). This definition of resource constraint is essential because much of the research had tried to address issues around the human capital on other pertinent issues. In this definition of resource constraint, we cannot understate the racial component. Ladson-Billings (2006) demonstrates this by comparing the amount per pupil spent on students in the predominately minoritized urban community, and students found in suburban predominantly white communities, frequently located around the same city. She found that sometimes predominantly white districts were spending up to twice as much on their student when compared to the other communities. Given the number of students in urban schools and the unique needs of those students, the situation described by Ladson-Billings could be resource constraint.

2.9. Specific Focus: The Context of Detroit Schools – *Milliken*

Since this study takes place in Detroit, it is necessary to frame the discussion of school context around Detroit and its history in relation to schooling. Many researchers point to two major policies as the start of this discussion is the 1974 supreme court decision *Milliken v. Bradley*, a policy that re-entrenched school segregation across the metropolitan area, and Proposal A, a funding policy that expanded school choice in Michigan.

Khalifa, Douglas, and Venzant Chambers (2016) use critical policy analysis to trace the effects of *Milliken* on the city and the school system. They argue Milliken contributed to white flight from the city to the suburbs. This led to a depreciation of the value of homes in the city, which ultimately affected the revenue for the schools. Even though white families were migrating, white teachers remained in the mostly Black school district, and they were unprepared to work with a Black student population. (2016), did a comparative case study to analyze

changes in enrollment, fiscal resources, and academic achievement following *Milliken*. The authors found that following the court decision Detroit public schools saw an enrollment decline of up to 83% by 2016. This decrease has been attributed to a combination of white flight and the proliferation of charter schools (a direct result of Proposal A). As enrollment dropped, and as depopulation occurred the finances available to maintain the schools decreased. This combined with increased costs in the district created a dire situation for the school district.

2.10. Proposal A: School Funding in Detroit

Arsen and Ni (2012), conducted a study of charter school expansion in Michigan. In this work they cite proposal A as a lever that affected the funding across the state. With passaging proposal A policy makers shifted the funding responsibility for Michigan schools from local districts to the state. A part of this shift was the switch to funding schools primarily through a per-pupil state grant and limiting local jurisdiction's ability to raise local taxes to support school operations. These actions created a system where funding was now contingent upon enrollment and the only way for a district to increase their funding would be to increase enrollment numbers (Arsen & Ni, 2012). When the authors analyzed the funding across the state, they found that in Detroit, because of a loss of students attributed to school choice policies, the public schools were losing upwards of $400 million annually. The funding provided by proposal A for the Detroit public schools was found to be way below the estimated funding threshold for the provision of an adequate education (Ferreyra, 2007).

Choice policies like proposal A were publicly marketed as opportunities for families to choose the best options for their students. However, a study of enrollment patterns in Detroit suggests that a lack of consideration for socio-spatial dynamics in policies may have contributed to continued racial isolation is schools (Lenhoff et al., 2020). Lenhoff et al. (2020), also asserts that school choice policies in Detroit, which are tied to the funding policies passed by the state,

are not effective in ameliorating residential and school segregation but aid in exacerbating those conditions. The author came to this conclusion through an analysis of enrollment patterns, geographic and other administrative data, which found that student transfers from Detroit into the surrounding suburbs was often one-way, affecting both the enrollment and finances of Detroit schools and increased the share of Black student isolation in the district.

Milliken and Proposal A help paint a picture of the conditions that created the situation in Detroit. The *Milliken* decision helped maintain segregation in a financial system designed to disadvantage the predominantly Black city center. This is followed by a financial policy that ties funding to enrollment in a depopulated context and introduces competition for an already constrained environment. Lipman (2014), details the history of venture philanthropy in Detroit. She illustrates that most times philanthropists wind up promoting choice policies and school closures further exacerbating the issues stated before Considering the earlier cited literature on the effect of funding on schools, it is reasonable to conclude that this policy context contributed to the situation in Detroit and the eventual bankrupting of DPS, which led to the creation of DPSCD.

2.11. The Impact of Human Capital in Schools

In discussions about funding, evidence suggests that the most important part of funding, in schools, was the money spent on instructional supports. Funding spent of these types of supports was tied to student achievement and success. As a part of instruction, the authors included hiring teachers and other essential staff. We can then assume that for most schools, the hiring of personnel could be an important process. It is then necessary to examine what people have said about the effects of non-teaching personnel (human capital) in urban schools. The focus will be on faculty members who exist within the school but are not directly responsible for instruction. The reason for focusing on these individuals is that my argument rests on the idea

that AmeriCorps provided non-teaching personnel influence student outcomes.

Some literature focuses on ways the school system, including relationships between community, teachers, and administrators, leans on the support of non-instructional personnel. Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy (2007) discuss the essential role counselors have in the school structure. They discuss the level of control counselors have with advocacy for students and creating norms within the space of the school. The authors also argue that counselors could build partnerships between all the different school stakeholders. School-based professionals can work together to make sure the school provides a safe environment though multilayered systems of support that prevent things like violence and other factors that may affect the school climate (Sugai, Horner &Algozzone, 2011). Sabatino (2009), argued for collaboration between teachers, school psychologists, school social workers, and communities to create safe positive spaces from students in schools. In this model, the author posits non-instructional personnel as an essential part of a school system that is striving to provide a quality environment for students. Through this work, we can see that non-instructional personnel in schools can be just as essential as teachers and administrators themselves.

Some literature used the number of counselors in a school as a measure of adequate access to human capital. Butler (2003) discusses the plight of African American students in urban schools. The author speaks to the many environmental factors that might impair the student and ultimately influence student achievement and success. This author positions counselors as a positive force in schools that could mediate the issues students face through mentorship and interventions that reinforce positive cultural messages. Constantine (2002) portrayed the multifaceted roles of counselors, showing that they often occupy the academic space as advisors, consultants, advocates, and role models. This author argues that all those roles are necessary in schools with African American students who face different environmental

pressures. In this situation counselors are an essential part of the school system that impact factors that have been shown to affect student's achievement and other like outcomes.

The literature also speaks to the importance of addition school personnel for students with disabilities. Giangreco, Prelock, Reid, Dennis & Edelman (2000), discovered that schools were in fact in need of these types of services both for students with disabilities and students who were considered academically "at risk". Goldstein & McGinnis (1997) discussed the importance of school psychologists in teaching all students in the school the social skills necessary to interact with students who have exhibited difficulties navigating social spaces.

Concerning student achievement, much of the literature argues that improvements to student environment will inherently influence achievement. There is some work that attempts to analyze this phenomenon statistically. Carell & Hoekstra (2014), conducted a study to measure the impact of non-instructional supports on student achievement. The authors examined elementary schools with counselors and graduate level school counseling interns. For their formula, they converted the interns into full-time employees since the interns interact with students year-round. They found counselors accounted for increases in male students' test and decreases in behavioral incidents, and all their results were statistically significant at least at the 10 percent level. Importantly, estimates from specifications including family or individual fixed effects remained unchanged, suggesting that results were not being driven by families selecting into specific schools (Carell & Hoekstra, 2014). However, this effect was not similar in female students.

In 2010, Randall Reback discussed the way non-instructional spending improves noncognitive outcomes in schools. The author employed a regression discontinuity approach to investigate the effects of elementary counselor subsidies on student test scores and behavior. He found that increases in subsidies for counselor led to less behavioral issues in school. An increase

36

of about .5 FTE in counselors in school in Alabama led to a significant decrease in suspensions and classroom disruptions. However, Reback did not explicitly find a link between spending on counselors and increasing test scores. The author suggested that a longer-term study would yield more results possibly because fewer disruptions in class would give way for more instruction would help scores. Reback also argued that counselor presence led to more students being present on test days, which could also have a greater effect.

From the year 2000-2002, Dr. Greg Brigman of Florida Atlantic University conducted a study across two counties in the state of Florida. These studies were an attempt to figure out counselor's influence on student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT). This study looked at 440 students across 36 schools. They randomly selected the students out of a group of students who scored between the 25th and 50th percentile on the FCAT. They subjected the students to structured group counseling and in class interventions directed by school counselors. What the study found was that these types of targeted collaborative interventions had positive effects on student behavior and achievement, specifically on the math FCAT. However, this study did not explore any of the mechanisms that might have led to that increase.

The literature supports the importance of human capital in the operation of schools. If urban schools with predominantly minoritized populations and funding difficulties cannot fill these types of positions, it is highly likely that the students are not receiving all the attention they would need outside of academics. In an environment with low access to funding and the inability to hire or keep additional personnel consistent, school leaders in these environments would be stuck with some choices on how to proceed. There is a glaring weakness in several of the articles that deal with changes in school climate. None of these articles discuss the number of counselors, and the ways faculty-to-student ratios affect the climate changing process. Non-profits often

provide a multitude of personnel, and it would be helpful to do comparisons based on the number

of individuals working with students. If non-profits were to come and offer their services and

provide personnel at a low cost, or at no cost at all, it would make sense that school leaders

would take that opportunity to provide for their students.

2.12. Human Capital Provided by Non-profit Organizations

In situations where schools do not readily have access to non-teaching staff, mostly

counselors, school leaders may have to depend on outside organizations to fulfill the capacity of

those roles. In the last 20 years AmeriCorps emerged as a means to provide schools with extra

capacity, as long-term volunteers, or external staff members. Other like organizations emerged to

provide similar types of services. This question is important because AmeriCorps and other

programs that provide personnel through alternative methods are becoming more permanent

fixtures in education reform. In addition, alumni from AmeriCorps organizations like Teach for

America are moving into positions as policymakers and school leaders, which means dominant

cultures and idealism from these organizations are making their way into larger policy systems.

If these organizations are going to serve as reform tools, it will be important to analyze these

organizations and understand the way they interact with schools. The goal of this section is to

support the idea that these organizations are building capacity in schools in ways that are

comparable to non-teaching personnel and thus are being used as a substitution for those full-

time roles.

Diplomas Now: A Multitier Approach to changing schools–Every year MDCR comes out

with reports to describe the impact of certain AmeriCorps programs. In June 2016, a report came

out that discussed the success of the Diploma's now initiative (Corrin, Sepanik, Rosen & Shane,

2016). Diplomas Now combines the efforts of City Year, Talent Development Secondary, and

Communities in Schools to try to provide targeted interventions for "at-risk" student sin urban

schools. The program aims to identify and support students who are "off track for graduation" and bring in addition human resources (capital) into the school to bolster implementation of the program itself and to provide direct help to students. This help came as additional support in during classroom instruction, mentoring, and after school tutoring. To measure student progress the Diplomas Now identified three early warning indicators that could be linked to lower graduation rates. These three factors are attendance, behavior, and coursework. What the authors found was that schools that implemented the Diplomas Now program was successful in reducing the early warning indicators in the students who took part.

In this AmeriCorps organizations model, there are elements of the model I discussed in the section that outlined my research question since Diplomas Now only target urban schools it fits within the criteria for the schools my question addresses. Also, the organization lists the provision of non-teaching personnel as one of its strategies. These individuals interact with students both in the classroom and after school as mentoring and tutoring. The focus on relationships is found within the mentoring space. Diplomas Now could be schools addressing lack of counselors through a non-profit solution. The organizations that make up Diplomas Now are also focused on promoting social justice through empowering communities that have historically been denied access to resources. This lens guides a lot of the training in these organizations to bring culturally relevant practices into the intervention models.

826 Valencia – The 826 Valencia organization is a non-profit that is based in San Francisco, California. In 2015, Ashley Varady wrote a report detailing the ways the organization partnered with K-8 Schools in the San Francisco area. This organization would train volunteers to tutor a group of 3rd 4th and 5th grade students, who were identified by their teachers as performing below grade level. In most cases this organization worked with students who were identified as English Language Learners. (ELL) and students who were identified would work

with the volunteer tutors for an entire year. Valencia 826 also supports teachers throughout the school year. By the end of the third year of implementation, the organization reported that 74 percent of the students who went through their program saw improvements in their reading comprehension and writing skills. This project-based learning structure also allowed for students to publish their work, which creates great opportunities for boosts in student confidence.

With this specific program, we can see some elements mentioned earlier in this review. Some schools in the San Francisco area did not have the personnel to meet the needs of the entire student population. This could be related to a funding issue, but nothing in this specific report suggests that. Some students who were interviewed expressed the ways relationship building with the tutor helped them feel confident enough to apply themselves to working harder. The organization itself speaks to the way they train tutor to focus on integrating themselves into the support network of teachers and administrators for the students. This is comparable to the role of counselors discussed in earlier literature. So, we have a need, and an organization offering economical capacity building. There is evidence that members of the organization were integrated into the school system and focused on building relationships to support students and lead to some measure of success. In terms of impact on teachers and administrators, the organization is said to interact with teachers, and since the organization is providing volunteers, which are free to the school, which must be a financial boom for administrators.

University Service Learning – Some universities have outreach programs that send volunteers into urban schools to offer tutoring services, and serve as pre-teaching requirements. One university started an initiative to bring language tutoring programs to urban schools that did not offer robust options for second languages (Polansky et al. 2010). In this study, the tutors were trained in using storytelling and reflection when instructing students on the use of languages like, German, Japanese, and Italian. They also asked tutors and participating teachers

to use self-reflection to contextualize the language learning process. The authors found this process led to more overall engagement in students. Students were more involved in the language learning process when they could participate in it around storytelling and reflection. Also, hearing the narrative of the tutors allow students to feel more comfortable and encouraged when attempting their own language process. This system also depends on interactions between tutors, students, and teachers who participate in the programs.

Here we have another example of a program that is interacting with the entire school system. The individuals who are coming into the school as "extra personnel" could interact with students and teachers. Students become invested through sharing their own narratives and hearing the narratives of the tutors. This narrative based structure engenders familiarity and trust between students and personal. The authors of the article found that this structure built motivation, rapport, and confidence in the students. Students advanced positively in the development of new language skills through conversational storytelling, which inevitably led to building positive relationships with tutors. This program follows the model of my argument. An urban school is lacking the resources to provide a service for students. An organization can provide that service for free, and due to the context of the student in an urban school the program's employees are more successful when they employ relationship-building techniques. This all leads to student achievement in some form.

Dropout prevention among African Americans—One of the major goals of non-profits working in urban education is tackling dropout prevention. Cheryl Somers and Monte Piliawsky (2004) wrote literature that discussed the effects of a program targeted at Midwest high school students. In this model, college students were prepared as volunteer role models and tutors. They would go into schools every afternoon and work with the students who voluntarily participated in the program. The researchers who set up the study hoped to measure changes in student Grade

41

Point Average and academic attitudes and behaviors. They implemented the intervention through one-on-one time with tutors and group workshops that dealt with college and career topics. They gave students practical and concrete methods for improving in school and becoming more involved in school community life. On average, the study found that students improved in academic behaviors and attitudes but there was not much movement in terms of Grade Point Average. Researchers found students responded well to the program because it provided them with a safe, caring, after-school environment that improved their sense of belonging (Somer & Piliawsky, 2004).

This program differed from the others because the research design was more quantitative. The researchers set up an experimental design and tested the results using statistical methods. In the end, the environment mattered most. The students responded well to having a caring, safe environment to work in. Again, this would seem to be built on the development of trust relationships between the students and the tutors. The schools needed to combat the dropout phenomenon is urban schools. Instead of using resources that it would have been difficult to obtain, these schools piloted a program that gave them access to important additional human capital. This human capital was best used for building relationships and positively reinforcing students. The students developed close relationships with adults who cared about their success, and it's possible that this led to positive results in the schools.

City Year's direct impact in schools - In 2015, City year partnered with the Policy Studies Associates to produce a report that detailed the influence the AmeriCorps program had on their partner schools. The reports argued City Year handled increases in test scores across the 27 cities they find the program in. Meredith & Anderson (2015) argued in this report that City year schools were two times as likely to improve in English Language arts assessment scores following partnership and significantly likely (1.7 times) to improve in math. The authors also

argued that schools with a higher ratio of Corps Members, who essentially are non-teaching personnel, were more likely to see improvements in English Language arts and Math. These results show that there are several positive benefits to having this type of program in schools. However, the report does not discuss any of the mechanism that would directly lead to this improvement. City Year offers tutoring, mentoring, and in class intervention services, and it is not clear which of these functions directly contribute to improvement.

The organizations interacted in this way because of the relationship centered context of "urban' Schools. In these instances, we can assume additional capacity was built for both teachers and administrators. Teachers got additional support through their students getting extra attention. This could have created more space in teachers' schedules since they might not have to remediate students. Administrators might be satisfied because the programs reviewed above had zero to no cost attached to them. Through this, school might focus resources on other areas.

Additional human capital has been pivotal to creating safe and inclusive spaces for students. Overall additional human capital is a necessary part of the school network and can contribute to setting and defining norms within the school space (Croninger & Lee 2000), (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Non-instructional staff have also been shown to have an influence on student achievement (Carell & Hoekstra, 2014), (Brigman, 2002). The impact on non-teaching personnel in schools whether it be environmental or academic makes the case that non-teaching personnel are a valuable educational input, and more work might need to consider this. This creates an issue when the school does not have the resources necessary to hire and keep non-teaching personnel. If AmeriCorps organizations can provide low-cost comparable services, it makes sense that school leaders would consider using them as a resource.

AmeriCorps and similar programs provide cost-effective non-teaching personnel to schools. The individuals from these programs interact with the entire school structure and has

effects on different areas. Reviewing the Diplomas Now, City Year, and 826 Valencia programs shows the variety of ways outside programs influence schools. These non-teaching agents impact the school environment and create a space of safety for many students. This is a function that is analogous to what they discussed in the (Sugai, Horner & Algozzone, 2011) and Sabatino (2009) articles. Also, programs like City Year argue that their presence handles improvements in both reading and math in schools, like the increases related to counselors according to Reback (2010). When examined side by side, we can make the argument that the extra personnel provided by AmeriCorps and similar programs is comparable in terms of functions and influence. It is then understandable that school leaders would view AmeriCorps programs as valid solutions to any funding issues.

After examining the work on non-profit organizations, several details that must be considered to broaden the general understanding of these entities. Taken together, imbalances across the reviewed literature and gaps in the knowledge base highlights promising avenues for future research. This review shows the need for more focus on non-profit organizations that send volunteers into schools. There is information on these kinds of organizations, but mostly it is self-published. Existing work also focuses solely on results. If we are to understand the specific mechanisms that lead to outcomes when implementing these types of programs, future scholarship will need to go beyond focusing on numerical improvement and focus more on the interactions and pedagogical strategies that may lead to student success. This work will require the use of multiple frameworks to be fully realized. Any future work would also need to consider the specific metrics that will show the effects non-profit personnel have on teachers, students, and school's administration. Much of the literature only examined two to three years of data, which highlights the need for longitudinal data analysis of non-profit organizations. Longitudinal data would help identify positive or negative trends occurring within these organizations.

Analysis of organizational training strategies could reveal specific contributing factors, at the preparation level, that affect the school climate.

2.13. The Role of the School Leader in Navigating this Context

Douglass, Scott, and Anderson (2018) used a critical policy analysis framing to examine the politics of modern education reform. In this work the authors emphasized the role of the school leader as it relates ongoing shifts in reform work.

> "School leaders are faced with a complex policy context that pulls them in multiple directions, and this varies from state to state and district to district. For instance, in some states---especially urban district leaders—are contending with gentrification, school choice, competition from charter schools, police in schools, colocation, and vendors trying to sell them services….. dealing with social justice issues related to privilege, and what some are now calling "opportunity hoarding," may raise other kinds policy issues" (Douglass, Scott & Anderson, 2018)

This quote displays the unique intersections of issues faced by school leaders in urban school districts who may have to contend with a bevy of external issues while also needing to attend to social justice. The balancing act school leaders participate in justifies the plethora of research committed to understanding the impact of the school leader.

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) expanded on the idea of distributed leadership as an effective means of achieving school improvement. This idea of distributing leadership responsibilities and power started as a discussion of one school leader taking an in building bottom-up approach to reform. Diamond and Spillane (2016) revisited the concept to critique the overemphasis of the school leaders as an individual and the incorrect conflation of distributed leadership with democratic leadership. The authors articulate that the goal of distributed leadership was to call attention to power structures within school leadership, and how school

leaders should engage with communities to disrupt those structures. Green (2018), argued that

for urban schools, leaders could adopt a practice of positioning the school as a social broker for

community improvement, which would benefit the school in the long run. DeMatthews (2018),

examined how school leaders could tap into and engage community to improve school

conditions. Consistent across much of the literature is the idea that the school leader is most

effective in affecting change through partnering with community (Ishimaru 2014; Ishimaru &

Galloway, 2014; Jordan & Wilson, 2017) families (Rodela, 2013; Wilson, 2019), and

students/youth (Khalifa, 2018; Lac & Mansfield, 2018) towards goals of equity and justice. To

accomplish this, many scholars have theorized leadership behaviors that contribute to the work

of equity and justice.

2.14. Development of Leadership frameworks: From Instruction to Transformation

These frameworks use theory to analyze the decisions and organizational structure school

leaders implement with the goal of reaching various objectives. Mainly for this research on

school leaders and their interactions with external organizations, leadership frameworks can aid

examining why school leaders seek partnerships and inform what specific aim they hope to reach

with the use of resources from those organizations.

Hallinger (2003), discussed the emergence of two dominant leadership theoretical

frameworks: instructional leadership and transformational leadership comparing the

implementation and merits of both types. Instructional leadership was one of the earlier models

for understanding schools and concerned itself with the instructional leader affecting the

processes that directly influence the quality of curriculum and instruction (Cuban, 1988).

Transformational leadership was first presented as a dichotomy with transactional leadership and

emerged as a counter to top-down leadership reform initiatives. We define transactional

leadership as "Leadership that occurs when one person takes the initiative in contacting other for

an exchange of valued things" (Burns, 1978, p. 133). Transactional leaders are those who focus on supervision and performance, using incentives or punishments as motivators. Transformational leadership was initially described as "occurring when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978, p. 134). Transformational leadership has been expounded on over the years and once incorporated into educational settings is defined by ten essential characteristics, six related directly to leadership and four that dealt with managerial duties, which helped in distributing responsibilities throughout the school (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000).

While these former models are essential, there grew a community of researchers who felt the frameworks did not do enough to respond to the unique needs of urban schools and students of color. Hallinger (2016), argued that having general leadership strategies was good for a sufficient change in schools but was not used to address the unique contextual issues leaders might face dependent on location. Other leadership models such as culturally responsive school leadership, transformative leadership, and social justice leadership emerged to provide leaders with specific ideas for working with specific student groups. In trying to understand how school leaders navigate resource constrained urban environments and secure additional resources through partnerships, it is crucial to ground these interactions in theory. This next section will cover various leadership theoretical frameworks and discuss how they could frame this research. Here Transformative Leadership, Social Justice Leadership (SJL), Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) and Contextual Responsive School Leadership (CRL).

Transformative leadership was created as a context-focused extension of transformational leadership. The argument was that transactional and transformational leadership highlighted the

interactions between leaders and followers but did not address the context in which these

processes occur. Astin and Astin (2000), wrote of TL within a higher education context stating:

> "We believe that the value ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice,
> and the quality of life; to expand access and opportunity; to encourage respect for
> difference and diversity; to strengthen democracy, civic life, and civic responsibility" (p.
> 11)

Here there is an explicit focus on equity, justice, and diversity, which are all concepts that should

be incorporated in urban school settings. Weiner (2003), presents ideas on how TL must also

know the historical context in areas to affect direct change. The author argues transformative

leaders are often tasked with working from within "dominant social formations" (p.102) to find

effective means of opposing ideological and historical conditions. Leaders are charged with

being activists and voices for change, who use strategic alliances to overcome different societal

oppression.

Shields (2003) took the concept of TL and mapped it to a K-12 educational framework, to

define a clear set of characteristics. Shields argues that transformative leaders in schools need to

address issues of power, control, and inequity, which causes the creation of socially just

education in schools that critically built on the lived experiences of students. Shields (2010) used

this understanding of TL to understand the interactions of two school leaders in urban

educational environments. From this study, Shields developed a list of seven vital transformative

practices in each school. This list includes: Balancing Critique and promise; Effecting deep and

equitable change; Deconstruction and reconstruction of social/cultural knowledge frameworks

that generate inequity; acknowledging power and privilege, emphasizing both public and private

good; focusing on liberation, emancipation, democracy, and equity; and demonstrating moral

courage and activism. (p. 574). Shields emphasizes that the principals in the study did not focus on effectiveness or efficiency. Instead, they focused on equity and opportunity for all students.

Two of the tenets presented by Shields has significant implications for the research on school leader decision-making and the creation of partnerships for resource acquisition. First is the tenet of "Effecting deep and equitable change." The two principals found in the Shields (2010) study took different approaches to reach this objective. One principal focused on the creation of extended learning opportunities, homework supervision, community partnerships and a staff buddy program. The community partnerships included retired people from the surrounding community who were trained to help students in extended day after-school programs and as tutors for the homework supervision program. The other principal "deployed" teachers and volunteers in the areas of the school with the most amount of need. The principal brought in parent volunteers to work with the students.

The second tenet of "acknowledging power and privilege" was understood by one principal in the study, as making a sure every student had access to all opportunities. The second tenet manifested itself through the music program offered by the school. Students were expected to have their instruments for practice at home following the lessons in class. Given the background of the students in the school, the principal found it irresponsible to assume that all students had access to instruments, so she leveraged relationships with local businesses to get instrument rentals for students.

This finding shows the school leaders' willingness to leverage community assets to obtain volunteers, who are considered a human capital resource. This research also creates an explicit link between the school leader's orientation towards equity and the desire to bring in extra personnel to help with the goal of leveling the playing field for students from minoritized groups.

This finding could support the idea that school leaders make partnerships and bring in resources out of a commitment to a greater sense of justice.

2.15. Frameworks Centering Justice and Culture

The concept of social justice has always been nebulous in its conceptualization in education. Kumashiro (2015), defined what social justice looks like in education when appropriately implemented. Kumashiro outlined four things social justice education should seek to address. This includes improving the experiences of those who have been treated in harmful ways and not treated in helpful ways (p.XXV), the deconstruction of stereotypes and myths around different, an interrogation of the invisible societal dynamics perpetuating oppression, an active tracking of the resistance to social justice initiates to keep in mind barriers to justice. These values characterized by Kumashiro helped enhance the discussion of social justice in education.

Theoharis (2007), conducted an empirical study to try a construct a theory of social justice educational leadership. There was already all this work on how to teach social justice in schools so there was a need for research that detailed how school leaders can lead for social justice initiatives as well. Theoharis defines social justice education as:

"Principals who make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision. This definition centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools." (p. 223)

Under this definition school principals would be knowledgeable of their students' histories and identities, and able to respond meaningfully to those identities. This point of view also speaks against school practices that relegate certain students (ELL, Students with disabilities) to

specially segregated classrooms, because a genuinely inclusive school community seeks to make the "world fit for all of us."

Theoharis (2007), used a position-subject approach to understand the actions of principals who expressed an interest in doing the work of SJL. Position-subject approach was utilized because it assumes the person being interviewed actively creates meaning from and interprets their work, a self-reflectiveness often found in social justice work. The study included seven principals of, varying backgrounds, from cities across the Midwest. After interviewing the principals, Theoharis found they were enacting social justice in four ways; raising student achievement, improving school structures, re-centering and enhancing staff capacity, and strengthening school culture and community.

These components were selection, knowledge and content, critical consciousness, teaching and learning, proactive systems of support and induction. McKenzie et al. (2008) argued that schools of education that sought to prepare educational leaders needed to be selective and engender a critical reflective consciousness in its participants. Furman (2011) offered an alternate way of thinking about leadership preparation for social justice. She determined that SJL for praxis required interaction by the school leader across seven critical relational dimensions. The school leader needs to be prepared to engage in a personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic, and ecological level (p. 205).

DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014), analyzed SJL and it occurred in an urban district fraught with inequities. This study occurred in two schools that had considerable amounts of students with disabilities. In both schools, the leader attempted to implement the structure changes, such as integrating the classes so that student groups were not separated based on ability status and providing additional support to students with special needs but met resistance as budget cuts from the district. This resistance provided a smaller allocation for personnel from

the district which caused one principal to debate the merits of cutting another school program, like library services, to pay for the additional personnel necessary to allow inclusive classrooms. Also, both schools were lacking improvement in achievement for students with disabilities during the period of the study. The discussion in DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) presents a dilemma in that these two school leaders tried to apply social justice-based changes in their school and were met with challenges out of their control, and ultimately struggled to make meaningful change, which hurts the school leaders' status as a social justice leader.

Contextually responsive school leadership is a framework that includes elements of distributed leadership, professional learning communities, and SJL to try to address urban school reform. Reed and Swaminathan (2014), proposed this framework after a three-year case study of one principal in an urban school district. The study found that the principal faced issues that are endemic to the urban context like racial and linguistic diversity, negative community perceptions, and low levels of student achievement and that no one leadership framework could address all the issues at once adequately. Contextually responsive school leadership emerged as a compound solution to these problems. They operationalize this framework through three tenets: 1) urban school leaders must consider the context in which they lead; 2) urban school leaders must use creative ingenuity to address the needs of their contexts, and 3) urban school leaders must take a balanced approach between transactional and transformational leadership practices.

The first tenet in CRL is supported by the work of White-Smith and White (2009), which argued that a school leader in an urban setting with the goal of bringing about change must have critical consciousness around the community and its inhabitants. Reed and Swaminathan (2014), argue that "urban principals must acknowledge the community, institutional and societal forces that impinge on urban students, their families and the school itself" The authors also emphasize that issues of race, poverty and other inequities must be addressed this acknowledgment of

52

community. Inherently the school leader must exhibit the same reflective competencies championed by SJL.

The second tenet is a concept that has not been addressed in the other leadership frameworks. Here the authors call on Crow and Scribner (2014) and Mumford and Gustafson (2007) to explain that creativity is required to work in urban school contexts. Here school leaders are prompted to face challenges by taking on unique identities to engage stakeholders. The principal studied by Reed and Swaminathan demonstrated this ability by increasing his school's test scores through his instructional restructuring of the school while also working with the district to acquire additional resources (though the exact method is unknown). The third tenet argues for balancing between transformational leadership and transactional leadership to reach different objectives. This tenet effectively encourages leaders to change leadership approaches as the situation arises, which was Reed and Swaminathan's argument on a larger scale.

While there is not much research that directly names CRL, there are researchers who have analyzed schools which might fit neatly within the descriptions of CRL. Green (2015), discussed school-wide reforms occurring concurrently with community development. He interviewed several school leaders and community leaders to examine the conditions that lead to change. The study occurred in an urban school district with a diverse student population. The author found that the schools studied principals could create partnerships with the community and promote the school as a spatial asset for the members of the community. The schools offered services such as allowing the gymnasium to be a community fitness center, allowing the school to be used for financial literacy programs and allowing community members to use the on-campus clinic. In exchange, more than 73 organizations that provided services including tutoring, mentoring and service learning supported one of the schools. Green (2016), further supported this idea with the

concept of "Community-based equity audits," which advocated for school leaders understanding the assets available in the community to support equity efforts in school.

The research conducted by Green addresses all three major tenets of CRL. The first tenet requires that school leaders have an intimate understanding of the community, the people in the community, and how their narrative and identity informs their biases or thoughts about the community. This tenet is reflected in Green (2016), where the author states:

> "the school leadership team should spend quality time addressing myths, assumptions, and stereotypes about students, families, and the community (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Gorski, 2013), as well as affirming their commitment to equitable, collaborative, and dialogically centered school-community change (Freire, 1970; Packham, 1998). Thus, school leadership team members should commit to cultural humility throughout this process (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998)." (p. 20)

This statement shows how much community knowledge is expected of the school leader. The second tenant of CRL, which discusses the school leaders need to leverage their creativity, is reflected in Green (2015). In this research, the school leaders could create partnerships with the community by offering the buildings as solutions to community issues, which is a creative solution that works outside of the bounds of traditional school funding. The third tenet of CRL is addressed in both Green (2015, 2016) articles. The transactional nature of the leadership is expressed in the exchange of services with the community for mutual, whereas the transformational nature of leadership is expressed in requiring of the school leaders to practice critical consciousness. Green admits that more research is needed to examine the quantitative impact of community-based leadership strategies, but so far this work has yielded impressive results.

Cultural relevance or responsiveness first appeared in the early 1990's through the work of Delpit (1988), Gay (1994), Ladson-Bllings (1995) and Sleeter and Grant (2003) and since then it has developed to become more inclusive and considerate of student contexts. This concept strengthened out of a need to address the unique issues that often plagued minoritized students in schools. It was an attempt to bridge the gap between a student's home life and their home life by acknowledging the systemic and infrastructural barriers that work against students (Nieto, 2010). Teachers were expected to infuse language and culture into the curriculum, which would hopefully lead to widespread changes in student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This concept became more critical as school environments grew more racially and ethnically diverse, forcing educators and those concerned with education to critique to overall U.S. educational system and understand the ways it inequitable structure was negatively affecting achievement of marginalized students (Taylor, 2010).

Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016) conducted a systematic literature review in which they constructed an understanding of Cultural responsiveness operating within school leadership. Their work discusses CRSL as a series of four key behaviors or practices that influence the learning of marginalized students and engagement with historically racially oppressed communities. The first of these four behaviors are "Critical Self-Awareness," which is described as the school leader needing to have "awareness of self and his/her values, beliefs, and dispositions when it comes to serving poor children of color" (p. 1280). Mostly the school leaders need to have spent time, either in preparation or otherwise, developing a thorough understanding or race, culture, socioeconomic status, language and national identity, and how their identity influences perceptions of the identity of others.

They define the second behavior as "Culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation." This idea proposed that the school leader is directly responsible for ensuring their

teachers are culturally responsive. Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis argue that the school leader does

not have to be an expert in cultural responsiveness, but must actively recruit culturally

responsive teachers, and acquire culturally responsive resources, and curriculum. One of the

types of resources recommended was professional development sessions that aligned with the

leaders' vision of cultural responsiveness. School leaders must also see when teachers are

resistant to culturally responsive practices and be able to make the "challenging decisions to

counsel out" those teachers (p. 1281).

They relate the third and fourth behaviors of CRSL to school climate and community

context. "Culturally Responsive and Inclusive School Environments," implies that the school

leader must "leverage resources to identify and a culturally affirming school environment" (p.

1282). This behavior would require the school leader to analyze the systems within the school to

find any marginalizing or discriminatory practices, i.e., overrepresentation of African American

students in behavior infraction reporting and address the issue in a way that protects students.

The fourth behavior, "Engaging Students and Parents in Community Contexts," calls for the

leader to understand, address and advocate for the community that surrounds their school. This

behavior would require the school leader to foster the development of strong ties with the

community and use their status for the benefit of that community.

2.16. School leader's sense-making process

The literature on sense-making is helpful for our understandings of the actions of school

leaders. Much of the former work on sense-making can be traced back to the work of Karl

Weick. Weick (1995), outlined the argument that sense-making, at its core, is an ongoing reality

building process where individuals try to make retrospective sense of an what occurs. Weick

(1979,1995) developed a conceptual model that outlined a seven-characteristic framework for

sense-making. They demonstrate this model through four emphases: ecological change,

enactment, selection, and retention. These steps mark the ways individuals identify something new, construct what they sense, choose a plausible explanation, and hold on to plausible selection for future reference all towards an understanding of a phenomenon. Weick (1995) expresses an important summative discussion of sensemaking by asserting that sense-making relies on the individual's capacity to construct and interact with the environment.

Evans (2007) argued that the concept of sense-making is "socially constructed, context-specific, value-laden, and subject to interpretation" (pp.185). Using this meaning, Evans argued that sense making was an appropriate construct with which to analyze race. When applied to school leaders' understanding of race and demographic change, Evans found that their own sociopolitical identities informed school leaders' interpretation of these constructs. If school leaders ascribed to notions of colorblindness, they could not address the needs of a racially diverse student population. I believe this definition can be extended to a school leaders' interpretation of urban schools, and urban contexts and thus the decision-making process around human capital providing external organizations can be informed by a school leader's values and sociopolitical views. Spillane et al. (2002), adds to this context by positioning principal sensemaking as " in their professional biographies, building histories and roles as intermediaries between district office and classroom teacher" (p.731).

Neumerski (2013), found that the research on school leader sense-making is consistent with the larger body of educational research that highlights the importance of the school leaders' pivotal role in implementing reforms. Ganon-Shilon and Schechter (2017), wrote a literature review to analyze the ways school leaders' sense-making influenced their policy implementation. The authors found that school leaders mediate and contribute to reforms mandates all within the context of their beliefs, experiences, and values. This requires the school leader to manage external demands and internal goals to reach specific goals.

Ganon-Shilon and Schechter (2017), also stated that "contradictions between policy and local goals have resulted in creative strategies that have bridged the gap between everyday school practices and external demands." School leaders were required to respond to accountability pressures through strategic or creative actions. Only school leaders who have made sense of the policy and contextual environment their school is embedded in can make actions towards reform change. This framework is appropriate for this study since the school leaders I am interested in are embedded in urban schools, which have racial, cultural, and historical factors that can be influenced by a school leaders' out sociological outlook.

2.17. Chapter 2 Summary

Collectively school leadership literature speaks to the multifaceted nature of the role of school leader. The school leader is positioned at the nexus of community and politics, and much of the work has focused on navigating the tensions. For urban education research, these tensions are compounded by histories that have had racial, spatial, and sociopolitical ramifications. In this context it is important to center discussion of race and social justice and managing resources effectively for equitable outcomes. Many have offered community and organizational partnerships to address these needs. Leveraging partnership can provide essential resources and engage community-based ways of knowing to help improve the school condition. What is absent in research is a qualitative understanding of the explicit leadership behaviors that promote successful implementation of partnerships in schools. There also needs to be an understanding of how school leaders interpret partnership work and how their perceptions and interpretations affect their process.

This review also engaged with literature on organizations that provide human capital as a mechanism of school reform. While the literature is consistent on the benefits of more human capital, there is a gap in our understanding on specific school structures that lead to success.

There needs to be an examination of how the school leader influences this process and creates an environment that optimizes the resources form these organizations. Much of the literature on this specific type of partnership does not engage how the people brought in by organizations are prepared for working with diverse student populations. Cultural responsiveness literature focuses on how teachers are prepared for this type of work, but we see little that interrogates the extent that volunteers or other external actors are prepared to do this work, even when there are high levels (daily) engagement with students. The following chapter will frame the methodology for this study and how it approached addressing the stated gaps.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design & Questions

This qualitative case study explores and describe urban school principals' decision-making processes and sense-making around utilization of human capital, providing non-profits towards a goal contextual responsiveness. This research is inspired by urban school leaders, who are often called to be committed to social justice and cultural responsiveness, while nesting within a larger historical resource-scarce urban context. At its core, this question is trying to explore a mechanism for simultaneously addressing issues of justice and culture and mediating the environmental pressures caused by resource scarcity. By studying the implementation of the same program across multiple school sites, I hope to show the way principals' perceptions and use of programs support this idea of mediating pressures to be socially just, culturally responsive, and fiscally efficient.

I designed the study to address the overarching question: How do urban school leaders use non-profit partnerships to navigate the unique fiscal and cultural context found within urban school districts. Three ancillary questions for the study are:

1) How do school leaders successfully partner with and implement resources from external partnership organizations?

2) What social factors (race, class, community content,) influence school leaders' decision-making when collaborating with external partnership organizations?

3) What are the school leaders' perceived costs and benefits of partnering with external organizations?

3.2. Using Qualitative Methodology

This study employed a primarily qualitative research approach with a phenomenological case study design. Merriam (1998) argued that qualitative research methods are most appropriate for the exploration, explanation, or description of a phenomenon. Qualitative methods help understand the human experience within context-specific settings compared to quantitative methods which help in testing generalizable hypotheses or determining causal inference. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research uses a collection of empirical materials including, personal experience and interviews, that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in the lives of individuals. Qualitative research is also inductive by nature, allowing for researchers to make sense of the phenomenon without imposing expectations on the study, which allows for categories of analysis to emerge from the data as the study goes on (Mertens, 2010). This all means that qualitative methods are appropriate when trying to understand some social phenomenon.

Merriam (1998) outlined the essential characteristics of qualitative research which include: 1) information is collected by a researcher as the primary source for data, 2) involves fieldwork 3) is inductive and 4) has richly detailed findings. I designed this study to include these characteristics. As described in chapter 2, urban education, and by extension urban education leadership involves a complex network of historical, cultural, and economic contexts that require the school leader to engage in a variety of ways to address various issues, which is inherently a social dynamic. Qualitative research is primarily grounded within a social constructivist theory of knowledge, which means we construct knowledge from individual experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research is best employed when attempting to understand the lived experiences of individuals. The primary goal of this study is to

understand the ways urban school leaders bring utilize abstract resources in response to a resource-constrained district context.

3.3. Philosophy of Research: A Critical, Humanizing Approach

Research as a concept and as implemented through university structures is an inherently colonial project. Several scholars have proposed means of (de) colonizing the work, but the fact is researchers are often implicated by proximity to privilege constructs (universities, think-tanks, etc.). However, being cognizant of this, I attempted to employ humanizing research techniques to reduce the harm in this project. Using qualitative and participant-centered research are means of creating distance from coloniality, but I fully understand that my position as a researcher from a university ties me to a specific colonial history. "This analysis turns upon a theorization of the academy as an arm of the settler state—a site where the logics of elimination, capital accumulation, and dispossession are reconstituted—which is distinct from other frameworks that critique the academy as neoliberal, Eurocentric, and/or patriarchal." (Grande, 2018). My position as a scholar and research from a university setting and my own benefitting from patriarchy implicates me in different ways. I approach this research with critical orientations and humanizing strategies.

Critical epistemology, as a starting point, operates with the assumption that people exist and interact in a system of contradictions and asymmetries of power (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2009). Research in the critical tradition is concerned with issues of power, hegemony, and injustice and their inextricably links with issues of race class and gender (Crotty & Crotty, 1998; Sipe & Constable, 1996). In education research, we can achieve critical inquiry through an emphasis on community and history (Lyon & Driskoll, 2012). Lather (2004) wrote on the research design that promoted a critical approach. She states that "Critical research designs are characterized by 1) their exploration of interactive, dialogic and reciprocal methods, 2) connect

meaning to the broader structures social power, control and history, 3) respect for the experiences of people's daily lives and 4) foreground the tensions of speaking for or with groups (Lather 2004 p. 209). Properly design qualitative projects have the potential to fulfill Lather's outlined conditions.

Paris and Winn (2014) conceptualized humanizing research as a necessary decolonizing process when working with youth and communities of color. The authors defined a humanizing research stance as one that involves the building of relationships of care and dignity and dialogic consciousness raising between the research and participants. There is also an emphasis on how one enters and exits the research process in a way that protects the relational aspect. One of the highlighted methods was the "dialogical spiral." Kinloch and San Pedro (2014) position the dialogic spiral as "the space between listening and storying" during the research process. Operating in this framework research with participants becomes an active, reflective exchanging of stories between the researcher and participant (as opposed to a one-sided collection of information from the participant. This process ultimately allows for greater vulnerability, understanding, and depth. I crafted this study in a way that allowed for the maximization of participant voice through my use of the dialogical spiral in some interviews, while also adhering to history and context to interrogate systemic oppression.

3.4. Critical Race Theory

During data collection and analysis, I encountered a methodological predicament. My initial conceptual framework utilized sensemaking and cultural responsiveness as a way of understanding school leader decision making around the use of external partnership organizations. However, setting (predominantly Black schools), historical context (Detroit) and sample (socially conscious principals and volunteer corps members) presented concepts which my initial conceptual framework did not adequately attend to. While sensemaking was useful for

some of the work, participants knowledge and relationship to the context necessitated engaging with literature on critical race theory (CRT). I used theoretical guidance from literature on cultural responsive to frame interviews with school leaders and other participants, and based on the conversations we had, I found it necessary to analyze their responses using a CRT framing. To be clear, I refrain from labeling this research, critical race research as that strain of research requires a more comprehensive and thoughtful integration of concepts. I lean on critical race theory as an analytic tool rather than as a key part of my research model (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

Critical Race Theory, or CRT is positioned as an interdisciplinary tool influenced by history, law, sociology, anthropology, and political science to understand how race and U.S. centric racialization interacts with society on a systemic level. The theory places emphasis race and racism to help analyze the impact racialization has on history, law, politics, science and social thought and action within a contemporary context. CRT is useful in contextualizing and examining policies and practices, and their relationship to race, power and privilege. CRT was conceptualized in the 1980s by legal scholars of color to precisely articulate racial disparities in legal theory and practice. As an approach to inquiry, CRT became increasingly accepted in other spheres like Education. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) presented an article title "Toward a Critical Race Theory in Education" which helped to open the doors for CRT analysis in education subfields like teacher education, educational leadership, higher education, and education policy studies (Aleman, 2007; Amiot, Mayer- Glenn & Lawrence, 2020; Dixson & Rosseau, 2006; Heilig, Brown & Brown, 2012; Horsford; 2010; Lopez, 2003; Solorzano and Yosso, 2002; Stovall, 2013).

When applied to educational leadership and education policy, CRT can "change administrative thinking and practice in school leadership in the areas of structural racism

(tracking, school discipline), white supremacy (overt racial bias and racial microaggressions) and continuous-self-critical of race, school culture and climate" and "question the standard operations of schooling. (Capper, 2015). Expanding on this, Amiot et al., (2020), highlighted educational leadership and education policy research that critiqued the racial dimensions of the politics of education (Lopez, 2003), school finance (Aleman, 2007), and leadership standards (Davis, Gooden & Micheaux, 2015). Subsequently, education researchers have contributed to the work of CRT in education by emphasizing and interpreting the central tenets of the theory. For this dissertation, I primarily rely on four of six central tenets of CRT as outlined by Amiot et al. (2020): 1) the permanence of racism, 2) whiteness as property, 3) critiques of liberalism and 4) counter storytelling. Each of these tenets will be explained in greater detail in the subsequent ers.

This dissertation study is most concerned with understanding how school leaders, respond to a resource-constrained environment using external partnership organizations. Given the responses of the participants, which touched on issues of resources, access, community wellbeing and standards for school achievement/improvement concepts which all are inextricably linked to race and racism through the history of the city, it was necessary to use CRT as an analytic tool. In the discussion section I more thoroughly explore the tenets of CRT as they relate to the findings and the participants in the study.

3.5. Methods – Phenomenological Case Study

This study was designed to understand school leaders' decision-making processes within urban educational contexts. There is also an explicit focus on the use of a specific interaction, the use of non-profit or other types of external partnership organizations. The precise nature of this inquiry necessitated the use of an exploratory and descriptive method tailored for the examination of social phenomenon bounded within a specific context, case study,

According to Yin (2003), case studies should be employed when the focus of the study is to answer how and why questions; you cannot manipulate behavior of those involved in the study; you want to cover contextual conditions because they apply to the phenomenon, or the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Baxter and Jack (2008) describe a case study conducted to understand decision making by nursing students and the factors that influenced the decision making. A case study was necessary for this study because a researcher cannot have a full understanding of decision making without understanding the context in which those decision-making skills are developed and utilized. It is impossible to have a full understanding of decision making without an understanding of the surrounding context (Baxter &Jack, 2008)

According to McDoffie and Scruggs (2008), a case study involves the in-depth study of a case or phenomenon utilizing several units of analysis. Case studies are inclusive of several forms of data ranging from interviews and observations to other artifacts. The utilization of a multitude of data sources can allow for the provision of a detailed and data-rich explanation of a phenomenon. A case study is appropriate when the desired phenomenon is occurring within some "bounded" context. Schools and school systems both serve examples of bounded systems in which their dynamic characteristics make a case study an instrument for the understanding phenomenon. The bounding process also helps the researcher determine an appropriate unit of analysis for inquiry. Since I am interested in understanding the school leader's decision-making processes within a bounded context of urban schooling, I thought case study would be the most appropriate way to engage this topic.

The unit of analysis for this study would be school leaders nested within urban school contexts. Since case study relies on a collection of data from various sources, it can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the school leaders' disposition. Also, judgments about

school context would not be comprehensive if just an interview, focus group or observational study were employed. Using case study to combine all these elements would allow for an all-encompassing perspective of the school, which would support what the idea of a unique urban school context influencing the actions of the school leader.

Phenomenological case study as a method, incorporates the first-hand lived experiences and perceived realities of a particular group of people (Moustakas, 1994). Traditional case study design does not include space for a in-depth, personal, examination of concepts which is why phenomenological methods can be combined with case study to create deeper understandings of experiences. Using a three-interview structure during the data collection process (Leedy & Ormond, 2016), helped in facilitating an in-depth recording of individual experiences and perceptions necessary for phenomenological case study) Creswell, 2013). In this study design, the phenomenon is the use of external partnership organizations at three Detroit schools. Conversations with the school leaders use the three-interview structure, and I interviewed a member of the Volunteer Corps organization at each school to help enrich the context provided by the school leaders.

3.6. Defining the Case

To aid in defining the case for this study, I lean on Ragin and Becker's (1992) guidelines for casing characteristics. The authors argue cases can be constructed or discovered or determined by the researcher. Given the study, how school leaders in urban resource constrained environments make sense of and deploy abstract resources from external partnerships, it was important to find a case that fulfilled a variety of factors. I looked at schools within a district with policies that encouraged the use of external partnerships. This would allow me to guarantee partnerships in the school. Since there was an explicit interest in race and human capital as an

abstract resource, I felt it important to choose a district with schools that were racially isolated and that had demonstrated history of volunteer work.

3.7. Site Selection

My decision to pursue the work in Detroit, Michigan, emerged naturally as my coursework and research at Michigan State University had covered the social foundations of education in Detroit. I had multiple opportunities to support university led professional development session with Detroit principal through the office of outreach.

Detroit was a conducive site for this dissertation study for several reasons. According to the official state educational data source, MI School Data, as of fall semester 2019, DPSCD had a student population of 49,000 with 82 percent of those students being Black. Districts school partnership agreement implemented in 2017 made it where any school labeled a partnership school was required to utilize external partnerships. DPSCD also had a long-standing relationship with Volunteer Corps (pseudonym), an organization that is part of a larger federal civil society program. Prior to the district restructure schools paid for contracts with Volunteer Corps, but under the new format Volunteer Corp is a community partner, the district covers whose cost. Volunteer Corp, which is currently positioned in 10 schools in the DPSCD. Volunteer Corps is a non-profit organization that provides volunteers who work with students on reading and math. The goal of Volunteer Corps is to support schools through providing interventions to students to increase their test scores, improve in school behavior and attendance, and combat the dropout crisis. According to the Volunteer Corps website, the organization aims to partner with schools where at least 75% of the student population is considered "economically disadvantaged," which is how school partnerships are selected. Particularly DPSCD schools that are partnered with Volunteer Corps have student populations that are not only "economically disadvantaged" but also are predominantly Black.

3.8. Sampling

I selected the seven participants of my study through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling takes on many forms depending on the intent of the research. Theory-based purposeful sampling sets the criteria for selection within the boundaries of a theoretical framework. For this study my framework, which includes school leader sensemaking and CRT was bounded in financial restraint, use of community partnerships that provide human capital and schools with predominantly Black students. Narrowing left me with 10 schools to use as sites for the study. Snowball sampling occurs when participants direct the researcher to other interesting cases (Creswell, 2007). This study incorporated a mix of both styles which allowed me to recruit three school principals (all of which were Black) and four "leaders" from the Volunteer Corps organization. Each Volunteer Corps leader was positioned at the same school as one of the school leaders in the study to provide a complete picture of the interactions that go into the decision-making process.

Here I am using Volunteer Corps as a starting point for community partnerships. Since the program exists at all the schools, it allows for comparison in use across school leaders and school contexts. Also, Volunteer Corps is only at schools that are a part of the partnership agreement, which provided opportunities for discussions of other community organizations.

3.9. Research During the Coronavirus Pandemic

One of the most significant challenges of my dissertation has been the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. In November 2019 I had received IRB approval for my study in Miami, FL. By January the Miami plan was going to fall through, so I submitted an IRB to Detroit, started sending recruitment emails and even observed a MSU-DPSCD professional development. Once I had participants my I started touring and observing schools in March. I met with the

leaders of Volunteer Corps, to get approval to interview members and observe the after-school space. I then had my first interview on March 10th, 2020. All schools in Detroit shutdown two days later. This created a scramble I had to modify all my IRB documents and now figure out how to conduct meaningful research during a global pandemic. My school leaders were juggling their own new realities, which made it even more difficult to get access to the schools. After several email exchanges I could schedule my remaining interviews with school leaders, find participants through Volunteer Corps and schedule meetings with them. Over the next four months I was interviewing, collecting documents, scanning websites, and making phone calls to try to piece together my study during these tumultuous times.

The coronavirus context has affected my study in a multitude of ways. Originally, I thought I would interview and do in-depth observations of important school meetings. This pivoted, and I was now relying on an increased number of interviews and digital documents and artifacts. Overall, it was unsettling to have an event of this magnitude occur during data collection, but modern technology made it possible to connect and collect useful research information

3.10. Data Collection

Polkinghorne (2005) described qualitative data as the "descriptions or accounts that increase and understanding of human experience" (p.141). To adequately represent the complexities of lived experience, Polkinghorne lists interviews, observations, and documents as three essential parts of the construction of experiential accounts. For this study I chose interviews, observations (limited), and documents to examine the school leader decision-making processes. Interviews are the method I leaned on most heavily because they allow the researcher to capture the world as experienced by the participant (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Previous research on school leader decision making and sense-making have included levels of in-depth interviews

and observations. Coburn (2005) employed interviews and observation to understand how school leaders interpreted district policies and enacted those with their faculty. Similarly, Campbell-Evans (1991), tried to capture the influence one's values have on their decision making, and collected data from 8 interviews to inform her analysis. The precedent set by these studies influenced my decision to lean heavily on interviews. Observations and document analysis will be as a cross-reference for the values espoused by the school leaders during their interviews.

3.11. Phenomenological Three-Interview Series

The primary technique used for data collection in this study was in-depth, phenomenological interviewing. Ferrarotti (1981) positioned education as a "social abstraction" that could only be understood through the experiences whose work and lives are built on the abstraction. Given this context, Seidman (2006), argues that interviewing in educational research is both necessary and sufficient in understanding the meaning people involved in education make of their experiences. Seidman (2006) also stated "Interviewing is a tool for understanding social issues, most consistent with people's ability to make meaning with language, affirms the individual without denigrating the possibility of community and collaboration and is deeply satisfying to researching interested in stories" (p. 14).

Given the nature of this project and the aims of the research inquiry I found it essential to employ an in-depth phenomenological technique to understand the participants lived realities in engaging with external partnership organization within an urban educational environment. It also compelled me to utilize this design as it provided the opportunity to engage in Kinloch and San Pedro's notion of dialogic spiral, where I could gain trust and depth through the active, reflective exchange of stories.

To fully engage with the interview process, Seidman proposed a "three-interview series" structure. This structure is intended to add depth and context as according to Seidman, a single

one-shot interview with an unfamiliar interviewee leaves little room to make deep meaning of experience (Seidman, 2006, p. 17). Seidman's interview approach comprises three semi-structured open-ended interviews that focus on participant life history and context, an articulation of a specific experience, and reflection on the meaning that experience holds (Seidman, 2006). For this study, I interviewed the school leaders three times. I chose to only do this with the school leaders, since they are serving as my primary unit of analysis. Here I am positioning the school leader as an anchor for the decision-making, partnership implementation process and the other interviews are supported.

The first interview with school leaders was centered on the leaders' own educational trajectory and initial thoughts around school context and partnerships. In the second interview participants were asked to detail specific strategies utilized in their schools regarding partnership. During the third interview I asked the participants how they were making meaning of the partnership process and educational reform. Due to time and access limitations, I conducted a condensed version of the Seidman method in interviews with members from Volunteer Corps. I interviewed each member one time but incorporated aspects of life history, critical experiences, and meaning making in our 60-minute interview period. This still allowed space to deeply engaged with critical topics in this study.

3.12. Participant Interviews

I conducted the interviews with the school leaders over zoom. The first two interviews were 60 minutes long and the last interview was 45 minutes long. I began the first interview with rapport building with each participant to build a relationship. I shared an in-depth description of my personal story and my positionality with each participant. Prior to the first interview, I thoroughly explained the scope and purpose of the study. Because of the availability of the school leaders, the interviews (in the three-series structure) were scheduled about two weeks

apart, which gave me enough time to transcribe one interview and use it to develop the set of questions for the following interview.

I also conducted the interviews with the Volunteer Corps members over zoom and lasted an hour each. In these interviews I had to do more on the initial rapport building as the connections with the participants was made through other people. The interviews with Volunteer Corps members occurred after the first two interviews with each school leader, which allowed the interview protocol to be based on the school leader's perception of external partnerships and community context. My experience also informed conversations with these participants as a former member of a program like Volunteer Corps. My sharing of my own experiences allowed for a smooth interview process.

Fontana and Frey (2000), note that interviewing as a practice is shaped by unavoidable power dynamics that may include issues of race, gender, class, sexuality and even age. Navigating the complex spaces bound within the interviewer-participant relationship requires reflective and reflexive behaviors on the behalf of the researcher (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010; Oltmann, 2016; Roulston et. al, 2008). As a researcher I recognize occupy a space in interviews contextualized by patriarchy and by the history academe has imposed on minoritized communities, particularly the appropriation of narratives. To humanize the process, I engaged in a form of "dialogic spiral" with my participants, where I during our interview I became vulnerable, and shared stories of my work in schools. This helped the participants feel more open to sharing their stories from a more honest space. I also allowed the school leaders in the study the chance to help create/review the questions for future interviews. This created an iterative and collaborative interviewing procedure. After each I wrote memos to process how the interviews were going, to note how the participants responded to questions and plan how to move forward.

3.13. Observations

Wilson and While (1998) defines social science observations as the "systematic collection of events, behaviors and artifacts" (p.11). Observation occurs within specific bounded setting and is useful for describing, contextualizing, and processing events (Bryman et al., 1988; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Those who intend to do critical research situate the observed subject (people, place, event) withing a broader social and historical context to identify the nature of existing inequality (Patton, 2002). In this study, it was crucial to understand the context the school leaders and Volunteer Corps members were working in. For each school I walked around the school and made several notes about the use of physical space, student and staff interactions, systems, decorations, and historical items. For the observations, I had time to be accompanied by the school leader, which allowed me to observe how the school leader interacted with students, staff, and parents. Sometimes, I was fortunate enough to witness a key problem-solving interaction that provided context for school relationships and the demanding work of the school leader. After each observation, I reread my field journal and wrote memos. I also drove around the neighborhoods of each school, noting the layout of the community, and distance of the school from different institutions. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, I could only visit each school once before closure.

3.14. Documents

Documents are imperative for case study research as they often contain recorded data completely uninfluenced by the researcher (Bowen, 2009). Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (1999), positioned documents as "social facts", generated, proliferated, and used in socially organized ways (p.46). Documents allow the researcher to obtain rich, descriptive material without disrupting context, something important in educational settings. For documents I asked the school leaders to provide any existing calendars, and agendas or anything else they felt was

pertinent to the study topic. Sometimes, I received flyers, local new articles, and pictures that helped provide more context to the topics we discussed during our interviews. From the Volunteer Corps, Programming director, I asked for training schedules, and material used for training to get a better sense of how volunteers were prepared to enter the work with students. I examined and took screenshots of each school's public social media pages, and utilized the DPSCD school website to get demographic information as well of obtain resource maps that detailed each school's access to a variety of partnerships. This data together with interview transcripts and observations notes, were used for descriptive purposes.

3.15. Data Analysis

Data analysis was a solely conducted by me the researcher. To guide the analytic process, I leaned on the writings of Merriam (1998), Seidman (2006), Saldaña (2011), and Galman (2016). Merriam (1998) maintained that the data analysis process is highly intuitive but requires a systematic approach to recording. Merriam offered the construction of categories and themes and the researcher's need to develop a logical system for sorting data into these categories as a strategy for data analysis. Seidman (2006) described the analysis process as separate but ongoing from data collection, and comprises consolidation, categorization, restructuring and interrogation of concepts. During the data analysis process, it was imperative to remain cognizant of my participants' histories and how that shaped their own sensemaking process.

As I stated before, I collected the data waves. First, I interviewed each school leader and worked to transcribe the interview. I wanted to become close to the narratives of each school leader, so I did the first interview transcription by hand. I placed all transcripts in a password protected folder within Atlas-TI. Atlas-TI is a computer assisted qualitative analysis program that allows the user to organize files, code transcripts, and other pivotal research functions. As with any computer assisted qualitative research tool, the program does not conduct analysis for

the user, rather it provides a platform for organization. I loosely analyzed the transcripts to

unearth general themes and come up with some questions. I sent the themes and questions to the

school leaders for review and input. Following this, I incorporated feedback into the protocol and

conducted the second interview with the school leaders and the interviews with all the Volunteer

Corps members. I sent all remaining recorded interviews to an official transcription service. I

uploaded transcripts into Atlas-TI and then read closely, multiple times to prepare for the coding

process.

After several close reads of the transcripts and reviewing my memos, I found that my

meaning-making process was affected by the order that I read each transcript in. As a

phenomenological case study, I tried to analyze data from each school as separate cases to

generate deeper meaning at each site. However, I found I could see unique connections and

findings when analyzing all the interview data chronologically. This knowledge helped informed

my approach when coding

Figure 3: Example of Data Analysis Process Matrix

3.16. Coding

Galman (2013), illustrated coding as collecting information and placing them into different buckets. Galman states, "in coding we use a system to make sense of our data by finding patterns, questions, connections and links to our research questions" (p.33). As a part of this discussion, Galman articulated the difference between "inductive buckets" (bottom-up approach) and "deductive buckets" (top-down approach) of data as the initial basis for coding. As in line with many qualitative studies, I utilized both an inductive and deductive coding approach. Saldaña (2011) articulates a two-cycle general structure for coding, where the first cycle occurs in the initial, descriptive phases of coding and the second cycle is where the bulk of the meaning making in qualitative research is generated. For this study I adopted Saldaña's two cycle approach, leaning on structural, in-vivo, and descriptive coding for my first cycle and then relying on pattern and focused coding for my second cycle. In each cycle I started with deductive coding approach, utilizing my conceptual framework and research questions frame the data and then switched to an inductive approach to discover things that were not originally conceptualized.

3.17. First Cycle Coding Details

For example, if a principal in the study stated that their understanding of the neighborhood their students were from had a direct impact on the partnerships they employed in school, that line in the transcript would be highlighted and assigned a code. Usually, the codes were based on topic, but sometimes the participants words were poignant and used as a code. Once coding was finished completely for a transcript, I categorized the codes based on their similarities. Atlas-TI allows you to assign codes to a category table and creates a visual web that allows you to draw in associations between different codes. Merriam (1998) notes that coding fractures qualitative data allowing the researcher the opportunity to reconnect them meaningfully

through categorization. After this I created a new document that allowed me to link codes to the original quote for ease of reference.

After this I would go through the same document again, this time searching for the things that were not apparent in my conceptual model. During this rereading, I would inductively code and then categorize to find emergent concepts. These categories were then added to the data web and linked to existing concepts. Most of these new codes had emphasis on being a Black school leader, and made commentary on principal preparation programs. These emergent details caused me to return to the literature and identify the research on Black school leader and principal preparation as it directly relates to partnership processes. I combined these codes with the codes developed from the Volunteer Corps interviews, and with the artifacts.

3.18. Black School Leaders and Principal Preparation

When I initially designed this research, I did not include Black school leader identity as a part of sensemaking in the conceptual model. Once I gained participants for the study, and discussions of race emerged during the interviews, I recognized I needed to speak explicitly to the ways Black school leaders in charge of predominantly Black students make sense of their experiences. While my model did account for the history of the students and the community, it did not address the potential depth that could emerge from a Black school leader in this context, as that leader understandings and actions carry a fresh perspective. My model did not consider where and how school leaders were trained to think about external partnerships. This is an important consideration, as it could explain the difference in school leader approaches to the utilization of external partnership programs in their schools.

3.19. Second Cycle Coding

Saldaña (2009) argues that the second cycle of code is where codes are grouped into thematic bunches, conceptualizations, or meta-codes, as a step towards the development of

established themes. Lecompte (2000), outlines a similar process where "stable" codes are merged to create categories. During this cycle, I looked at the coding webs and noted the relationships between different codes and code groups. This allowed me to group codes into thematic groups around similar topics. From there I contextualized the data around different schools, by putting the school leader interviews, Volunteer Corps member interviews, observations, and documents in conversation with one another for each school context. Maxwell (1996) discussed contextualization as a process by which an individual (or case) is fully explored the collection of multiple points of data that provide context for phenomena. Contextualizing allowed me to understand how the school leaders' perceptions led to decision-making, and how those decisions were being enacted within the school space. Contextualization also helped me merge findings and develop as a series of overarching themes. Saldaña (2009) states, "And when the major categories are compared with each other and merged you transcend the reality of your data and progress towards the thematic, conceptual" (p. 11). An analysis of the data led me to three major themes: *The value of information and organization*, *the impact of race and community context on decision-making*, and *the complexity of benefits and costs*. These themes helped me when engaging with the across case comparisons.

3.20. Trustworthiness

Guba (1981) developed a series of constructs in qualitative research to ensure trustworthiness which included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This work was picked up by Shenton (2004) who detailed all the provisions a researcher could make in order to address Guba's constructs. For credibility, Shenton mentions the adoption of well-designed research methods, triangulation, debriefing sessions with superiors, and thick description of a phenomenon, member checks, and examination of previous research among other essential criteria. In addressing transferability, Shenton mentioned the researcher must

provide background data to establish the context of the study and a detailed description to allow for comparison to be made. Shenton described dependability as "an in-depth methodological description to allow the study to be repeated." Confirmability requires triangulation, admission of the investigator's beliefs and assumptions, recognition of shortcomings, and the use of diagrams for audit trails.

In this study I addressed credibility, which is the most critical component in ensuring trustworthiness according to Lincoln and Guba (1985).,I did this by adopting all the provisions mentioned in the sections above. Throughout the process, I was constantly member checking with the school leaders and other participants. I gave the school leaders the transcripts for review to see if I correctly represented their statements. Similarly, after interviews, Volunteer Corps members were sent transcripts to confirm the validity of what I recorded. Collecting multiple sources of data from interviews, observations and documents aided in triangulation efforts. Seidman argues that the three series interview structure helps feature that enhance triangulation and validity. By interviewing a participant three times over a consistent and relatively short period, one can check for the "internal consistency" of what they are saying. This process combined with interviews with other people in the buildings helped corroborate the narrative put forth by the school leaders.

3.21. Rich, Thick, Description

Creswell and Miller (2000), position rich, thick description as another means of ensuring credibility in qualitative research. Denzin (1989), labels thick describe as "deep, dense, detailed accounts". This includes providing vivid, detailed descriptions of phenomenon in ways that evoke imagery or emotional resonance within readers. To get at this while also prioritizing the voices of my participants, I use verbatim block quotes with minimal imposed interpretation. This

practice accomplished two things; 1) it allowed for the voices and experiences of my participants to guide the study, and it helped alleviate me be cognizant of researcher bias.

3.22. Positionality

The discussion of positionality in research is important because it calls on the researcher to reflect on themselves and their relationship to the participants. Bourke (2014) argued that identities and perceptions of both the researchers and the participants can affect the research process. This means the researcher must recognize their own biases and assumptions coming into the work and reflect on these things to examine how it may intersect with the process which also ties into confirmability. I was a student in an urban predominantly Black school, and a volunteer with an organization that worked closely with students. These perspectives guided how I designed and interpreted this research. As stated in chapter one, my organization's work in our school was directly linked to the decisions of the school leader, and a result of lack of access to adequate resources. I am aware, however, that the position I currently occupy, as university researcher, carries with it a history that makes it important to navigate research spaces thoughtfully. For some communities, research is associated with experimentation and the pilfering of community spaces and ideas for profit. This reality led me to carefully consider who was included in my study, and how to amplify the voices of the participants. I also leaned heavily on my own experience as a volunteer in an urban school environment but recognize the difference in the Miami context when compared to Detroit.

3.23. Summary

This qualitative research focused on school leaders within a financially constrained, predominantly Black school environment, and their sensemaking around the use of external partnerships. The qualitati.e approach allowed me to understand how their community based and racial sensemaking informed decision-making processes. The design also allowed for

contextualization by anchoring the study around schools and using a variety of data sources at each school to produce a research narrative. This process led to the generation of three themes that detail the thoughts, motivations, and behaviors of school leaders who work in urban environments and rely on support from external partnerships.

CHAPTER 4: PARTICPANTS & CONTEXT

4.1 Introducing the Participants

In Chapter 3, I briefly discussed the sampling procedure used in this study. This was an intentional choice as I felt it was necessary to devote significant space to introducing the participants, and the context they work in. As such, this chapter will introduce the study participants, and root each participant within the context of their school and community. I believe this is necessary to properly situate the findings and the discussion as they are intimately linked to identity and context. Below is a list of the participants that contains their pseudonym, position, racial background, experience in K-12 education and their highest degree obtained.

Table 1: Study Participants

Pseudonym	Position	Experience Working in Education	Education	Hometown	Self-Identified Race
Dr. Ellis	Principal, Hope Elementary-Middle School	5th year as Principal 15 years total	EdD. Educational Administration	Detroit	Black
Dr. Childs	Principal, Little Elementary-Middle School	4th year as Principal 20 years total	EdD. Educational Administration	Detroit	Black
Mr. Dent	Principal, Motown Elementary-Middle School	10th year as Principal, 15 years total	Masters School Administration	Detroit	Black
Sean	Programming Director – Volunteer Corps	6 Years at Volunteer Corps	N/A	Minneapolis	White
Roger	Team Manager – Volunteer Corps – Little	1 Year at Volunteer Corps	Master of Public Policy	Ohio	White
Michelle	Team Manager– Volunteer Corps Motown	1 Year at Volunteer Corps –	Master of Elementary Education	Detroit	Black
Robyn	Team Manager– Volunteer Corps Hope	8 Years at Volunteer Corps	Master of Social Work	Detroit	Black

4.2. Cases and Major Characters

As humanizing the project, I decided it would appropriate to spend some time doing an in-depth description of the participants and the various cases represented in this study. Though this is a study on school leaders, and the leaders in this study are all Black, I felt it was important to share the unique factors of everyone's stories to avoid essentializing a singular Black school leader experience. Since the research was approved through the district IRB office and needed additional approval from Volunteer Corps and the findings will probably be reported to the district, each school leader asked for anonymity to allow for open conversation. I assigned each leader a pseudonym to protect their own identity. I assigned each Volunteer Corps member and each school a pseudonym to limit the likelihood of identification. While I will describe schools in depth, I refrained from providing any details that may allow for direct identification. The contexts described here were woven through the firsthand accounts of the school leaders, Volunteer Corps members, and documents to try to present a vivid description of each case. I introduce each case with a short narrative detailing my first time being in the building. It is also important to note that the focus of the project is primarily the relationship between the schools and Volunteer Corps. However, throughout our conversations, the school leaders offered information on other partnerships as well.

4.3. Case 1: Hope Elementary/Middle – Dr. Ellis – Robyn

I felt a well of excitement as I approached the neighborhood that frigid spring morning. Equipped with my notebooks and recorder, I was prepared to have my first interview for my dissertation. I parked near the school and took a walk around the neighborhood. The fresh white snow from the previous night loudly crunched under my boots. I noticed that even though it was around the time for the school to open there were not a lot of students walking to school. The

houses surrounding the school were large, diverse in shape and building, and spaced neatly in rows.

As I approached the school, I noticed two buildings separated by a large athletic field. I could tell one building was empty as it was missing windows and had other signs of wear. Cars surrounded the second building with people entering and exiting, a sure sign that this was the school building.

As I entered the building, I could not help but notice the architecture. The hallways were massive in width and tall with very classical touches. It looked like I was in a museum. One the walls there were various fixtures, like ancient Greek molds of gargoyles and statuesque figures. At the main entrance there was a metal detector and a security guard. The guard seemed skeptical at first bit he opened up once I shared why I was in the building. "Oh, you are here to see Dr. Ellis, she's a special and busy lady, she gave me a shot and hired me when I was in a bad place, I owe a lot to her" her then called her on the walkie talkie and pointed me towards the office. After small talk with her staff, I sat and waited. She walked in, asked if I was Alounso and offered to show me around the school. Before she could leave the office though there was a problem that arose. Some eighth graders were supposed to go on a field trip, but the bus company was claiming they never received the check. In a flash she called the company, whipped out a logbook, and read off the details of the check provided by the district. The problem was solved in less than three minutes. Just as efficiently as that scenario ended, so began our tour of the building. As we walked through the halls, she was constantly stopped for hugs and high fives. In each encounter she directly named and referred to some shared experience or some past problem. She took me through the entire building, and even though the building was old, there was a lot of care put into the posters and flyers around the building. For instance, one hallway was all about Black girl hair, and Black girl magic.

85

When we finally got to her office, we sat to begin the interview, but she was called for another incident. Once again, her logbook made an appearance, and within seconds the information was provided, and the problem solved. "Sorry about that, should we begin?" she asked. With her continued demonstrations of efficiency, I felt obligated to stick to a tight schedule.

Hope elementary/middle school (pseudonym) was founded in the 1920's as one of the primary schools that served the greater Detroit area. As with many schools in Detroit, the history of segregation, white flight and depopulation had devastating effects on the enrollment level, funding and consequently proficiency scores. This history put the school on many state lists as a candidate for closure. In 2017, after 90 years of serving as a site for education and community engagement for its neighborhood, the building was closed. As the district was struggling with widespread enrollment issues, district leaders combined schools to save costs in the long run. Hope was moved int the nearby "Piston" high school, one of the oldest buildings in the state, which was also struggling with enrollment numbers. In the new configuration Hope elementary/middle occupies the first, second and half of the third floor of the six-story building and Piston high occupies the rest. In response to the merger and closure of the old Hope school building, Detroit activists started a crowdfunding effort with the goal of converting the building into something that could be used for the community. This resulted in the founding of a community center, that houses a gym and is open to businesses if they pledge to support Hope.

Hope elementary/middle school currently has 498 students enrolled. Out of that number, 97 percent of the students are Black, and they consider 87 percent of the students "low-income". The neighborhood surrounding Hope is mostly made up of older families who have lived in the area for a while, and many of the students who attend Hope are not from the actual neighborhood. The students are mostly bused in from other parts of the greater Detroit area.

86

Dr. Ellis is the principal of Hope elementary/middle school. She was originally born and raised in Detroit and attended DPS for all her schooling. After graduating, she got a got a bachelor's degree in special education. She started her career in education as a special education teacher, a role she enjoyed for 10 years. One of her mentors, a lead teacher at her school, "coerced" (her words) her into going back to school (something she did not want to do) and getting various leadership certificate. Upon the completion of her certification, they promoted her to lead teacher for the special education division. One year, the school's assistant principal, who was recently promoted to become the principal, feel ill and could no longer fulfill her role. The district could not hire an assistant principal or principal during that transition period, and as a result Dr. Ellis was tapped to be an interim assistant principal while also holding on to her status as a lead teacher. She jokes "that period of my life made me a list person" as maintaining those dual roles was a challenging endeavor. She eventually got her graduate degrees and official promoted to assistant principal a role she held for two years before eventually being promoted to principal of the school. She is now entering her fifth year of being a school principal.

Dr. Ellis is described as "not like other principals" and "always on the front lines and in the hallways". In every interaction with office staff, teachers, and students you could see warmth and ease. She described herself as a servant leader and stated that everything she does is to "serve the needs of her students, serve the needs of her teachers because they are the ones standing in front of the students all day and serve the needs of her parents and families". Her commitment to serving the students is captured in this quote: "It's the kids, seeing their faces. Seeing them get it or understand or just enjoy school. I don't think I would ever wanna do anything in education outside of being connected, directly connected to the kids because they bring me joy. I look forward to coming to work to see their faces, truly. And to interact with

them." During our first conversation she was most excited to see the student growth on the state proficiency text, but she was uncertain of how the year would turn out due to Covid-19.

Robyn is the team manager from Volunteer Corps that was assigned to Hope elementary/middle. Robyn was born and raised in Detroit and attended Detroit public schools. Following high school, she moved to Ohio for college and completed a bachelor's degree program in social work. During her senior year she expressed experiencing all too familiar final year spiral of figuring out what to do next. Her college sponsored a "life after graduation" fair and it was there she met a recruiter from Volunteer Corps. The recruiter sold her on the idea that she would not only get experience working in schools but also possibly move back to Detroit and do great work in the community. The marriage of these two things presented a compelling prospect for Robyn and she joined the organization. After a year of service, she got her master's degree but continued working for Volunteer Corps, which she has now done for eight years. In her capacity as a team manager, she is responsible for the team of volunteers that works at Hope elementary/middle. In this role she serves as a liaison for the organization stationed full time at the school. She cites the experience of working in the Detroit public schools, seeing the disparities for youth of color, and seeing the impact passionate youth can have in influencing change as the main lever for her continued work in non-profits, something she is seeing as a lifelong commitment.

4.4. Case 2: Motown Elementary/Middle – Mr. Dent – Michelle

The snow and wind howled as I made my way to the school. I had parked around the corner to walk and get a better sense of the neighborhood, but between the blankets of snow and solid ice on the ground and the ice-cold wind seeping through my ill-advised winter wardrobe choices, I was regretting my decision a little bit. The school was on a major street that extended towards the bustling city. On either side of the street there were colorful buildings, many cars

and houses with big snow-covered yards. I noted three different churches and a Montessori school that all occupied the same street. The front of the school itself was lined with cars with parents seeing their children off for the day. The giant brick building was surrounded by open space and trees, an area that I imagine would have been filled with playing kids on any other day. Instead, the kids were all huddled near the entrance of the building once you walked in.

When I checked in with the security, it directed me towards the main office which was further from the main entrance. This gave me the opportunity to walk the halls and the layout of the school. The green walls were strewn with old photographs of the students and teachers of the past. The kids were filing themselves into the halls in an orderly fashion greeting teacher as they went along, occasionally, there was horseplay, but it was always quickly interrupted by some adult in the building. When I got to the office, I spoke to one clerk who instructed me to wait for Mr. Dent. As I was waiting, a parent came into the office. He was trying to enroll his child, who had recently moved in with him. However, he did not have the paperwork and it was near the deadline for enrollment submission. The clerk explained this to him, but he was not pleased with the explanation. He got increasingly angry and began speaking with elevated voice and urgency, which alarmed the three clerks working in the office. When that happened, a door opened and out came Mr. Dent "My brother, how can I help you today" he announced stepping out of his office and approaching the front counter. I watched as Mr. Dent diffused the situation, explaining why the paperwork was necessary, why it was not helpful to direct anger at his office staff and presenting a set of options. The parent, who was calm now, apologized to the clerks, thanked Mr. Dent, and left to get the paperwork. Mr. Dent turned to me and said, "My brother, you look familiar? Are you the one that's doing that study with State", I replied "Yes sir that's me"? Mr. Dent laughed and said, "come to my office! You ready to interview right, now right?" "Well, no, this meeting is just to see if you were interested to be interviewed, and for you to sign the

89

consent form" I said feeling awkward about not being prepared start right away. "Shoot, I am ready to start right now if you need it brother" He exclaimed as we walked to his office.

The original site of Motown elementary/middle was founded in 1922 as an eight-room schoolhouse within a township on the outskirts of Detroit. In 1924 that township was annexed into Detroit and the school officially became a part of the Detroit Public schools' system. Over the next several decades the school expanded to accommodate a larger student population reaching a capacity of 1600 total students in the late 1930s. However, that number declined in the subsequent decades, with enrollment falling under 1000 in the 60s and steady declines after that. In 2010, the original school site was closed and Motown Elementary was combined with the Tiger high school on the "west-side" of Detroit. Eventually, Tiger high was officially shut down by the city and the building came to be known as just Motown elementary/middle. Motown elementary/middle currently serves about 700 students and is 99 percent Black and considered 91 percent low-income. The school has a long history in the community, and many of the students who are attending the school had parents who attended the school during their own education. The parents from the community are involved with many aspects of the school.

Mr. Dent is the principal at Motown elementary/middle. He was born in Detroit and enlisted in the United States military following his K-12 education. Following his years of service, he moved back to Detroit with his family. It was the 90s and he and his wife were deciding where they were going to send their two young children. According to him, there was a lot of messaging around the failings of public schools to promote the new charters schools being set up around the city. As an involved member of his home community, he heard and saw a lot of the negative things with the education system, and he wanted to be part of the solution. He changed careers and teaches and eventually moves up the ladder to become a school leader. He

states, "what led me to become a school leader it was a lot of my experience in the marine corps, just being taught when you see a need to don't complain, fix it, and be part of the solution".

Mr. Dent described himself as being driven by his core belief of servant leadership and responsive leader. In explaining this he says that a leader must be a servant to all, meaning hearing the needs of others and responding to those needs in a timely fashion. For him, not leading in this way can lead to disenfranchisement, and he never wants to be "just another person who doesn't listen to the people's needs". His biggest priority and the thing that brings him joy in his role as a school leader is the ability to give back to students and to see them succeed in their later years. "What brings me joys is Just seeing people when they're older and seeing what they're out there doing, seeing that they're productive, seeing that they remembered literally almost everything you told them even though you struggle yourself to really, truly remember who they were as an individual because you've had so many."

Michelle is the team manager from Volunteer Corps that was assigned to Motown elementary/middle. Michelle was born and raised in Detroit and attended Detroit public schools. Following high school, she went to college and completed a degree in elementary education. Upon graduation she was hired by Chicago public schools where she taught for two years. Though she enjoyed teaching, she wanted to be closer to home, so she applied to teach in DPSCD. While teaching she was recruited by Volunteer Corps and offered a position as a team manager. In her role she leans on her experiences as a teacher to help guide her volunteers in their interactions with students, with partner teachers, and with administration. She loves the energy and creative her volunteers bring to the table but often must help shepherd them towards things that are feasible, given her understanding of the inner workings of schools. Michelle is proud of the work she does with Volunteer Corps but acknowledges that true change and reform can't only come from supporting schools, but by truly supporting communities as well.

4.5. Case 3 Little Elementary/Middle – Dr. Childs – Roger

Enormous, beautiful, old houses surrounded the blocks of this school. Some of these houses had signs of life; I noticed a little blue doghouse in the yard of one, a tent in the yard of the other, and the tools of constant gardening covered in snow. Other houses were abandoned; windows missing, boards loose. It was not cold enough for the snow to stick that day, which allowed me to clearly see the streets surrounding the school, which were all cracked. Oddly, the streets that were perpendicular to the ones surrounding the school did not have the same damage, in fact sometimes they were recently paved. As I made my way around the building, I noticed a large open field, with play structures, a vast sand pit, beautiful vibrant trees, and a trail that winded through the trees. The field was at least five times the size of the school. There was an old couple making their way on the trail stopping occasionally to talk or breathe or take in the scenery. I wanted to walk the trail, I wanted to ask them questions, but I did not out of fear of interrupting their morning idyll.

Once inside the school I saw familiar scenes, students interacting with each other, playing games, huddled in groups talking or joking with one another. Some people were still clustered around the front. As I checked in and asked for the principal the security told me "I don't actually know where she is, you are gonna have to catch her because I'm sure she is zipping around somewhere". I figured the best place to start was the office, so I asked where that was and headed in that direction. On the way to the office, I noted how the building was older but with a blend of modern structures, and newly refurbished fixtures throughout. I did not make it to the office before feeling a miniature gust blow by me. I recognized the tall blur that darted by me from a Professional development session I attended a month prior. Doubling back, I followed the trail which led back to the front of the building to witness her in her element. Dr. Childs was there with the kids, dancing and singing a song that was really the words "Welcome" repeatedly.

The students could not help but smile as greeted them, as if there was a current hitting them and energizing them as they entered the building. Once that was done, I approached, and she said, "Hey there Doc!" (something she insisted on calling me as a way of vocalizing the future). "I'll be with you in just a minute, I just gotta make sure these students are starting their days right". "No problem Dr. Childs" I replied, glad that I had coffee that morning to match the energy she brought.

The history of Little elementary/middle school is like that of many of the schools in Detroit. Little was built in 1921 on the "westside" of Detroit to meet the demands of a booming population and economy. Designed as a "neighborhood school" Little was intentionally built in the middle of the neighborhood for ease of access to the families that surrounded it. Little was attached to a community park to provide a safe space for students and for community gatherings as well, further signaling the essential role this school and the park adjacent to it served. They built the school to hold well over 1000 students and for decades served as a beacon for the community. The decline in population and enrollment across the city invariably affected this school and by extension the neighborhood. Entering the 2000s and 2010s enrollment levels hit the hundreds, and they placed the school on various watches and closure list. However, a group of older people from the neighborhood got involved. They raised money and applied for grants to revitalize the park connected to the school. They also created a community organization to support the school and the families that attend it. This support was born out of both sentiments, as many of the people grew up in the community, and practicality as school closures bring down property values, increase crime, and further displace families. Little elementary/middle currently serves 689 students' majority of whom are Black and considered low income or free and reduced lunch status. The school never had to merge and has existed mostly in its original form since its founding.

Dr. Childs was born in Detroit, grew up of the "Eastside" and attended Detroit Public Schools for her K-12 Schooling. Her first college degree was in sport journalism, and she had experience covering a variety of big events. Her 26-year journey in education started when, while she was still working in journalism, she became a substitute teacher. She wanted to sub as a way of giving back and connecting to kids who grew up in neighborhoods like her own. After subbing for a while, she worked her way up and become a full-time teacher. She served as a counselor, an academic dean, a grants coordinator and then eventually an assistant principal all around the city and the neighborhoods surrounding the city. Eventually she worked on obtaining her doctorate and was promoted to principal for one school they stationed her at. Her commitment to staying in this work is driven by a connection to the students and a connection to the city.

Dr. Childs initially introduced herself as the "humble leader of Little elementary". Others describe her and herself, as energetic (in her words a little crazy), people focused, strikingly caring and down to earth. She says that her upbringing keeps here grounded and real with people and that she never tries to elevate herself above others. To her the success of the school comes from her prioritizing God, the students, and the families first in all her decision-making processes. She also prioritizes customer service for families, which is motivated by her own upbringing with schooling. She refers to herself as both a transformational and 21st century leader, as she hopes to inspire others and meet people where they are at. She expressed joy at seeing students succeed at life, stating "When I see students who leave Little, who are going to high school, who are doing great things... Now just like I said, this is only my third year, I'll be going to my fourth year, just to see the pride that they've taken in our building, the pride that they're taking in themselves, the dedication and hard work".

Roger, the team manager at Little elementary/middle originally grew up in a suburban community in Indiana. He has a master's in public policy and has worked in non-profits across the nation in a variety of capacities. His travels made him aware of the various disparities that exist across suburban and urban communities, which compelled him to apply for work with Volunteer Corps and work in metro Detroit. He has been working for Volunteer Corps for a year and prioritizes learning about history and community with his volunteers. This approach is driven by his own self-education around disparities in school systems and his positionality as a white male working in predominantly Black spaces. Before coming to Detroit, he did research on the property tax system and the legislation that created the educational environment. He constantly tries to remind his team of this history as a means of continual motivation.

4.6. Context Across Cases: Volunteer Corps Program Manager Sean

To provide more framing for the discussion around Volunteer Corps and their history in the schools, I sat down and spoke with Sean, the program manager for the organization. The program manager oversees overseeing the partnership between the schools, the organization, and the district. Sean could provide a meaningful commentary on the organization and the way they have incorporated it into the district. Volunteer Corps first arrived in Detroit in 1999. It was general service organization for the city in the early days and shifted to an explicit education focus in 2008. After the district restructure into the DPSCD, it included the organization as part of the partnership agreement plan, which changed some things in the funding and service model. Sean's input was included to provide more context for the presented findings.

4.7. Chapter 4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an introduction for each participant, bounded within their schools and communities. I thought it was necessary to dedicate a chapter to these individuals to narratively honor their contributions to this work. I also found it important to

provide a space to contextualize observations and utilize them to paint a cohesive picture of the

neighborhoods, the schools, and the people who occupy these spaces. As this project attempts to

connect history and identity it was important include these vignettes as a way of centering those

concepts, which will be explored in greater detail in the subsequent chapters. The following

chapter will be used to present the findings. These findings center the voices and experiences of

the participants. As such, for me it was important to provide context prior to engaging with the

findings and analysis of those findings.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1. Findings Introduction

So far, I have outlined the problem, relevant literature, and the methods and methodology used in this study of urban school leaders and their use of external partnerships. Throughout this study, my participants shared vivid accounts of the experiences that shaped their decisions and interactions with external partners. I began this study by seeking to answer the following research questions: 1)How do school leaders successfully partner with and implement resources from external partnership organizations? 2)   What social factors (race, class, community content,) influence school leaders decision-making when collaborating with external partnership organizations?3) What are the school leaders' perceived costs and benefits of partnering with external organizations? What follows is a rich narrative that illustrates the effect perceptions have on leader decision-making, and the processes that maintain successful partnerships. Further, there will be an analysis of the three major themes that guided the behaviors across the three school contexts.

The three prominent themes and in this study include:

1) The value of information and organization.

2) The impact of race and community context on decision-making.

3) The complexity of benefits and costs.

Together I lean on these themes to construct a story that highlights the things urban school leaders must negotiate when make external partnership decisions in a resource constrained environment. Most times interview responses addressed multiple themes and were categorized in

the theme that most logically fit. The data represented in the study includes school leader interviews, Volunteer Corp interviews, demographic data for the school and district level demographic data. Though there are three major themes, there are several sub-themes that represent more specific meaning.

5.2. Overview of Themes and Sub-themes

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the data analysis adopted a combined deductive-inductive approach, where the first wave of coding was informed by my research questions and conceptual model. The findings were mostly aligned with the intent of the research questions, with room for more concepts to emerge as discussions went on.

The first research question explored how school leaders were successfully partnering with external partnership organizations. Throughout the discussions school leaders, and other participants spoke to the various ways having information informed their decisions. This was to say that, knowing about an organization, understanding who led the organizations, and how the organization could contribute to the school space, were factors that influence their comfort with the organization. Also, participants described it was not enough to just have access to the external partnership, but that there needed to be a deliberate strategic organization of resources from the partnership to yield the best results. Taken together, this concept of information and organization helped form the first theme, the *value of information and organization*.

Theme two, *the impact of race and community context on decision-making*, emerged from the discussions on race, class, and community context prompted by the second research question. In our initial conversations, participants would speak about concepts and the community in a way that communicated understandings of race and racism without directly naming either construct. During the last conversations, I was more explicit in naming race as a construct which prompted deeper conversations about community and positionality as it relates

to working with and serving Black students. This also prompted conversations about cultural responsiveness and the nature of working to improve communities.

The third theme, *the complexity of costs and benefits*, seems straightforward at first, as it is directly related to the research on school leaders, perceived costs, and benefits. As one would expect these discussions were direct and referenced, material goods, monetary benefits, and access to programs as positive benefits to partnership work but there was also a robust discussion on the value of additional human capital, which revealed tensions within the district regarding funding and staffing. The cost discussion also touched on some expected findings like time-use and space, but also included things like the need to engage in racial training for volunteers.

The development and emergence of a theme were not enough. For example, with theme one. information and organization were expressed in the discussions through a variety of means. To illustrate this point, Dr. Childs, the principal of Little Elementary, spoke to the information she received from the district when she first started working with Volunteer Corps, and how that influenced her perception of the organization (Volunteer Corps is good for the district), which lead to her giving them more freedom and trust to operate in the building. This showed that each theme is operationalized through the combination of a series of Sub-themes. For theme one, the *value of organization and information* is expressed across five different sub-themes. Subsequently, theme two is expressed across five sub-themes, and theme three, which is conceptually larger than the previous two, is expressed across nine sub-themes. The rest of this chapter will take time to introduce and explain the findings as expressed through the themes and sub-themes. The following table helps illustrate the relationship between the themes and the sub-themes.

Table 2: Relationship Between Research Question, Theme, and Sub-themes

Research Question	Related Theme	Sub-theme relationships
How do school leaders successfully partner with and implement resources from external partnership organizations?	The value of information and organization.	Access to Information ⬇ Formal/Informal Information Acquisition ⬇ Perception ⬇ Alignment with Mission and Vision ⬇ Implementation in Practice
What social factors (race, class, community content,) influence school leaders' decision-making when collaborating with external partnership organizations?	The impact of race and community context on decision-making.	Considering Communities and Families ✚ Black School Leader Identity ⬇ Fostering Cultural Responsiveness ✚ Adopting "Anti-racist" Orientation ✚ Managing White saviorism/Pity
What are the school leaders' perceived costs and benefits of partnering with external organizations?	The complexities of benefits and costs.	Responsive Material Goods ✚ Human Capital as an Abstract Resource ✚ Benefits to Support Goals ✚ Access to Money/Saving Money ✚ Connection as an Abstract Resource — Cost of Time ✚ Needing Space ✚ Sustainability ✚ Racial Cost of Volunteerism

5.3. The Value of Information and Organization

Before the beginning of the formal research with participants, I discussed the nature of

school-external partner relationships with Sean, the program manager for Volunteer Corps.

When asked about the factors that constitute a successful partnership relationship, he replied:

"The single greatest determinant of Volunteer Corps success at the school is the relationship with

the school leader". This idea informed the ways I engaged in discussions about successful partnerships with my study participants. Consistently, the school leaders in the study articulated the idea, that the more they knew about an external partnership organization, the more likely they were to figure out if the organization's goals aligned with their own and incorporate resources from that organization into their school. Thus, this entire exchange is predicated on the quality of information available, and the ease of organizing resources for implementation within the school. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, the actual process of and value of information and organization can be explained across several sub-themes, all of which work in concert to guide the school leader's decision-making process. The following sections cover each of these sub-themes in detail.

Sub-theme One: Access to Information

The first sub-theme is *Access to Information*, which speaks to the school leaders' process of receiving information before the establishment of an external partnership relationship. This theme emerged from the data when engaging participants in conversations about successful partnerships. Across the board, participants referenced getting a "good start" at the beginning of the partnership, which often included formal meetings, training, and other like structures. School leaders in the study often spoke favorably of organizations where there was an open exchange of information from the outset. This perspective is consistent with the literature on sensemaking, which suggests that the first part of the sensemaking process is the gathering of information. For the Volunteer Corps, the organization mediated this information acquisition process itself. For other external partners, school leaders collected information from a variety of sources and often relied on informal contacts. As this study primarily focuses on the Volunteer Corps relationship, I will start with how the school leaders received information on that organization, and then move into a discussion of how other organizations were handled. One thing that was emphasized in the

Volunteer Corps relationship was a significant onboarding process. Mr. Dent, who was new in working with Volunteer Corps, speaks to this by describing his initial introduction to the program. He states, "Yeah. So, upon getting hired that was definitely part of the information that was given to me, that they would be there in the in the building. I was given how many (volunteers) and I was given a direct point of contact. So, basically for me, everything was already set up." What this illustrates is that for school leaders who are experiencing Volunteer Corps for the first time, much of the groundwork is done by existing district relationships. There is also significant work by the organization. Sean, the Volunteer Corps program manager, was pivotal in setting the context for the information-sharing process between the organization and the schools. In speaking of the onboarding, he states:

> So, over this past summer, we were able to hold what we called a Principal Summit, but it really amounted to a three or four-hour training where district officials along with Volunteer Corps leadership stood up in front of the partner principals and the managers that were partnered with those principals, and we're able to say, "Here are the expectations for the year. What do you all need in terms of resources and planning to make that happen? What potential challenges do you anticipate? How might we mitigate some of those challenges

This initial meeting was important as it helped set the tone for the academic year. With Volunteer Corps, important information on the organization, volunteers and how they align with mission and vision were communicated at the principal summit. Dr. Childs reaffirms this by stating "So it at the beginning of the year just meeting with the impact manager, meeting with the team leader and just to describe what our relationship and collaboration would be". This process demonstrates the communicative relationship between the school leader and the leaders of the organization. Volunteer Corps can present what they offer to the schools, and the school leader

can provide input on the relationship. Sometimes, school leaders take the onboarding a step further by introducing the organization to their staff early in the year following the principal summit.

Expanding on this initial meeting Dr. Ellis added:

"And so, they have a session before school even starts to introduce our incoming Volunteers that we'll be working with our school and just kind of like a Volunteer Corps rollout. Mmm. Well, we go over, you know, the expectations of Volunteer Corps and what their responsibilities and what their role will be. Mmm. So then after I had my introduction to Volunteer Corps, I bring them to the staff before school starts. So that they can have that same introduction, introduce them to the Volunteers and the manager."

In this example, Dr. Ellis attended the initial meeting and then decided it was necessary to introduce the volunteers to her school staff to well integrating the volunteers into the daily school operations. Across all three schools the leaders engaged in some form of beginning of the year meeting, as a starting point for the school- organization partnership.

The team managers from Volunteer Corps played a pivotal role in the initial information sharing process, as they serve as the crucial point of contact for each school. This means the successful implementation of this specific program relies not only on the school leader but includes contributions from the manager as well. In speaking to this relationship, the team managers offered useful insights for their understanding of the relationship. Robyn, the team manager at Hope elementary spoke at length about the relationship stating: "The second step is always having a clear and open communication. So, the beauty in Dr. Ellis is that she... Because she understands what we do and she finds it valuable, she always makes time for me, she always makes time for a meeting. If I need to ask her something, she makes it happen. But like I said, a lot of that comes from her

understanding of our role and her knowing that it's valuable. At the beginning of the year, like I said, I have them sit down, the principal sit down with the team and give their vision, share their vision And so, I think what makes the partnership strong, is us at Volunteer Corps respecting that vision, figuring out how we can insert ourselves."

The manager at the other school reiterated similar sentiments. Essentially, the school leader's openness and understanding of the roles of the organization helped guide successful partnering. The team manager also emphasizes the importance of connecting to the school leaders' vision as a necessary precursor for a successful year which will be expanded on later in this section. This open, communicative flow of information is because of the inherent structure of the Volunteer Corps organization, as having onsite managers tied to each building allows for quicker channels of communication. The process is more complicated for partnerships with other external organizations.

When discussing information as it relates to other external partners, the school leaders spoke to the variety of ways they learned about various organizations. As stated earlier in this dissertation, the DPSCD recently underwent a significant transfiguration. As a part of that new construction, advocates pushed for including a community partnership plan, as a buffer for closing schools. As a part of that plan, the district created a new office, the family and community engagement department that helps facilitate some partnerships between schools and community organizations. In some other instances, school leaders "inherit" the information from previous administration as Dr. Childs notes here:

> "Okay, so the community center, there are, they're led by _____ and _____ and they actually live across the street. They grew up in this neighborhood and they went to Little. When I first got here, the principal before me gave me their information, so before they even called me, I called them, and I think it cracked them up. Because I'm just, I don't

have the wait on you. Imma reach out to you. So, I asked them to come up and we talked

about just different programs that they wanted to support in the school, their stake at

Little and the community. Just a lot of things that they do in the neighborhood. And this

was my first year here."

Little is benefitting from existing work in the community and a relationship that was cultivated

by previous administrations. It is also important to stress Dr. Childs' important role in being the

first to reach out and capitalize on the existing relationship. If she had not, it could have affected

the eventual partnership between the organization and the school. Community partners were not

the only sources of information for partnerships, as sometimes that information came from

parents, volunteers, and even peers. What is important that school leaders' understanding of an

organization and what it might contribute was an important first step in the meaning-making and

implementation process.

Sub-theme Two: Formal and Informal Information Acquisition

The second sub-theme, *Formal and Informal Information Acquisition*, emerged as an extension

of the *Access to Information* sub-theme. While designing the project and the first interview

protocol I operated with the assumption that the school leaders all had some shared access to

information on organizations, and that their training covered pertinent details related to external

partnerships. After the first interview I realized that each principal had varying experiences with

creating partnerships with external organizations, vetting members from those organizations, and

deploying resources from those organizations. I followed this thread in the second and third

interviews to get a better understanding of the formal and informal structures that contributed to

their understanding of organizations, and the potential for work in their schools.

In speaking with each school leader about their training to become principals, I learned,

in several ways, that leadership preparation had not fully engaged with the idea of external

partnerships. Particularly, programs that were preparing each person for a career in Detroit, did very little to introduce them to the concept through a Detroit specific lens. In the following quote, Dr. Ellis, explains that there was a course on community partnerships during her time in school. "So I think there was a course community... School Community I think is a required course. But just like all of the college courses, they give you the technical terms and the technical administrative rules and school law". She laments that the class does not have a hand-on component and is too technical. Continuing she states:

> "Yeah. A classroom can't quite prepare you for what you actually get into. It gives you the outline of it, but then when you're in it, you have to put it together yourself through experience. No, I don't think that the college level does prepare you. They tell you need community resources. They tell you need the Parent Teacher Association. They tell you what you need, however, they don't tell you how to go about to make sure you get that."

Her coursework emphasized the importance of making partnerships without detailing the specifics of how to approach that process. To expound on this point Dr. Ellis added "I do know it was never a visit to any schools to see how they partnered with different resources, or it was no hands-on type of experience. Maybe a paper on what kind of resources you might need for school but hands-on experience was not there." Mr. Dent, echoes a similar sentiment when discussing his own experience with principal preparation. He noted:

> "Yeah, that could've. When you reminisce... I don't remember having a specific class that talked about that. And maybe... Yeah, I do. Actually, I do, I remember. But it was more on the upper level of understanding how partnerships can help collectively a district and those type of things. So I do think a little bit more conversation can be held around it. It would be helpful primarily in the sense because the lift is so heavy and one trying to do it individually by him or herself can be problematic. And not knowing that there's other

resources that can assist and that other resources do have the same agendas that you have

to help, I think that would greatly help folk if they understood and they knew that that

was out there."

Again there is an emphasis on the partnerships as a theoretical concept and not enough practical

discussions of partnership work. Dr. Childs alludes to the same tension expressed by both Dr.

Ellis, and Mr. Dent with the following quote: "I think what they need to do is, and none of the

classes did that and I'm in the school forever. Take you on a trip. Take you on a trip to some of

these school districts. One day... And I know that because most of our classes are in the evening,

I don't think that we were exposed to real life situations or we're able to share a real life

situations, like what I'm trying to do right now." In this quote Dr. Childs highlights one tension

of trying to authentically genreate experiences. Most times the people who are in principal

preparation courses work in schools, and as a result most of their classes occur after school,

which may make it difficult to get hands-on experience with things occurring within the school

space.

Over conversation, the school leaders each also discussed the informal ways they learned

about partnerships. Whether it be district-run professional development sessions, or small

collaborative groups school leaders communicate with one another to share experiences and best

practices. Dr. Childs speaks to the ways some of her principal support groups share information

on the use of partnerships. She mentions: "It's for example in DPSCD its 105 principles and I

may know lot of people, but I have a close knit group. But when I first became a principal of

DPSCD we talk, so I've got with like 10 or 15 people and ask them what partnerships are you

have and who do you have in your building?". For her this came out a need to find other

principals who she could learn from as a new principal. Dr. Childs also mentioned a special

support group of principals that also helps with partnerships.

"We have a, what is called a principal sisters group. And what we do is we make sure that We make sure that like we have major things that's due today, so we make sure that we're all, you know supporting each other because again, it's so much. So because of that. My girlfriend, who was the principal at 7th Street. Her name is Christa. So she told me about the female mentor group, Emerging Opals, because I heard of it, but I didn't know who the person was that ran it. And I managed to get in touch with that person."

Principals in the Detroit school district have various informal support groups where they can communicate with one another and receive mentorship. This type of support is pivotal with partnerships since they are rarely covered in the course work.

Mr. Dent similarly spoke of the ways he learned of partnerships through informal conversation stating:

"It just you know, it, you know, you have those collegial conversations. You do actually learn about other partnerships. I mean, I've learned about a couple of myself just from a casual conversations and even professional conversations with colleagues. So yeah I mean we communicate to the best of our students, but the lean and glean other ideas that we can incorporate in even in our building. So that network of collegiality is huge."

Here Mr. Dent, illustrates how the opportunity to talk with other school leaders, provides access to brainstorming that can benefit students across all the schools. Given the value of collaborative and communicative spaces, it is unfortunate that they do not give the school leaders enough time and space to engage in this practice. According to Dr. Ellis, the time when district principals meet is often too prescribed and does not encourage collaboration. She explains:

"No, I don't think since I don't think us as principals get enough opportunity to truly sit and talk. Cause when we come together, you know it's a full agenda and it's stay on task, so we don't have that opportunity like we should to discuss those possibilities. I may not

like, another Volunteer Corps principal may be doing something different, but I really

wouldn't know because we don't get that the opportunity to really communicate and have

those conversations. If we have a conversation, it's really, hey this is due, so how do you

do this? It's not a think tank or a, you know, problem solving type conversation that we

should be able to have more of."

More flexibility in the time where school leaders are meeting could provide a beneficial space

for collaboration and sharing of information on the use of organizations. Dr. Ellis calls to

attention how important this process would be for schools that are using Volunteer Corps as the

actions of the organization are heavily influenced by the decision-making processes of the school

leader. Taken with what we know about sense-making, this exchange of information is an

important part of the process for school leaders. If the district is requiring the use of

organizations, and suggesting the use of this specific organization it could be important to create

spaces for this information exchange work. This would also tap into the experiential knowledge

of the school leaders who have been successful with the organization. This idea is expanded on

in chapter six.

Sub-theme Three: Perception

The third sub-theme, *Perception,* describes the way school leaders come to understand an

organization, meaning its utility, value, and ability to effectively work within their school space.

Perception is seen as the direct result of the school leader interpreting the information acquired

from various sources, and making judgments about the partnership organizations they would like

to pursue. According to sense-making literature, this is indicative of the school leader beginning

to make meaning about a situation (Birken et. al.; 2012; Gawlik, 2015). This was important to

tease out because the school leaders' perception of an organization ultimately influences their

understanding of how well that organization aligned with their schools' mission and vision, and implementation.

These discussions on perception were mostly similar across participants, with some differences in the ways the school leaders conceptualized an organization's integrated-ness with the school. Speaking about her perceptions of external partnerships, Dr. Ellis expressed the following sentiments:

"I guess for those, those partnerships and the relationships are bet they're valuable too. Seeing the overall success of a school. You can't do it by yourself. You do need to form those partnerships because they can bring in aspects that your budget can't provide. So you, you need, you need community partners So I guess, when you form a good partnership I think it leads to other partnerships and other opportunities for other organizations to help support the school goals as well."

Dr. Ellis sees external organizations as a valuable component because of the things they bring that go beyond just the budget, and she emphasizes the way organizational partnerships have the potential to create access ways to other partnerships. She continues to talk about how as a new principal she did not understand how important partnership work is and frankly did not feel like she had the time to devote to the maintenance of these partnerships. However, as she continued in her role, she arrived at a different conclusion regarding partnerships: "I realized the value in the partnerships and so I make sure that I create them, take them and always look for others to other partnerships to fill in those gaps that I can't do because I don't have those resources" The school leaders of Little and Motown both expressed similar sentiments regarding their perceptions of organizations.

In speaking directly about Volunteer Corps, the school leaders offered interesting insights on how they viewed the program as a part of their school. Mr. Dent commented on the fact that

only ten schools in the district have the program, and how it was "unique" to have a program that

provides support as in class interventions, and after school support. Dr. Childs opted to share

why she was pleased to learn that Volunteer Corps was present when she was hired at Little.:

> "I was hired as the principal of Little three years ago, the principal before me had already
>
> established a relationship with Volunteer Corps. I had worked with Volunteer Corps
>
> previously in 2012 at Harvest Woods. I had never even heard of Volunteer Corps until I
>
> went out to Harvest Woods. So I was excited when I got over to Little to know that we
>
> had the partnership and I had the same person, her name, Jessica. She was actually, you
>
> know, the team manager. So to know that, you know, Volunteer Corps was already in
>
> Little. It was, it was huge for me, you know, I really, you know, cause like I said, good
>
> experience with them."

In this discussion Dr. Childs signals her comfort with continuity of the organization and its

members. She was excited about moving to another school and seeing this existing partnership

because she was familiar with the support, they could provide the school. This positive

perception affected the way she used and incorporate the organization into her school's

operations.

Team managers from Volunteer Corps also take actions that contribute to the perceptions

of the school leaders and other staff. Michelle, the team manager at Motown, spoke to her

concerted efforts to be visible in the school to build the leadership team's trust in the

organization. She states, "I didn't wanna be just in the Volunteer Corps room in our designated

space. So Mr. Dent and Mr. G, the AP, they would see me walking through the halls, they would

see me going into classrooms. I think that that's important, to have visibility. And I don't... I

practice what I preach. It was kids that I don't know how they... Pre-K students that I don't know

how they know me, but they know me. But they knew my face, and that was because of visibility

and engagement with all of them in some kind of form or fashion. So I think that trust, seeing me being engaging, they knew, Okay. She's for the good of the school." As a representative of the Volunteer Corps, Michelle sees her role as the Team manager as creating a trust relationship between the administration and herself, and by extension the team of volunteers she leads.

Taken together, the school leaders typically had favorable perceptions of using external partnerships. Dr. Ellis articulated that the working of acquiring, using, and maintaining partnerships may not seem essential to a new school leader, but is critical in making any sort of academic progress. Mr. Dent and Dr. Childs both expressed the ways partnerships add value to the work being done in schools. Also, the work by the school district to establish a sustained partnership with Volunteer Corps has resulted in the school leaders trusting the organization to come in into their schools and interact with students and teachers. This perception is one component that affects the school leader's implementation.

Sub-theme Four: Alignment with Mission and Vision

Another important consideration school leader in the study made when partnering with external organizations was the degree to which the organization aligned with their mission and vision. This component came up most frequently when the school leaders discussed the roles external partnership organizations would play in their schools. For Volunteer Corps, the design of the organization aligned well with the mission of the schools. For other external partnerships, alignment was a deciding factor whether they brought the organization into the school. Sean from Volunteer Corps offers useful insight into how the organization approaches mission and vision. He states:

> " But I think shared vision, so what does the principal expect and what is their intended outcome or future state for the school and how does Volunteer Corps fit into that vision and making sure that's highly aligned or as highly aligned as possible. A shared set of

112

metrics which we've actually been refining over the course of the last few years of, "What would success look like for the Volunteer Corps partnership with you as the principal and ultimately with the school district as a whole across all 11 of our school partners? And what does it mean when we say we wanna work in math, English language arts, attendance, social-emotional development? And how are we holding ourselves accountable to those goals?" I think on a day-to-day, week-to-week basis, it's about open and honest lines of communication and feedback, consistent check-ins, face time with the Volunteer Corps leadership with the principal or the school liaison. "

This quote from Sean demonstrates the Volunteer Corps' calculated approach to aligning their organization's goals with that of the partnership school leaders. Here he emphasizes open communication, feedback loops, face-to-face interactions and accountability regarding vision all are important parts of maintain the relationship in the schools. Dr. Ellis expands on this relationship between the school and Volunteer Corps in the following quote from her first interview:

"I've worked with Volunteer Corps. So their, their roles just kind of fit right in with the goals of the school. Which makes sense why the district does support, you know, Volunteer Corps cause they're not, sometimes you can get a partnership and their goals are on the other side and we're just going in different directions. That hasn't been the case with Volunteer Corps. We always have been moving in the same direction and supporting the goals of the school"

In speaking about the organization again in her second interview, she reiterates the notion that Volunteer Corps has always been moving in the "same direction" with the school and her vision.

"Of course, they have the, the model that, you know, they support the academic attendance, behavior and the coursework. So, Volunteer Corps has a model that kind of

just rolled into the goals of the school because of course the goals are to increase student

achievement, increase attendance and decrease behavior problems. So, it was like a

perfect match and what their roles and responsibilities are and what my school goals

were"

Across both quotes there is the sense that the deliberate goal alignment process mentioned by

Sean earlier was effective in responding to Dr. Ellis' schoolwide needs. There is also an implicit

suggestion that the goal alignment is favorable based on ease of implementation, something that

will be discussed in a following section.

Dr. Childs at Little elementary/middle expressed similar sentiments when speaking about

her school's partnership with Volunteer Corps. In talking about alignment with mission and

vision, Dr. Childs explained she had to be flexible in her own goals to match the school district's

shifting focus. This change in approach ultimately affected how she communicated with

Volunteer Corps and made their goals fit.

"we actually, you know, mentor and engage them, but we also have them working with

students as well. So, you know, it's huge, but Volunteer Corps has taken it to another

level. Not only are they doing things to help the kids, you know, academically, because

we have a Little elementary blueprint 2020, the district has you know, our blueprint 2020

overall. But as a principal, what I did was I used the mission and vision of the district, but

I also created our own blueprint so everyone to know that the Volunteer Corps they have

an after school program. we kind of sat down and kind of created the plan that we want to

have for, you know, for the school and the, for our students. Now what happened this

year Ms. Wright, deputy superintendent and Dr. Vitti Came in with a different focus.

They wanted Volunteer Corps to work, you know, specifically with, our tier two students

still but also to the kids who are going to push us, the bubble students, that's going to help

us move the test scores. So, we changed the focus right before, the COVID-19 hit. So

and, and, and it worked."

Dr. Childs had what she called Blueprint 2020; a strategy adapted from the school district.

Typically, Volunteer corps members work with student who are identified as tier two and tier

three students, or those with slight deficits in their proficiency. However, the blueprint called for

a focus on bubble students, or students who are on the cusp of proficiency. This caused a change

in the focus at the school and by extension a change in focus for members of volunteer corps.

The school leaders in the study also made commentary on alignment with mission and

vision with other external organizations. With Volunteer Corps, the organization has a hierarchal

structure that allowed for multiple points of contact, and opportunities for communication and

collaboration. With other organizations, there may be well-intentioned individuals or smaller

groups attempting to work with the school, which could affect the partnership process. Mr. Dent

provided an interesting explanation of his thought process when deciding to partner with an

organization.

"With the other partnerships when they want to come in if their goal is to give out food

basket, we keep it right in that vein because we want to be very purposeful as far as what

those missions are. With the group that is trying to come in as far as providing tutoring, it

helps us achieve our ultimate goal, so we make sure we are purposeful in making sure we

have partnerships that help us achieve our goals but in that we are finding that there is a

mutual benefit"

Mr. Dent here emphasizes purposeful partnering and mutual benefits as necessary components

for partnership work. In one of his later interviews, Mr. Dent reiterated his viewpoint on mission

and vision:

"So Just noninvasive, is it aligned with our mission? is it going to help us achieve our

goal? and is it a win for them because one of the things is you do want sustainability you

just don't want quick fixes, if it is going to provide a win for that organization as well I

am finding out sustainability is able to stay in play, we want to be able to sustain things

because I want to be able to measure it and see has it caused what we thought it would."

In this quote, there once again is the emphasis on mutual benefit because in Mr. Dent's mind

mutual benefit leads to sustainability, which is important when working with organizations that

may not have consistent funding or consistent presence.

When commenting on non-Volunteer Corps external organizations, Dr. Ellis explained

her process of meeting with and collaborating with organizations. She states:

"So you can never just agree to say, Oh yeah, let's Keller Williams are coming in during

red day and just let them take over and do it because that's, they may not have your same

vision. So you have to take the time to make sure that this is something that will benefit

the students. Or if it's not, let's work through how we can benefit the students. And then

once everyone's on that same page, then you can kind of let, let them go for it. You have

to make sure everybody's on the same page before you just invite a partnership to come

to do what it is that they want to do. And that's through the initial conversations. And

even before you turn them over to the next point person, they, everyone has to be in on

that initial conversation so everybody can understand what the goal is or the desired

outcome of this partnership. That has to be very clear in the very beginning and not, not a

work in progress, but set at the beginning".

Here Dr. Ellis speaks to the importance of the initial meeting for communicating vision. This is a

task that the school leader must undertake before passing it along to other members of the

leadership team. Unlike the relationship with Volunteer Corps, where there is a district mediated

existing precedent, other external partnership relationships require time and planning to ensure that whatever is being done at the school is primarily for the benefit of the students. Dr. Childs described a similar process when speaking about meeting with an organization that wanted to provide tutoring services for the school: "After I get off the interview with you, I have two other interviews that I'm doing for the school. I wanna make sure that I get the right people in Little. And when you look at talent, you think about... You don't have to take everybody". Getting the right people is an important part of the partnership process and this relies on the intuition of the school leader. A school leaders' understanding of the organization's alignment with their mission and vision influences the way the leader engages with partnership work.

Sub-theme Five: Implementation in Practice

Discussions about in building implementation of volunteer providing nonprofit organizations centered the experiences each school leader had with Volunteer Corps. As stated, before the Volunteer Corps relationship is unique, but offers many key mechanics and structures that can support effectiveness. Sean, the Volunteer Corps partnership manager offered a useful framing for understanding the successfulness of the partnership.

> "So, I think setting up that foundational conversation is really helpful, and then I think the, one of the other structural things that sets us apart is having a full-time manager in the building, so the folks you've been talking to. I think that's key because so many other organizations send and deploy teams of volunteers similar to what we do into schools, but sometimes there's just questions of quality control or management of volunteers that sometimes if there's not a staff person that's there consistently can sometimes just be an added burden for principals"

Here Sean highlights the importance of having an in-building liaison to help in mediating the relationship between the volunteers and the school. With other organizations, the school leader

would likely have to manage this aspect of school operations, which could put a strain on an already tight schedule. Another key feature in the partnership is the level of access the organization receives regarding student performance. Sean states:

"So we have a written-out, signed, data-sharing agreement with the school district. So, on a monthly basis, we receive attendance data, information on any suspensions or behavioral incidents at schools and then academic achievement data in English Language, Arts, and Math. We use that data to really continuously monitor progress for the students that we serve. And so at a really tactical level, our corps members are looking at individual student level data to inform the types of intervention supports that they're offering."

The sharing of data is emblematic of a closeness and trust with the organization that may result from the long-standing relationship between the organization and the district. This access to data has allowed the organization to refine their services to respond to student needs, which ultimately may lead to improvement. Volunteer Corps' success in the schools in Detroit depends on trust and contact which are things built through an emphasis on relationship and information. Much of the work also hinges on the relationship between the school leader and the team manager positioned at each school. The next section will detail the specific successful implementation behaviors at each school from the perspective of the school leader and the team manager.

Dr. Ellis has a history of working with Volunteer Corps which has influenced the way she views the organization and understands their work. As a result, her implementation strategy is hands-on and inclusive, as she fully understands their role, and is familiar with the things the organization can accomplish in the school space. Dr. Ellis views Volunteer Corps as an integral part of her building as noted here:

"So I, I'm very hands on and interacting because I, well I'm hands on anyway. So just to

know, I don't want Volunteer Corps to ever feel like they're not a part of the school. So I

think, you know, I meet with the team manager. We meet maybe twice a month, sit down

to catch up. But we, we talk all the time. But just a formal meeting. We do have twice a

month just, and then I started this year meeting with the Volunteer Corps members."

During that meeting there is also a designated time to check in on student data, which the

members have direct access to. This aids in accountability. "We kind of have what's called a data

check because they now have their student focus list is broken down and iReady, iReady as our

quarterly, our benchmark assessments in math and reading. So they have their students assigned

to them. So now we have real live data that we can discuss. And so our first day to chat, we went

through which they were, this was their first time actually seeing the data."

Another important element emphasized by Dr. Ellis was control over the schedule. She

approached scheduling for Volunteer Corps much like schedule other key support staff members

in the building.

"I do check in with the support staff because of the support staff like our academic

interventionist and paraeducators and I consider Volunteer Corps support staff as well

just monitoring their schedules and making sure that they are able to pull the students that

are on their caseloads to provide their interventions with whether its academic

interventions or some peer mentoring tutoring situations just making sure that everyone is

in fact where they are supposed to be doing what they are supposed to do so that we can

keep moving towards our goals in the school"

This scheduling is necessary as it positions Volunteer Corps as a fixture of the school

environment and legitimizes their place in the school. Without this process, teachers and other

important staff members could view the organization as disruptive (constant interruptions to pull

119

students out of class for different interventions. Scheduling also emphasizes the need to respect the time and space of teaching staff).

Dr. Ellis also focused on partnering Volunteer Corps members with teachers in her building. This partnering process is important as the bulk of the work by Volunteer Corps occurs in the classroom during instructional time. Given the critical importance of instructional time, this pairing process has the potential to affect student learning outcomes greatly. She states:

"The teachers need that second hand in the classroom. And especially our focus is moving towards small group instruction because that's where the teachers can really fill those gaps. And so then the Volunteer Corps member comes in with their small group and it's just more hands on that, that, you know, is, is necessary. So they definitely support building those, those, those gaps with our small group instruction. We moved, the master schedule supports an hour a day for each content area to have a small group. So Volunteer Corps worked perfect into that plan. So the teacher has a group, Volunteer Corps has the group and then there's always a group that's on with technology. So it, it, I would not want to be at a school without Volunteer Corps especially a priority school because our needs are so great. We need the corps members."

Here she states just how important Volunteer Corps is for her school, as the volunteers provide additional support for her students and help for the teachers. She emphasizes how the presence of Volunteer Corps provides the opportunity for multiple instructional models and scaffolded support to allow teachers to focus on students in greater need. This notion speaks to a general human capital issue in the schools. There is also an emphasis on what teachers and what classrooms receive help from Volunteer Corps.

"So when they come and they want a tutor or volunteer in the classroom, I do look for my teachers that are organized and could best take a volunteer and really put that volunteer to

120

work versus just pairing them with anyone and then that volunteer not feel like their work

that they're doing is important. So you do have to make sure if you, once you bring in a

volunteer that you partnered them with another staff member that recognizes the value in

this volunteer and can use them the best way possible"

Dr. Ellis here articulates a strategy for pairing volunteers and teachers based on the classroom's

readiness and work availability to respect the work of the volunteers. There also must be

recognition for the teacher regarding the value of the volunteer. This suggests that there are

scenarios where a teacher who does not value the work of the volunteer winds up alienating the

volunteer, and damaging the partnership, which ultimately affects the efficacy of the partnership

work. Another consideration when partnering teachers and volunteers is personality:

"So we can kind of pair the personalities. So to make a you know, a matching pair, a team

working team together. So we do take time to make sure we're pairing our corps members

with my teachers for the best working condition"

This consideration shows that a mismatch of personalities can likely affect the working

environment.

For utilizing Volunteer Corps at Hope, Dr. Ellis emphasized having control of scheduling

and personnel partnering. For her, adding the volunteers from Volunteer Corps effectively added

ten more staff members to her building. With this new human capital, she put effort into

organizing their work to maximize the potential benefits of the extra bodies in the building. This

included taking into consideration the environments they place each volunteer in. In managing

all this moving parts, Dr. Ellis articulated the importance of disseminating tasks and

responsibility to other people in the building.

"Just making sure that I'm not the only point of contact because I can be too much. So

just designate another point of contact. So after it's established and everyone understands

121

the expectation and the roles, then they have a support person that they can work through

on contact other than me because you know, it can become overwhelming"

Showing that staying organized is a time-consuming process that requires multiple points of

contact for success.

Robyn also provided key insights into the in-school implementation process. She speaks

to integrating the Volunteer Corps members into the building and developing rapport and

camaraderie between the teachers and the Volunteer Corps members. She states, "That's another

struggle we have had to strengthen and work on, is the school understanding that Volunteer

Corps is not just a partner, we are a part of the school community. And because we're, like I said,

a new partnership, we're still working on that" This emphasizes the conscious effort to be

situated as a part of the school and not an invasive outside organization. Robyn describes an

event that occurs at the beginning of the academic year to help instill this collaborative

environment:

"And then, usually the last week or two of that month (July), we go into the school, we

try to meet with the teachers. I pair them... I ask them... I usually have a survey where

they can tell me, "What are their strengths? Do you have an age group that you would

prefer to work with? Is there a subject that you would prefer to work in?" And then, I try

to pair them with the specific teachers. We obviously go through... We'll try to go

through the same training that the teachers are going through as well, just to make sure

that they understand what their teachers have to adhere to, what standards do they have to

uphold"

On the Volunteer Corps side at Hope, paring comes down to a survey of the volunteers and their

preferences. There is also an effort to get the volunteers to understand the perspectives of

teachers through training. The hope, being this training, would create an understanding between the two groups that would help with partnership.

At Motown elementary/middle, there were some similar trends for the implementation behaviors of the school leader regarding Volunteer Corps. Mr. Dent was new to the partnership with Volunteer Corps, so he relied a bit more on the district to help mediate the relationship between his school and the Volunteer Corps organization. It also has helped him that the team manager assigned to his school used to be a teacher and thus she has helped create a connection between the volunteers and the teachers in the school.

> "So that all goes through the district, so they make sure they handle all of that but again those young individuals being in the school who have a desire to help has been a blessing. I really enjoy the presence we work hand in hand with them Even their leader used to be a teacher and so they know some of the challenges in this work that we have and so they are just there. What we as leaders do is making sure that we hold them accountable for their mission and not having them do any other things I mean their mission is to help provide so academic support so that's all we ask them to do"

In Mr. Dent's mind, the organization has a set of goals and his role is to hold them accountable to their goal. Mr. Dent's approach to working with the organization is not as direct as Dr. Ellis' as he splits most of the responsibility with his assistant principal.

> "And so it's a lot that goes on in the day but then again one of the things you have to prioritize because so many things can detour you so to speak as far as with respect to academic achievement because there is so much that goes you just have to really hunker down and make sure that your priorities are met and that one is the academic achievement. So I split those responsibilities with my AP again with making sure that that is the first and foremost thing."

123

Even though his assistant principal is the key point of contact, Mr. Dent attempted to be a part of the schedule creation process at the beginning of the year.

"So again, at the beginning of the year we sat down with Volunteer Corps, we sat down with students that they were actually be assisting with, we developed a schedule and we followed that schedule throughout the year. And so, based upon the data, it was determined which population that in the school that they will help assist. Oh, for intervention"

Beyond this beginning of the year meeting, Mr. Dent had regular check ins with the team manager from the organization, and status updates from his assistant principal.

"Okay. If there's anything he (AP) needs from me, I'll arrange a meeting with Volunteer Corps, and I've had several of them this year. Yeah. Quarterly I would have meeting with their upper leadership. As well and almost on a weekly basis I'm getting feedback from the direct lead in the building and reference with, you know, how they are able to connect with all the students who we've agreed they will connect with are there some issues that need to be worked around with"

This dissemination of tasks shows a trust in the organization's work generated by the district's relationship. For Mr. Dent, deploying the organization's resources is mainly done through an initial contact meeting and delineating responsibilities. He tries to be available if the Volunteer Corps needs to meet. Michelle, the Volunteer Corps team manager at Motown, spoke to the relationship between Mr. Dent and Volunteer Corps. She stated:

"So we have a liaison, the Assistant Principal is the liaison, and so he's who I would meet with almost weekly. Just checking in, checking in, checking in, updating him on events and things like that. And things that we might need, how we can support... If I see something that is coming up with the school, we collaborate then. Mr. Dent, the

Principal, was a little bit harder to catch up with 'cause he's in and outta the building

more, so him was on a monthly basis. But we would get together and have a big meeting,

just he and I, and that's how we worked with that. I was able to get, sometime where the

Volunteer Corps members could sit into staff meetings. Staff meetings happen every

week, but we weren't able to get into them all, but maybe one per quarter to sit in and

kinda know the big stuff that is coming down the line"

Here we see that at Motown elementary Mr. Dent relies heavily on his assistant principal to

communicate and manage the Volunteer Corps organization. Mr. Dent is more hands on for other

organizations since they rarely have consistent in building leadership who can interact with his

staff regularly. There is also consistency in the relationship between his school and the

organization expressed through weekly meetings. This speaks to the idea that Volunteer Corps is

intentionally integrated into the school building and treated like staff.

Dr. Childs voices a similar configuration and process at her school. She reiterates the

notion that the principal simply cannot "do it all" alone with no help. When asked how she

remains organized with the various external partnerships being in the building, she states: "Just

trying to make sure that, you know, being organized and having an excellent team because when

you're know principal, you're getting pulled in so many directions. If you don't have a good team

to have your back, you're not going to be successful." This is comparable to Mr. Dent's approach,

where the dissemination of tasks is necessary to operate effectively. Regarding the in-building

implementation strategy for Volunteer Corps, Dr. Childs leaned on her own experience with the

organization, and the district's pre-established relationship to guide integration with the school.

Dr. Childs outlined the nature of integration with the school in the following quote:

"Oh, okay. Well, like I said they were already there. So it at the beginning of the year just

meeting with the team manager and just to describe what our relationship and

collaboration would be. So, for example Volunteer Corps they come to my staff
meetings. On Wednesday, they sit at my instructional leadership team meetings on
Mondays because again, you know, they're a part of you know, the school. So on
Mondays everybody brings data. So, Volunteer Corps they work with third through
eighth grade students. They have a corps member in 10 classrooms. They have the, like I
say, the manager onsite, he has his co-lead and they make sure that they work with the
tier two students. So once, you know, the students take their iReady assessments at the
beginning of the year, we started breaking the students up with, you know, with different
group."

Dr. Childs made sure that the leaders from the organization were present at instructional

leadership meetings because the corps members are effectively a part of the school's

improvement strategy. These instructional meetings include the "data checks" mentioned earlier

by Dr. Childs as a method of progress tracking. This process is essential as it helps the

organization stay aligned to the school's mission. Dr. Childs' approach is hands on as she is

meeting with the organization regularly to help guide the process. This process is not only

important for alignment, but also for building the trust relationship between the organization and

the school, which could lead to a increase in the types of resources brought in by the

organization, something that is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Roger, the Volunteer Corps team manager at Little elementary, also provides some rich

details regarding implementation at the school. In one of his comments, he describes the

importance of the school leader in supporting the organization's work. He states:

"She obviously has had a history with Volunteer Corps, understands all the great things

that we're able to accomplish together. And so having her show that to the teachers was

really important for me and I think helped us be really successful, is that she knows the

value that we bring and that we can have. And so, when you have your principal and
these other people, everybody, telling you, "You need to trust the Volunteer Corp. You
need to let them do this 'cause it's gonna help you overall", that helps a lot more than me
just going into a classroom and like, "Hey, my corps member really needs 45 minutes
with this student like every other day." But when you have your principal be like, "You
need to do this because it'll make your classroom smaller so you can focus more on the
other students as well."

Dr. Childs' advocacy on behalf of the organization is essential in the implementation process.
Without an understanding of the organization and belief in the work, she could not speak to her
teaching staff and get them onboard with organization. If the relationship were not good, it is
likely that the organization would be ineffective.

Another process mediated by the relationship between Dr. Childs and the organization is
the teacher corps members pairing process. Like Dr. Ellis, Dr. Childs was involved in selecting
classrooms that would utilize Volunteer Corps members. Roger describes this process stating:
"Out of my 10 corps members that I started out with the year, six of them were gonna be in
classrooms that had brand new teachers to the school. And so the principal didn't know their
personalities, their teaching styles. Luckily, she had obviously interviewed them, interacted with
them a little bit beforehand, but not a ton." They actively involved her in the interview process to
get a better understanding of the corps members and how they would fit with teachers. This
process led to the successful navigation of what could have been a difficult situation (unfamiliar
teachers misusing corps members). This helps demonstrate that success goes beyond just
ensuring goal alignment, but also having the school leader informed enough to communicate
goals to staff.

Roger explained that the matching process at Little took personality and background into consideration. He expresses the importance of matching through this method in the following quote:

"One of my middle school math people, her and her partner teacher are basically the same person. Like, they're two black women from the Detroit Metro area, love to dance, love to workout. They just got... Like, every day, whenever I would see this partner teacher, she would talk about how amazing her corps member is. She's like, "I'm so glad you partnered me with her. She's amazing. We're joined at the hip in terms of like strategies", or where they see helping the students and things like that. And then I had a couple... A partner teacher and a corps member that they were very much alike, but they were both very much alike in being quiet, more reserved, didn't really have that authoritative personality. And so even though they were great together and they leaned on each other a lot and helped each other power through and develop, them as a partnership in terms of leading a classroom maybe wasn't the most perfect."

This personality dependent pairing process created positive work relationships for the teachers and corps members. While it is never explicitly stated whether this process yielded better results for the students, there is at least commentary on how the teachers responded to the pairings. Dr. Ellis and Robyn did a similar thing to ensure positive working environment between the pairs, but also put greater emphasis on placing members in classrooms that were better organized to receive and effectively utilize corps members.

The narratives of the Volunteer Corps implementation process across the different schools provide many important considerations. In each context the presence of an on-site manager helps with the alignment between the school and the organization. School leaders have an ability to influence this process by incorporating members in staff meetings, organizing corps

members schedules, and determining where members are placed in the school building. Sometimes the school leader relies on the relationship with the district and task delineation to manage the organization in their building, while other principals elect to take a "hands-on" approach and treat the organization like an extension of their staff. The entire process is aided by Volunteer Corps model and organizational structure, something that rarely exists in other external partnership organizations.

5.4. Summary: Theme One

This section details the experiences of school leaders in relation to the acquisition of information regarding external partnership organizations, and the structures for implementation at each school. School leaders interpreted their experiences with Volunteer Corps separately from their experiences with other organizations. Their access to information influenced school leaders perceptions of organizations. Those perceptions also influence the ways the implement and deploy resources from the organizations. With Volunteer Corps, the inherent structure of the organization and history of the organization had a direct effect on the information school leaders were receiving and guided how they approached implementation. With other organizations, the school leaders found it more difficult to get information, and more difficult to manage effectively. School leaders also discussed that their training may not be adequately preparing them to engage in partnership work and that there may not be enough spaces for collaboration regarding external partnerships.

5.5. Theme Two: The Influence of Community Context, Race and Culture

To this point we have discussed the ways school leaders work with external partnership organizations is mediated through information and deployed through structure and systems. Next, the participants discuss the ways community context, race, and culture influence decision-making processes and the resources that are prioritized. They discuss their understandings of the

community surrounding their schools, the historical factors that created these conditions, and the effect that has on their students. The school leaders also address their racial background and how that influences how they position themselves in the schools. There is also discussion on cultural responsiveness, particularly with organizations that provide volunteers. These factors contribute to understanding how leadership behaviors are influenced by history, race, and culture. In the following discussion, the school leaders of this study and the leaders of the Volunteer Corps organization share important leadership considerations for the use of external partnership organizations in urban, predominantly Black, school settings. Unlike with theme one, where each sub-theme fed into the next, the participants' understanding of community (considering communities and families), works together with their identity (Black school leader identity) to inform behaviors that respond to the needs of their students (cultural responsiveness, anti-racism, navigating white saviorism).

Sub-theme One: Considering Communities and Families

This section starts with a discussion of the ways school leaders view and understands the community surrounding their schools and how this influenced the ways the approached partnership work. Most times, the way they constructed community influenced the resources school leaders sought when considering. I asked each school leader about the community that surrounded their school, a key issue that presented itself in that community, an asset of the community, and to locate the historical cause of disparities.

Dr. Ellis found it difficult to speak about the community directly surrounding her school, as her students were not actually from that community. Given the structure and history of the neighborhood around her school, there were few school-age children in the immediate area, which then required students to be bused in from all over the city. She summarizes this here:

130

"So that would be complex because the immediate community that is in walking distance for the most part do not have school-age children, in the neighborhood, it is an older neighborhood so many of my students are bused from all over the neighborhood so that sense of community is not the same here as I am sure it is in some schools where it is a, where everyone lives in the neighborhood, this is not typical, this is not your neighborhood school, because the surrounding houses do not have school-age children, so we have to extend or stretch in terms of community. To the greater Detroit area um because that's where my students are coming from. I think I have about 15 bus routes so they truly come from all over with the majority of my students riding a bus."

This idea of stretched or extended community has complicated the ways she has to approach working with community organizations and finding support. When asked to more directly characterize the student population and issues that may arise from that population, Dr. Ellis stated:

"Just to be honest, bedbugs, is a problem in a school where the students live predominantly in poverty because there is nothing we can do about it when you try to keep the students from freaking out, you have to keep your teachers from freaking out because nobody wants to take a bed bug home but when I say every day I probably encountered a bed bug which I don't think some of my colleagues in more affluent neighborhoods experiences as well as the hygiene levels of my student, unfortunately. you know I have a lot of students without running water um if you don't look good if you don't smell good it hard to feel good so then that requires me making sure that I have clean uniforms here for the students and even hygiene kits so that they can go to the bathroom to or shower if necessary so that they can feel good about themselves."

Dr. Ellis provides examples that emphasize the poverty that most of her students are living in. To her, this reality affects several aspects of schools, from student-teacher interactions to self-esteem which ultimately affects the learning environment. It is not an inherently bad thing that Dr. Ellis, described her students and the community in this way, as it is useful in allow her to focus on the types of resources she needs to bring into the school. However, a damaged centered viewpoint could be harmful in other ways which will be discussed in the analysis chapter.

This sentiment around the community is not unique to Dr. Ellis. When Dr. Childs was asked the same question about describing community, she spoke in terms of poverty as well stating:

"To be honest, a lot of liquor stores, a lot of churches.... And the the area right now is very impoverished. Back in the day I say about 20 years ago, it was one of the most beautiful areas to live in, but right now most of our students are bused in. So most people who live in that area right now, they're older people and they're still trying to maintain the neighborhood. But it's, it's very desolate, you know."

Here she opens with a line about liquor stores and churches, which is often used as a marker to signal impoverished and often Black communities. She mentions that there is a group of older people maintaining the community, which is a reference to the community organizers who revitalized the neighborhood through raising grant funding for a park and community center. When asked to address the student population, she stated:

"There's no consistency. You know? So now they're going back and forth. They don't have food, they don't have clothes, and then it's impacting their academics, you know? So that's one of the things that I see more so at my school that I think as, like any other school, because when you look at it, we have schools down here, it's like the higher-performing middle school was like Journey Bass and Flips Chrysler (School Names).

They have less students than me and less problems. A lot of them are, the parents are

doctors and lawyers and you know, teachers, a lot of my parents don't have those same,

credentials, but they still need love and support and help and that's what I try to give

them, so that's a big difference that I see. They're very transient and they're going through

a lot.

Here she speaks in more detail about poverty and transiency. There are even comparisons to other schools and the parents at those schools. The overwhelming perspective seems to be that the students at Little come from impoverished backgrounds and need extra love and support. Again this viewpoint can be useful when figuring out what types of targeted supports students may need. As demonstrated later, this viewpoint influnces they way Dr. Childs approachs partnership work, and the types of resources she procures to help student and families. However, there is a dangerous line in perpetuating damage-based narratives of students.

Mr. Dent's response to the questions about community and students was different as he focused on the legacy and the history of the community instead of highlighting the poverty and lack of access to opportunity. Mr. Dent offered the following take on community context:

"It varies, and so we have had a lot of communications around that. With our school we

do service students who have a legacy so to speak where their family members have

attended our school. Most of our students are in walking distance but some of them that

legacy they may live miles away from the school but their parents went here"

To provide more context on this he described the types of conversations he had with parents from the community:

"Yeah so just talking to some of the local folk around and engaging the community and

even just on the anecdotal right before this virus thing started I had a brief five to ten-

minute conversation with a parent and he really was just communicating to me the history

133

of the neighborhood and the history of the school how he had been at the school since he

was in kindergarten how he is just excited so he just stopped and talked to me so some of

his words were, hey this is a tight knit community. yes, a lot of people have moved out

but there still is a lot of people who have been here for years. and again we are located in

the Puritan and Wyoming area and so it is a transitional neighborhood. but he wanted to

remind me that not everyone is in a transitional period there are a lot of homes that have

been there for 50/60 years. And he is from one of them"

For Mr. Dent, the discussion of community starts with a discussion of the people who are in the

community. His focus on the history and legacy leads to him emphasizing later on that the

decisions he makes regarding community organizations is vetted by and in service of the parents

and the community that surrounds his school. These members from the community even help in

contributing to partnership work as Mr. Dent explains here: "I've had several people who were

former students or former buildings of the buildings that were in, you know, they've come back,

they graduated 50 years ago. And then they come back and say, Hey, listen, we want to develop

a partnership to help those kids. And then they looked like, wow, things have changed."

Mr. Dent's primarily adopts an asset based perspective of the community surrounding his

school, while Dr. Ellis, and Dr. Childs utilize deficit language and construction of the community

by emphasizing student and family "neediness" and highlighting the poverty in the community.

While these viewpoints are useful in identifying what students may need to be successful, they

can be harmful and essentializing. With Mr. Dent's approach, the community maintains some

agency in the school reform process. Using deficit language persists throughout the rest of the

interviews on schools and communities, which may speak to language and concepts utilized in

their principal preparation courses. This presents a challenge to programs, as there is a need to be

realistic about the environments pricinpal candidates will lead in, while also using precise, and

historically and culturally relevant language to avoid the perpetuation of damage centered

narratives andout communties.

After attempting to get a better understanding of the ways the school leaders

conceptualized community context, I asked what they saw as the cause of some of the issues

manifesting in the schools and in the communities. Mostly, the school leaders named historical

and political conditions that influenced each school and community environment. When

describing her school's context, Dr. Ellis brought attention to a lack of resources, and lack of

attention from lawmakers:

> "That's a major part and a major role. So we have the most neediest students with the
>
> least amount of resources. So you do have to go out and search for resources to fill the
>
> gaps that the budget just... It doesn't exist due to lawmakers and things as way above
>
> what I can concentrate on right here in the school building. That goes back to depending
>
> on your community resources to make sure, because we don't have, doesn't mean we can't
>
> have it some kind of way, or work towards filling those gaps with the budget"

This quote captures her feelings of neglect from law-making bodies who decide on resources and

demonstrates why she engages in external partnership work. This quote also captures a deficit

conceptualization of students as "needy". Mr. Dent also named legislation as a major challenge

for the school community. He states:

> "Well, when you look at it, if you look at it historically of how districts had to survive
>
> based on legislature and their budgets for the year, and how those can just yo yo and go
>
> up and down, and how some can even drop dramatically without much advance notice.
>
> We're kinda seeing some of that now, but our government is trying to do the best they can
>
> to back-fill those gaps so we don't run into these type of issues... But again, when you
>
> talk about budget things, a lot of that I think does stem from not having the adequate

funds from state funding. And those things are well documented as far as how they go up

and down."

Taken together, Mr. Dent and Dr. Ellis' statements suggest that some school leaders still feel

neglect from the district, regarding budget, which affects the school climate and environment.

Placing the onus on the law-makers is a way of refraining from pathologizing the students,

families, and the district.This understanding is even shared by members of Volunteer Corps.

Roger, the Volunteer Corps manager at Little, expressed a similar understanding of the context at

the school in the following quote: "And so just sort of seeing those things and doing research on

property taxes for school funding versus like... In Detroit we get funding from the state lottery as

well, but that's equal across the state, not equity based in terms of who really needs it or where

that money on the lottery is spent. And just sort of thinking about those things. And I... It's sort

of weird for myself because a lot of these questions, when I was actually in K-12 education,

never really crossed my mind 'cause it was sort of like, "Oh yeah, this is just... It's school"

Roger, who did not grow up in the community, had to research to better understand the school's

condition, Roger's quote supports the viewpoint held by both Dr. Ellis and Mr. Dent. The schools

in Detroit are in areas that have been neglected by design and do not receive adequate funding.

This context necessitates the use of non-profit, external and community partnerships to try and

fill in crucial resource gaps.

Sub-theme Two: Black School Leader Identity

This next section will cover the ways the school leader's identity influences their work

and their approach to making partnerships. This Sub-theme emerged later on in the data analysis

process, as it was not an intention of the study to recruit all Black school leaders. After speaking

with each principal, learning about their backgrounds and life stories, I found it necessary to

address their identity in relation to their work. It is important to focus on this aspect of identity as

it may influence they way the school leaders approach making partnerships and maintaining those partnerships.

Dr. Ellis started out by talking about the context that influenced her decision to come back and work in Detroit. She states:

"When I first started in education, I started as a Special Ed teacher, so pretty much wherever I wanted to teach at, I could have taught. Whether it was in the suburbs or a private school or wherever. But I knew that I wanted to stay with the city. I was born in Detroit and I just wanted to... I want to be in the city, so I won't relocate. But if I was ever relocated, I'm going to an urban city." As someone who was born and raised in Detroit it was important that she do work in a community that she cared about. She then discuses what the work means to her as a Black school leader: "That's where I feel I can have most impact and that I love my black children. And that's... This is just where I wanna be. I want to be my best so that I can give them their best because they deserve the best. I want... I'm a committed individual and they need people to be their best. That's why". She has a belief that her identity gives her the ability to understand the students and how to maneuver in helping them.

Mr. Dent expressed similar sentiments in his own narrative around race and leadership. He adds the dimension of gender, noting the lack of Black men in educational spaces. He explains in the following quote:

"And not to change the subject, but even when you look at the dynamics of a male in these roles and a male as a teacher, you are definitely in the minority. Then you add color to it, you even diminish it... You become even more in the minority. And so understanding that it is a privilege, understanding that you are one of the few, and understanding to take it very serious and to really, really allow yourself to be a role model, whether you like it or not, because you are in a position that is not seen much and

137

children do look up to you, especially males. And you want to really, really take that

serious. And I do. It's a role model. And you really look at it as a responsibility that you

don't take lightly. It's always to do your best, to be your best, so they can see you at your

best at all times, even when you're not feeling your best, because those eyes are watching

all the time and you never know who you're influencing, but you know you are

influencing people every day"

Mr. Dent continues on to describe how this context influences his approach: "And so you really

want to come with your A game every day and really support folks and help them to reach their

goals. Because that's what it's all about; it's never about me as an individual, but it's about

helping others to identify their goals and empowering them and allowing them to be their best

and allowing them to know that they are their best and that they can compete with anybody. It's

really building up that self-esteem. And that's done in so many ways, but in the most important

way is by them seeing you uphold the respect that you're supposed to so they know then that

them themselves can do it themselves." For Mr. Dent, leading is an important act that has the

potential to inspire students.

Dr. Childs adopts a similar mindset when considering her role as a school leader and her

Black woman identity. Additionally she cites her experiences growing up in a "rough"

neighborhood as the primary motivator for her relatable, real approach with her students. She

states:

"It means that I have, for me, being a black woman, a black leader with the credentials

that I have, and I'm just... I'm saying that I have a larger responsibility to make sure that

I'm doing what's best for kids. I don't think that a lot of people understand when you're in

this position, you have to make the right decisions as best you can and put kids first. The

difference is, I say it all the time, too, you gotta take care of your staff as well. So I feel

as a black woman, I have to set a good example"

Here she makes the connection between her status as a Black woman with credentials and the

responsibility that places on her. Continuing this thread of responsibility she states:

"No, when you go to your job interview, you have to know what you're doing and you

have to be confident in what you're saying. Now, when you back in the hood with your

boo you can be hood all day, but you have to learn how to... I'm just saying you have to

learn how to turn it on and turn it off, but you can still be authentic to who you are. So

that's what I, as a black woman, I feel like there's a lot of pressure for me to set the right

tone and example for our kids, but I don't mind. Because again, I didn't see it as growing

up as a kid, I saw strong women taking care of business the best that they could, but I

didn't know a lot of women who went past the eighth or ninth grade...I didn't see that in

my neighborhood. So I feel like I can still be who I am, but also let people know and let

my students know... How can I put it? And it just makes me emotional just even thinking

about it. Authentic and true to who you are, but you have a responsibility to pull someone

else up, a responsibility. And that's how I feel as a black leader, as a black principal, as a

black woman."

Within these comments, Dr. Childs touches on several important topics related to her identity as

a school leader. She leverages her positioning and identity to speak to the idea of "code-

switching" as a necessary component of success. Code-switching is a concept proliferated in the

Black community that encourages Black people to not use Black colloquial ways of speaking in

professional settings. Her endorsement of this strategy is inextricably tied to her race and

perceived shared background with the students she serves. Dr. Childs also speaks to the

obligation to be role model her students, which is found in the narratives of all three school

leaders. Interestingly, two of the team managers from Volunteer Corps, Michelle and Robyn, were Black women who were born and raised from Detroit. Each woman provided commentary on how their identities influence their work with corps members. Robyn shares how she uses here experiences as a teaching experience for her volunteers. She explains: "So I had to get experiences to come back and support my community, and what I call home, and I think they respect me telling my story and being personal with them and them actually connecting the dots like, "Okay. So she is... Represents what these students could be. If we could just help. If we could just build this. If we could just get attendance up." So I think that brought a lot of perspective to the work that they were doing, if they were not from here." Here she is leveraging her shared identity with students, being Black and from Detroit, to demonstrate how the corps members' work might alter student life trajectories. Michelle offers a similar perspective:

"So, I think... I feel like I have to sort of exist in sort of two spaces. So, being a black woman, being from Detroit. I'm actually from the city, I live in the city. And I'm noticing... So, I started out my career at Osborn... So, I started working at a high school on the east side of the city, and I lived in the community. So, I was actually... I would see the students at the local store and run into them at the restaurants. And coincidentally, now that I live on the west side of the city, I live in the same community that I work in. And so, I view it as a community member. I feel invested in the students and the community. I see firsthand what they are faced with. I see the struggles that their parents might have. I understand how difficult it is to navigate through education as a black parent, or supporting black children, having to work hours that is not conducive for the support a child needs throughout education."

She goes to explain that this perspective informs how she trains and educates the volunteers she works with. She speaks of challenging preconceived notions of volunteers who are not from the

community. By providing a genuine connection to issues members of the community, and students from the community may face.

The emphasis on Black school leader identity because it helps frame some ways that school leaders conceptualize community. For example, Dr. Childs comments on community, when taken at face value, can seem like a deficit conceptualization of the community and its inhabitants. Adding the context of her own identity and upbringing can help in understanding that her perspective is not coming from a place of harm, but a place of familiarity. Understanding identity is also important, as it definitely influences they ways the leaders choose to lead, and ultimately how they approach partnership work, as demonstrated by the comments made in this section.

Sub-theme Three: Fostering Cultural Responsiveness

This section attempts to cover all the ways the school leaders attend to cultural responsiveness while utilizing resources from external partnership organizations. Cultural responsiveness is a topic of much discussion in educational administration and policy. Most times we apply this term to how school leaders are preparing teachers, or other in-building faculty. However, when school leaders are making partnerships with external organizations, there is the possibility that volunteers and donors are unfamiliar with a predominantly Black school context. This reality can make pursuing the work of cultural responsiveness difficult. The quotes from the school leaders, and the members of Volunteer Corps, help in framing some tensions of managing a culturally responsive school space with assistance from several outside factors. School leaders in this section elected to speak about more than just the Volunteer Corps organization to compare that organization with others from the community.

In speaking about Volunteer Corps, Dr. Ellis credits their training and preparation for cultural responsiveness. She states: "So, I have to give it to Volunteer Corps for the training. So

it's not placed on the principals or the teachers to train the corps members on how to respond to the students". She explains how the program's summer training camp gives her confidence in their culturally responsive approach.

"So I think Volunteer Corps does a good job because you know, they spent all summer training their corps members. So the corps members, I think they come in and they have an idea of what to expect. I don't, I don't think that I haven't seen a Corps member that's been shocked by culture. They have not had a culture shock based on the training that the corps members are provided over the summer, which is another good thing because you don't want someone coming in and not being comfortable with working with the students or working with the teachers."

Here she makes note that because of the organization's training approach, corps members can be fully integrated into the school space without fear of negative interactions. This trust in the organization's training method is not something that should be taken for granted as it does not occur in all volunteer providing organizations. All the school leaders lauded Volunteer Corps for their work, while drawing parallels to other organizations and the work they had to do in those relationships.

To have a better understanding of Volunteer Corps, it was necessary to have discussions with the team managers regarding the summer training, and continuous training throughout the year. Through these conversations it was revealed that the organization was deliberate in adopting a culturally responsive, community focused and sometimes anti-racist pedagogy with their corps members, starting with the recruiting process and continuing once they were in the schools. Much of the continuous learning depended on the team manager. Robyn, Michelle and Roger were extremely helpful in providing commentary on why the program could generate so much trust with the school leaders. Robyn, the team manager at Hope elementary describes the

142

how the interview process has been changed to recruit more culturally aware volunteers in the following quote.

"It is a requirement that you have some, one, cultural empathy as well as some cultural competence. And so, there's literally a section of the interview now where I wanna say three to four questions are asking corps members, "How do you align... Or how do you feel like you will make an impact? Or how does your identity, I guess, and your experiences, your privilege, how does that... Or how do you see that showing up in working with students, but also how do you think it'll affect your teammates and how you work with them as well?" And so, we're able to ask these questions and determine if a corps member is truly able to do this experience. If you don't know how to... If you don't... One, aren't aware of your identity and your privilege, then you might not wanna do this experience. And we can say, "This might not be a right fit for us as Volunteer Corps.

In trying to recruit volunteers who are aware of privilege and power, the organization is taking steps in mitigating the possibility of harm. This approach is important, as it is rooted in an understanding of the nuances of racial interactions within academic spaces. Robyn also offers insights into the training process. She states:

"Yeah. So, the corps members go through a month-long training a month before school starts. So, they start in August, they go all the way up until the first day of school. So, we spend that month getting them acclimated to not only the landscape of Detroit, so the educational landscape and history of Detroit, so that they have a knowledge of what they're going into. Like, "What is happening educational-wise in Detroit, and how is that going to impact your role when you walk into these schools?" Like I said, a lot of corpsm

members are not from here. They, in their minds, have this really rosy image of what education looks like and what the classroom actually looks like."

Robyn also emphasizes the fact that the training provides a lot of background context for Detroit through connecting volunteers to community leaders, advocates, and university professors. She posits that this may not be how the organization handles training nationally, and may be unique to the Detroit chapter. She states:

"So, we bring in... In Detroit... I can't speak for the organization (nationally). But in Detroit, we bring in our community leaders to actually lead training for our corp members. So, we've had professors from a lot of the different universities here come and talk about the history of Detroit. Like I said, we give them a very, very deep and rich lesson on the landscape of Detroit, not only the city. So, how segregated the city is, but also why did it get that way? How did it become this way? The beautiful, obviously rich history of Detroit, we give that to them as well. And we give them the educational background as well, so that they can understand what Detroit has gone through, what happened to lead us up to where we are right now, and what is that gonna look like when you get in schools. And like I said, we do all of that and corps members are still like, "What? You guys did not tell me that I was gonna see this and I was gonna see that." And there's never... We can't obviously prep them for everything, it's impossible. But I do think that the information that we give them prior to, it at least informs how they navigate."

This practice of rooting everything in context should guide how corps members perceive and navigate the community they are working in. This can be important in challenging notions of privilege and diminishing white pity and guilt. During this month-long training process there is a week that focuses on identity that Robyn explains here:

"We spend like an entire week on identity, race, privilege. And it is the most difficult week. The six years that I've been... Or eight years that I've been with the organization, it is literally the... It's not a horrible week. It's just a really heavy and intense week for corps members to go through because a lot of them have... A lot of them may be aware of their privilege, but a lot of our corps members, because their... Because of the age group, have never really worked in diverse settings the way that Volunteer Corps functions."

Robyn concludes that all the training on context, race and culture helped her corps members in building rapport with students and advocating for those students. When speaking about the link between exclusionary discipline practices and the school to prison pipeline, she mentions how her corps members' understanding of that link allowed them to be more diligent in advocating against student expulsion. Ultimately, this type of culturally responsive training helps in making the corps members better able to work in educational environments with Black students.

Michelle, the manager at Motown elementary and Roger the manager at Little elementary help in discussing the training and the process of continuous education with Volunteer Corps members. Michelle talks about the summer training academy, the same program mentioned by Robyn earlier. She comments:

"So, again, in BTA (Basic Training Academy), we show lot of Detroit documentaries about the education. And I am able, as a native Detroit-er, able to add to that because a lot of the things that they were showing, I was a actual student in DPS at that time, so I think them showing... Me showing them like, "Hey. I was a student and a product, of this transition that happened that we're still recovering from. I have gone off and done things into the world, and it was because of strong educators who did show up, who did care, who did supply that encouragement for me"

145

The organization allows her to leverage her own social positioning as someone from Detroit to help prepare the volunteers. Also for her team she tries to use this as a continuous point of emphasis as to the potential of the students who grew up like here. This argument help creates a tangible link for volunteers to see the importance of being a mentor and educator for youth. Roger also speaks to the effectiveness program, stating:

> "Yeah, I think overall Volunteer Corps Detroit does a pretty good job about that in terms of during our basic training academy. So before corps members even go into school, training to learn how to be in Volunteer Corps and training how to be successful. We do a lot of work in terms of the history of Detroit and specifically education in Detroit, and where it has been even 10 years ago when the City declared bankruptcy, and then couple of years ago when the school system declared bankruptcy, it had to be restructured and things like that."

Roger, who is not from Detroit, and who has a team of volunteers who are not from Detroit, also emphasizes his process of educating volunteers beyond the training month:

> "So I came in with a lot of educational background about urban policy, politics, things like that, my own experiences working in different communities across the U.S.. So I came in with that and I would try and help and just open up to them how to have these conversations or how to really learn to listen and ask questions that actually help you learn and help people share their stories...I really put an emphasis on myself helping the team understand the context of the area that we're in and what we're doing here and why. And so that was a lot of my early time as an impact manager, was trying to help corps members figure out where we fit into this larger scale and where this one team, this one corps member, fits into Volunteer Corps as a whole, Detroit public schools as a whole."

146

Here he cites utilizing his background and training in policy and politics to frame the ways he interacts with his corps members and helps them in understanding the context they are working in. He also talks about bringing members of the community to work with students and educate and provide a context from the corps members. One organization, Community Lens, would come in and teach the students about Black art, and the rich history of art in Detroit. In speaking about the impact of bringing in that organization, Roger explains:

> "They really helped students learn through how to use their voice or how to use art to speak. And so they would come in and do these other things, like they would... They would do stuff over spring break, unfortunately this year unable to, but they had students attend city council meetings and speak on different issues that were pertinent to them, or meet with different people. One of the women who led the group has a podcast on basically how to make Detroit more eco-friendly and would interview different leaders that were doing different things in terms of recycling or greening spaces and things like that. And so there was this great other organization that was coming into the school that could really help us with a history of the Noble community that also... They were really great at sharing context and sharing the needs and wants of the community that we as the outsiders (Volunteer Corps) just couldn't get unless we lived there for longer than 10 hours a day basically.

In bringing in other organizations, not only was he providing new perspectives for students, but he was providing a continuous community orientated curriculum for his own volunteers. The provision of extra context was helpful in combating preconceived, deficit notions of Detroit for outsiders and emphasize the positives of the community. This approach serves as an example of culturally responsive training that actively pushes back against a propensity towards white saviorism.

As stated earlier, the school leaders in the student widely praised Volunteer Corps for making their lives easier for recruiting and preparing culturally responsive volunteers. The school leaders also made a point of emphasizing that this was not the case with other organizations and volunteers. School leaders spoke to their process of navigating the utilization of volunteers and the acquisition of external resources. While sometimes the school leaders did not explicitly name cultural responsiveness, their comments fell in line with the ways responsiveness is typically framed across the literature.

For Dr. Ellis and Dr. Childs, intuition and discernment were pivotal in recruitment process of determining who could come in and work with students. Dr. Ellis describes this in the from of intention or fit as shown in the following quote:

"I think, personally, I'm in tune with people and in tune with their characters. I mean, I think that I'm pretty good at reading people and even... that non-verbal communication, I kinda pick up on quickly, which helps when people may... People may say the right things but you know their intentions are not necessarily there. They don't have the right intentions. I guess being able to sense that and being able to... Just my personal experiences with sensing, know this isn't a good fit, or, this isn't gonna work. And taking that time to try to listen, and again, that the verbal and a non-verbal communication."

This was in response to the question on how she determined whether an organization of volunteer was a good cultural fit for the school. This requires understanding intentionality and determining the impact it would have on students, which is likely mediated through who own position as a Black woman school leader, and her understanding of the community. Dr. Childs makes a similar statement regarding feeling out organizations.

"Oh, you know. Oh, okay. So, cause I want to make sure that I always talk about fit. It has to be fit because what I want is a partnership to come in and, and I'll give you an

148

example. I'm a, I don't know if you know, I'm a storyteller, but example kind of person.

You can't come into noble, you know, with your nose up in the air and think that you're

going to help our kids. So you know you have to sure. And I can pick up on, I have a

good discernment for picking up on things."

This serves to emphasize the fact that school leaders must consider a great deal before bringing

any entity into the school building to work with youth. Mr. Dent underscores this point by

speaking to the fact that as a school leader you must provide for all of your students. He explains

in the following quote:

"So, you have to be as a leader aware of your student body. So, I give you an example.

When I was in Pontiac, I had 30% students who were English second language and then I

had about 60%, you know, who were a black. And then I had about 10% who were

Hmong. And so even in community, I always had to keep that in mind. I wanted to make

sure that we're providing service for every student."

Effectively, the services being brought into the school space must meet the needs of the students.

Mr. Dent also spoke to what happens once volunteers are in the school building. He

discusses holding professional development sessions for volunteers before they can work in his

building. He states: "Yeah, so every volunteer that we have come in, I mean I'm most, we train

them like we train teachers. Culturally responsive teaching is huge in our schools now. And, and

one thing we just deal with the elephant in the room." He continues to explain some specifics of

this work.

"So like again, it would go back to bring them in and train them. Like you train your

teachers. We bring all of our teachers when they come in, they come in professional

development, they do have cultural responsive teaching. I trained all them on that. Um

and so it's the same thing with our volunteers. And so, I've actually I ran a couple of

classes with volunteers that have come in, even if it's not myself as someone in the staff. And so we try to be as teachers really if I can use that word as possible using a lot of the colloquial wisdoms in teaching. But the no things have changed. How we communicate. Our students have changed a, how community students communicate back to us."

Mr. Dent devotes time to train and prepare volunteers to understand students, much in the same way he prepares his teachers. The time used to engage in this practice could be beneficial in other spaces, but is necessary when bringing white volunteers to work in a predominantly Black student population. These serve the purpose of cultural responsiveness and might expand the application of that concept. The following section will discuss Volunteer Corps' desire to shift towards a more anti-racist orientation.

Sub-theme Four: Adopting an "Anti-racist" Orientation

This section discusses the shift to a more anti-racist approach across the Volunteer Corps organization. The previous section on cultural responsiveness helped demonstrate the school leader's inherent trust in the organization and their approach to cultural responsiveness. The comments from the Volunteer Corps team managers helped provide insight into the training processes that helped in fostering that trust. Sean, the Volunteer Corps program manager, was an essential perspective for understanding why the organization adopted this approach. Sean oversees the individual partnerships between the organization and each school, and manages the summer training for the organization. He articulated the organization's general position and future directions towards a goal of educational justice. In the following quote he outlines the the direction the organization is attempting to move in:

"I think what we need to be able to do though is move past that sort of more broad-based, social justice framework and really start to think about how I'm just gonna... It's a buzz word right now, but it has been in the Volunteer Corps lexicon for a few years now, just

150

what does it mean to actually be just not racist, but actually anti-racist and try to really

think about the systems and practices that we have to work through as an organization

that partners with other institutions, including funders, school districts, whatever it is,

where is there racism and inequity and how are we being a clear and coherent voice to

say, "Here's how Volunteer Corps approaches these issues? Here's our perspective on it.

Here's the type of training and resources that we provide to corps members"

This mindset affects the way the organization is approaching their interaction with the education

system. He also speaks to the role of Volunteer Corps as a national organization and the potential

for more positive change:

"And how do we have an open, honest conversation about the ways in which Volunteer

Corps is and is not pushing towards a truly just and fair education system for all, and that

means a lot of different things. I think Volunteer Corps as a national organization can do

more to push for real justice when it comes to educational resources for students, can be a

louder voice in the fight for equity and around issues of race that I think we're learning

more about how to do that.

As the organization is growing and reevaluating its role, there are spaces where they could

exercise more effort to create change. Sean emphasizes the fact Volunteer Corps as an

organization is connected to financial and political resources, and some of those things could be

better leveraged to actually affect educational systems, as opposed to simply working within the

educational system as the organization does currently. Moving away from organization

aspirations Sean centers the way this mindset has affected recruitment and training. He states:

"I think at a very like fundamental... I'm not even talking like tactics and trainings like

we're seeing it right now in the current moment we're living in that we may not even be

doing enough. But I think at a very basic level, Volunteer Corps attempts to be an

institution that values and prioritizes social justice. And so with that general framework in mind, when we bring corps members in, it's one, a very diverse group typically. We say: Here's what we're expecting of you as a member of this organization that attempts to be and is aspiring to be anti-racist and the practices that we look for in order to make sure that what you're doing it the very minimum causes no additional harm, but really actually tries to help dismantle systems of oppression."

This explains that from an upper management level the organization is geared towards social justice and change. This type of approach may explain why the training is designed with a community-focused lens, and ultimately why the school leaders have an inherent trust in the volunteers coming from this organization. The following section provides contrast and addresses school leaders' considerations when dealing with organizations that do not have an explicit socially just or anti-racist orientation.

Sub-theme Five: Managing White Saviorism and White Pity

The experience school leaders had with Volunteer Corps was not the same with other organizations that provided volunteers or other abstract resources to the school. Most times, these organizations are sending predominantly white volunteers, or headed by white donors and philanthropists, which creates nuance in the way school leaders have to navigate. Introducing white outsiders to a predominantly Black space has the potential to create harmful interactions if not approached properly. Sean articulates this when explaining how Volunteer Corps has historically approached the issue:

"What we try to do is set them up to understand really their role and position in the building, and that... I think one of the more toxic things that happens sometimes with these types of organizations is that sort of savior complex, particularly when it comes from people like myself, white people that come in to work in urban, inner-city schools"

Sean here was speaking about what it meant to train white volunteers to work in the Detroit school district, which is mostly Black. My directly naming the white savior complex he speaks to the nuanced tension school leaders in this space have to manage.

Outside of just white saviorism, they also consider white pity when making partnerships with organizations. Dr. Ellis speaks to this idea when reflecting on her experience with working with white volunteers. She asserts:

"And that it kind of bothers me sometimes when I sense that this is, Oh, they're doing it because they, these children are so pitiful is I don't want that help. If that makes sense. I need to, if you, if you're here for the kids, you're here for the kids and not because these poor black children need me. I need to work with volunteers who don't have that mentality. And so far as it's been, it's been good. It has, it's been really good"

Here she speaks to white pity and white savior mentalities as something she actively avoids in choosing to partner with an entity. This also feeds into the earlier discussion on intuition and discernment, as she relies primarily on those skills to determine which organizations are a proper fit. Dr. Childs articulates a similar positioning regarding this topic. In speaking about volunteers who could be in the building, she states: "So you can't have your nose up in the air. You can't think that you're just above it all and you don't have to come from the hood to understand the kids just show them some empathy. They do not want you to feel sorry for them. They want you to help them and show empathy".Which supports the ideas expressed by Dr. Ellis around inviting certain people into the school/community space. Dr. Ellis also provided a detailed account of her navigating donations for her students. One organization she partnered with Keller Williams had done a clothing dive and wanted to bring coats to her students. She recounts the interaction here:

" With the Keller Williams, they wanted to do a coat drive, which, you know, our kids do need coats, but then they wanted to do, you know, wanted to do a used coat drive.And I'm

like, I'm not going to accept used coats. If your going to do a coat drive. You bring in

brand new coats. I don't want hand me downs. We're not bringing hand me downs. And I

think for a minute they were kind of like, well what, you're going to be choic-y or picky

about the donations. But yeah, I am. I absolutely am. I don't want hand me downs for my

students at all. Just like they don't want hand me downs for their kids. So, you know,

once we got past the, if you're going to do something, you're going to do it and you're

going to do it right, then we're fine. Not just, you know, let's go clean out your closet and

then bring everything to Hope. That's not the answer.

This is an example of Dr. Ellis navigating for the dignity of her own students and also

demonstrates the resistance to white pity. Here she was considering how her students might feel

or respond to receiving hand-me-down, and instead argued for new coats for her students,

something the organization could actually do. The ability to navigate in this way is likely

affected by her Black woman identity and her context of being from the community.

5.6. Theme Two Summary

This section discusses the way school leaders' understanding of community context, and

racial identity influence their decisions when using external partnership organizations. Deficit

conceptualizations informed sometimes the school leader perspective of community, but when

speaking of the issues faced by the community most could situate the problem historical and

political contexts. Since all the school leaders in the study are Black, this section devoted space

to how the Black identity influenced leadership approaches, which can also be seen in the ways

the school leader approached cultural responsiveness. The organization Volunteer Corps is

viewed favorably by school leaders, because of the way they approach volunteer preparation.

Volunteer Corps approach is influenced by social justice and aspects of anti-racism, which can

explain their community-oriented, race-conscious approach to training volunteers. When not

dealing with Volunteer Corps, and seeking other organizations, school leaders had to consider

and navigate what it means to bring white volunteers and white led organizations into

predominantly Black spaces.

5.7. Theme Three: The Complexity of Benefits and Costs

The third theme that emerged from this study deals with school leaders' perceived

benefits and costs from utilizing partnerships with external organizations. In this section the

participants discuss how they see contributions from the organizations as positively influencing

academic achievement, student well-being, behavior, and other aspects of school operations. The

participants also discuss the perceived tradeoffs when engaging in the work of acquiring and

maintaining partnerships. Effectively school leaders engage in a "cost-benefit analysis" of sorts

when choosing to develop partnerships, but the benefits and costs are not always immediately

clear, or conventional. The school leaders and Volunteer Corps leaders discuss the tension and

nuances with managing resources from external partnership organizations. This section is also

where the school leaders elected to discuss other organizational partnerships in greater detail so

there is not a heavy Volunteer Corps focus.

Sub-theme One: Responsive Material Goods

Across several of the conversations with the participants, they clarified that access to

material goods was an important part of external partnership work. They acquired many of these

goods based on the school leader's understanding of student and family need. As exhibited by the

previous theme discussion, the school leaders operate with the belief that their students are

coming from impoverished communities. With this context, the leaders focused on creating

partnerships with organizations that could provide things for students with these backgrounds, as

it is a part of student well-being. The following discussions provide some examples of the ways

school leaders approached this work.

155

Dr. Ellis identified hygiene as one of her major concerns for students. She explains that some families live in parts of the community where the water shutoffs were frequent and thus students would come into school with dirty clothes. Dr. Ellis understood that there is a link between student hygiene, self-esteem and ultimately performance in school, which is why she emphasized creating partnerships that helped support student hygiene. She explains how a partnership with a church supports this effort in the following quote:

> "I do have a church; Borders city church is a partnership with Hope and they are very helpful with donating uniforms. They bring our hygiene kits once a month. Socks, hats, gloves, whatever the students need. They, they, they go reach out to their congregation to support the students at Hope. And that has, I mean, they've kept our students clean with the tighten up kids is what we call them. I mean, they come faithfully every month with about a hundred or 150 little baggies with, you know, some personal hygiene items that the students, absolutely, it's, it's very needed that partnership."

She continues to describe how the church provides uniforms, warm coats and hat to the school as well and how much she values that contribution.

> "Yeah. I mean it, it saves the school when you have those partnerships, a lot of money it does because you don't have to purchase the uniforms. You don't have to purchase hats,and coats and gloves because they're, you know, your kids need them and they're being provided and not only are their basic needs so then they're more opt to come to school if they have a warm coat or a hat, you know, or clean uniforms, they once, so it's, it's hard to put a a monetary value on it because their impact impacts so much more than just, you know, having pizza. All you can eat pizza for the day is, it extends beyond that."

Here she states how much more important it is in the long run to have an organization that is providing clothing, as it also supports student attendance. Dr. Ellis continued to describe how the

desire to support student clothing compelled her to create a partnership with a local laundromat business. She explains:

> "We form partnerships with the local laundromat so that the students can bring their dirty clothes in two days out of the week. The laundromat will come to pick them up, wash them, fold them, and drop them back off. Parents can also attend and go to the laundromat for free two days out of the week and that was a big help to our community as well."

Creating this type of partnership was motivated by her understanding on what children in the school community need, and it directly relates the benefit of being able to provide clean clothes for students and families to the school goals. For Dr. Ellis, clothing is an important part of making sure her students feel good coming into school, and she has prioritized that in the partnerships she makes.

Mr. Dent placed similar emphasis on acquiring clothing and food to meet the needs of students and families from impoverished backgrounds. He partnered with local churches and with figures from Detroit to provide for his students in different ways. Here he describes an encounter with a local boxer:

> "Uh those things help for us here at Motown I just had a boxer of Detroit. Boxer just came in and dropped off a hundred coats. Mmm. He just came in. His gym is down the street from our school. I forget his name. Everybody knew him. He's like a champion right now. I apologize. But I think his name is Tony, something Super Bad Tony or whatever his name is, but he just came in again, gave our kids all our kids over a hundred coats drop them off and say, if you need any more, give me a call."

This was in response to a question about the partnerships he valued. He named this encounter explicitly because it supported an issue in the school that he deemed important. He also cited partnerships with churches as providing food for families in the following statement:

"Yeah so, we have made partnerships with some of our local churches and this year they were intricately involved in helping feed, especially during the holidays, giving out turkeys, food baskets and even in the past at other schools. At one school that I was at last year, we made a big partnership with a church and we were able to hand-deliver huge food baskets and those are the type of things that really really help us connect with the community and we found that many of these partnerships that they have a mission so the churches their mission have been to go out into the communities and they have found out that one of the greatest ways to do that is to be impactful to the young folk even at the school."

The delivery of food baskets not only helps with the students being well fed at home but also increases the school's connection with the families in the surrounding communities. Here Mr. Dent pushes for responsive material goods that help support student well-being, which he articulates directly translates back to the school performance goals.

Dr. Childs similarly adopted the same approach when considering what partnerships to use in her own school. As far as acquiring material goods, she also prioritizes food, hygiene, and clothing. Here she lists the different entities she would reach out to for support:

"Every Friday I made a connection with Panera bread and they bring us bread and pastries for our kids and for our staff. And the kids take the bread home. Cause oftentimes they don't have it. Or I have Delta dental that comes in that, you know, they clean, the kids teeth and I have another partnership with a, I can't think of the name right now where they check the kids' eyes."

In this statement, Dr. Childs is operating under the same logic that Dr. Ellis and Mr. Dent use when making these decisions: children perform better in school when their basic needs are taken care of. She extends this to talk about a support group that helped purchase uniforms for students:

> "This summer, this past summer, they (Alumni Association) raised $500 and donated it to my school and gave it to me at a picnic to buy my kids' uniforms. So to know that my classmates that I graduated with over 30 years ago got together, bought my kids, soap, and toiletries, and then gave me money to get uniforms. Basic stuff, people have to understand. We have supplies in the school. You know, we get title one funding, but the kids can't come if they don't have clothes to wear. So I have a washing machine in my school that Volunteer Corps donated. So Volunteer Corps is another partner. They donated the washing machine. I need to get it hooked up so I can wash some of the kids' clothes."

Here Dr. Childs explicitly names the fact that her school receives title one funding, but often it is not enough to address all the needs of the students. She also mentions how Volunteer Corps donated a washing machine to support her efforts to provide clean clothing for students. This is an example of the additional value an organization like Volunteer Corps brings to school spaces, as donation of material typically falls outside of the organization's set responsibilities. Once again, this commentary from the school leaders calls into question the notion of equitable funding in the Detroit public schools. If the school leaders are having to create partnerships to provide basic necessities for students, it may suggest that the city itself may need to do more to meet the needs of students and their families. Following sections will further explore the nuances of this specific partnership relationship.

Sub-theme Two: Human Capital as an Abstract Resource

Throughout the conversations with the participants, it was becoming apparent that staffing was a significant challenge for the schools included in the study. This reality caused the participants to place a great amount of value in human capital. Human capital is classically constructed as an intangible quantity, which is why I use the language of "abstract resource" to describe it. When school leaders are bringing volunteers into a building, they are effectively adding to their collective capital without taking on labor costs. Thus, it was important to understand the varying ways school leaders perceived the value of this specific benefit.

Mr. Dent offered commentary on the state of education in Detroit and his assessment of why human capital from external organizations is important. He states, "Hey. If you are interested in education here in Detroit, they (Volunteer Corps) have different pipeline things that people can bring in so it kinda brings them in to that. I love that, 'cause bottom line is, on top of a lot of things that we're having, we don't have the manpower in schools like that. We need people. We need people to come into education, so that's one thing, to get more people into education from this experience." Here he expresses a lack of people in education in Detroit, which makes it difficult to advance change efforts. This sentiment is echoed by Michelle, the team manager at Mr. Dent's school. She explains:

> "And coming back to this city and there aren't many teachers and... That was another
> thing that I noticed that was different. I was a dime a dozen in Chicago. In Detroit I was
> one of the few that they had hanging on. So it was a lot of things that I've noticed that are
> completely night and day, and it's very, very unfortunate, but I like how Volunteer
> Corps... I can appreciate the difference Volunteer Corps makes as an Educator because
> I've been in classrooms that needed help and we had no extra people."

160

Reflecting on her time as a teacher, she discusses how it felt to be in a classroom with little

support on how the people provide by an organization like Volunteer Corps, help ease various

pressures for teachers. Roger, the manager at Little elementary recounted how Dr. Childs

referred to the Volunteer Corps organization when she first met with him.

> "I don't have to lead an all-star team in order to have success, I just need the players."
>
> Right now, she's like, "Before you came in we were playing a game of basketball with
>
> four players on the court. You can only do so much when you're short of people. I just
>
> need a warm body. And I can teach them, we can teach them, we can work with them to
>
> make them successful."

Expressing the need for warm bodies in this way helps to punctuate the value school leader place

in organizations that provide human capital. It also serves to prove the fact that there is a general

understanding that the schools in Detroit are perceived as understaffed. The idea that staffing is

an issue in the schools may be evidence that access to equitable funding may still be an issue

within predominantly Black urban school settings.

> Discussions with Dr. Ellis clarified the various ways schools derive value from human

capital. She described her process of working with a corporation that helped support recreational

events for her students.

> "Keller Williams, did a red day with us, so there's corporations that have days or hours
>
> set aside that they are employees have to give back to the community and so Hope has
>
> been receptive to Keller Williams, they come to bring over a 100 volunteers to plan a fun
>
> day for our students and as those volunteers come in they begin to talk to the students and
>
> talk to the teachers and then they form relationships that they want to come and help the
>
> gardening program and my teachers are I guess they understanding the needs here and

then they will reach out to me and say hey they (volunteer) wants to come and do the

gardening program."

Not only did this partnership result in 100 volunteers being brought to the school to help support

a field day, but also helped in generating more opportunities for partnering. Dr. Ellis discussed

how one volunteer from the Keller Williams community day connected her to a robotics

programs that became a new after-school option for some of her students. She describes: "And

they came every Tuesday and Thursday. They had 15 students that were on the robotics team and

the robotics team went to... They won... They came in first place, at the state level, and then they

went to the national level. They didn't place in the national level, but they were recognized for

their social justice project with, the most inexpensive way to get water out of the lead pipes." The

students working with the volunteer for the robotics team got to work on an interesting project

and got exposure for their participation.

In speaking directly to the benefits of the Volunteer Corps organization, the school

leaders expounded on what it meant to have those extra bodies in the school space. Dr. Ellis

makes commentary on utilizing the unique skills of individuals in the Volunteer Corps team.

"They (Volunteer Corps) support the school-wide goals, not just only in the classroom,

but of course they are part of the attendance team as well. And, and even an instructional

leadership team they are, a part of, because there's always a corps member that's really,

really good with data. I've been very lucky to always have that one corps member who

wants to go over and beyond as well. So I kind of appreciate those over and beyond corps

members and they kind of work with me and, you know, organizing the data."

In this example Dr. Ellis is leveraging the existing skills of the volunteers who are in her

building. Dr. Childs provides more context that helps in understanding the value of the members

of the Volunteer Corps organization. She states:

"They just do everything more than just working directly with our students. So that, and like I said, I didn't know anything about Volunteer and I was in education for over 20 years until I went to Harper woods. And just the positivity they bring to the building. When you walk into the building and you see those red jackets and they're dancing and singing and you know, and the kids, cause again, you never know what Someone's going through during the night and when you walk into any building with Volunteer Corps."

She explains how the organization's volunteers contribute to more than just the academic achievement in the building. Having the extra support of the volunteers even for just boosting the student morale is important. Dr. Childs describes another key thing she appreciates about Volunteer Corps here: "You know, it's great that you asked that because Volunteer Corps that they don't wait to have me say, doc, what you need? They jump in. So, they have something that I saw that I didn't see, you know at the other schools, they do so much with our staff and that's one of the things that's very important to me is to improve staff morale. So, volunteer corps always does monthly celebrations for the staff, monthly celebrations for, you know, the kids during school and afterschool." This serves to emphasize her general thoughts towards the volunteers. For Dr. Childs, it is useful to have positive volunteers who insert themselves into spaces to be helpful.

Sub-theme Three: Benefits to Support Goals

In this section the participants discuss the ways benefits help support the schools' vision and goals. As stated earlier, the school leaders in the study opted to create partnerships with organizations that easily aligned with their already predetermined mission and vision. Understandably, the school leaders' perception of benefits is also colored by the extent to which those benefits can support goals. It is important that the way they construct benefits in this section are services that the school leader did not have to pay for.

163

Mr. Dent primarily emphasized his school's commitment to academic achievement as a goal. In service to this goal, he highlighted partnerships with organization that provided services that directly influenced academic achievement. He starts by describing a partnership with an organization that wanted to provide tutoring services for the school.

"I'll give you an example, we had one organization come in a small organization who communicated with the community meant to provide academic support to the school so we had some deep conversations with them and so we were able to pull that off, they would be able to help us as far as the academic achievement because now we are able to get other people from the career field to help come in and help tutor our students and so when we look at these partnerships we just have to be transparent how it your work helping us achieve our ultimate goal, so we make sure we are purposeful in making sure we have partnerships that help us achieve our goals but in that we are finding that there is a mutual benefit."

In that statement Mr. Dent emphasizes that the benefit of having additional extra bodies, as tutors, in the building was in direct service to the school's academic goal. He describes another partnership with an individual who brought academic services into the building.

"He had solicited a lot of partners, a lot of corporations that had really gave to his foundation, and so we would allow them to come in. And some of the deliverables were simply allowing free tutoring to our students. And they would do it after school and on the weekend. And even as a byproduct of that, he had recreational services that were offered to the students as well. And so we started seeing chess teams develop, we started seeing after school boys and girls basketball programs, weekend programs and all of those things that really provided a well-wrapped around service for our students."

164

Here the major benefit of this partnership was the access to tutoring services. However, this individual' support branched off and create other opportunities for the students.

Dr. Ellis had an explicit focus on attendance with the benefits she highlighted. For her, the provision of benefits was to be directed towards incentives for the students to come to school. They enacted this, in most cases, through celebratory events where students could only attend if they had accrued some attendance-based currency. She elaborates on this in the following quote:

"So like just Keller Williams for example, they will do their red day at multiple, they never went back to the same location and this was going to be the first year that they were coming back and wanting to continue to make their red day at Hope because it was a success. We tied in attendance a month ahead of time so the kids could get tickets to participate in a little game and every day they were in school, they got, they earned a ticket because you know, again, the partnerships must support the goals of the school. So trying to incorporate, well they want to do. And an area to support is, you know, attendance and behavior lets make have the kids work for what we want to provide them at the end of the school year. So, it works for me because I can increase in attendance and decrease negative behaviors and then it works for the partnership because they feel good about being able to provide these opportunities. So the students, and I feel good because there's no cost to the school."

Here she leverages the contribution of the Keller William's company as another way of supporting multiple goals in her school. This way the use of the organization is acceptable to the district, but also because it allows Dr. Ellis to throw a recreational event for her students without going into her budget. Dr. Ellis also describes utilizing the same tactic with programs to support positive behavior. She shares how she manages a partnership with the Wayne State University basketball team for this goal.

165

"They have to do community service and volunteer hours. So, they, the basketball team will come in once a week and have like a life skills class with the middle school students during their lunchtime. And the kids really appreciated that, you know, that P near peer mentor type, you know, opportunity to work with the basketball team. So we were, and they were looking to get more hours, so they were wanting to start coming in three times out the week until you know, all this ended. So I'm looking forward to starting that partnership up again because they were going to run some basketball camp, some little three on three basketball camps for the students. And we want to tie that into the positive behavior."

This shows level of consideration when choosing to partner with organization. The connections are sought for benefits to the school, but it is up to the school leader to leverage these things into services, or items that support their overall goals. This is emblematic of the strategic maneuvering of school leaders who may not readily have access to programs, or incentives to support students, and further emphasizes the importance of partnerships.

Sub-theme Four: Access to Money/Saving Money

One thing that came up constantly over the course of the conversations with participants was the role of money. As previously established, the schools are positioned in resource constrained environments. In this type of context, successful leaders are those who can find and utilize partnerships that can either save money or help raise money through a variety of methods. The monetary value is difficult to fully understand because they typically render the services free for the school and are not tracked in any sophisticated way at the school level. Sometimes, this effectively creates a "shadow" budget of sorts, where the school leader can program and have events without dipping in operation funds. School leaders are likely to favorable perceive organizations that provide some sort of monetary benefit. This section focuses of the way

participants perceived and managed relationships with external partners that contributed monetarily.

Given the specific focus on Volunteer Corps, it is important to begin this discussion with the organization and its approach with money. Sean was helpful in obtaining a program level perspective of this topic. He explained the various funding streams for the organization, and the ways the organization distributes the resources from the funding streams. He described:

"Yep. We do receive funding directly from the school district. They provide... Typically, in Detroit, it's been $100,000 per school. And then, we're also part of the Corporation for National and Community Service in the AmeriCorps network, so we have a grant through Michigan's Service Commission at the state level. We receive a portion of our funding through AmeriCorps. And then, those are the two public dollar sources. And then, we have to raise the rest through private sources, so individuals, corporations and foundations form the rest of our revenue structure."

He continues to explain why this is beneficial for the schools and how they leverage fundraising processes.

"So yes, we have these avenues, we're able to gain private funding and state funding and federal government funding that is not applicable to even the schools that we work in. And so we're there to really fill the gap that schools just physically cannot at the moment. And so I think that's... Really for me, that's where I sort of see ourselves working, is trying to fill a gap that while we're trying to fill it we're also trying to make that gap disappear. And that's something that actually brought me to Volunteer Corps versus other opportunities that I had."

Volunteer Corps can raise money and help the school fill in in the areas where they struggle. In the conversations with the school leaders, there was a consensus that the Detroit schools has a

staffing issue. One of the most significant ways Volunteer Corps interacts with schools is the provision of full-time volunteers for no cost to the school. Sean spoke to this idea in the following statement:

"Is a dollar spent at Volunteer Corps the best use of that particular dollar and the financial resources in a resource-constrained environment?" And we could talk about how schools are funded and why that resource constraint is there and the inherent inequity that goes into school funding...So is a dollar spent here better than a dollar spent somewhere else? And I think at the end of the day, what I come back to is that for a dollar spent on Volunteer Corps, you are getting a team of anywhere from 8-10 young people that go into a school with a shared mission and vision and sense of purpose that are hopefully doing the right things when it comes to working with students in the particular context that we work in, which is Detroit Public Schools Community District."

The young people who work for Volunteer Corps constructed as an asset for the school communities they are a part of. Earlier comments from school leaders show that the members from volunteer corps are often included in faculty and administrative team meeting and given significant positioning in the school. This means schools using the Volunteer Corps organization are benefitting from having full-time, trained staff members at little cost.

Each of the school leaders also provided commentary on the relationship between Volunteer Corps partnership and money. Dr. Ellis spoke to the changes in the district the resulted in Volunteer Corps being moved out of her budget.

"So this school year is my second year or second year. So the district in the past I was able to purchase Volunteer Corps with grant funds. So Volunteer Corps was not a new partnership for me, but moving into under the new superintendent and leadership, they selected the schools to partner Volunteer Corps with and so Hope was selected to be a

Volunteer Corps school, which I, that was one of my asks because I had worked with

Volunteer Corps before and wanted to have that partnership at Hope as well. So they did

allow me to be a Volunteer Corps school and in the district pays for it, which is good

because it's very expensive."

Here Dr. Ellis not how much Volunteer Corps costs and how helpful it is that the district has

taken on the cost themselves. This decision has given her more flexibility with her budget to do

other things for the students. Mr. Dent echoed this sentiment in his statement:

"Oh, that's a great question. Great question. For us, it's (Volunteer Corps) being provided

by our district. So, so in a school level, my budget, I have, I don't put anything towards

that, that as a service being provided by the district. I don't know their exact expense, but

that's okay. The district has given us that the bottom because we were in the bottom 5%,

just some additional academic support. For me as a school leader, I don't have the line-

item budget that."

Dr. Childs posited an important question citing the money being spent on Volunteer Corps. She

spoke about the fact the district administration had questioned the efficacy of the program

regarding academic achievement. She states:" So that's about a million-dollar contract, a hundred

thousand dollars at Noble other schools. So, if they're not seeing that the scores are moving and

then what do they need Volunteer Corps for? So he kind of lit a fire under them because

Volunteer Corps had been in, you know, Detroit public schools, community district schools for

about seven or eight years. Mmm. And when he came over, he wants to come down and see, you

know, where's this going? Because after five years you should start seeing improvement in

anything." This quote serves to emphasize the expense of the partnership with this organization,

as well as present valid questions of program impact.

This discussion around the value of Volunteer Corps and the money saved by the district absorbing the cost had interesting implications. The school leaders were not paying for Volunteer Corps, but they also felt like the organization was not totally free since the district was paying for it. This led me to ask the school leaders a hypothetical question about money. I asked, how much additional money on top of their standard budget, would they need to not have to partner with Volunteer Corps, and how would they spend that additional money. The goal of this question was to understand just how much they valued the organization and what types of things they would focus on with full discretion over the budget. Dr. Childs can arrive at an answer really quickly, stating. "And I'll say about 200,000. And the reason, because again, you know, I, really, really loved Volunteer Corps but if I had an extra a hundred thousand, 150,000. I can get other programs into the school building". Here she mentions that her primary goal would be in getting more programs into the building. Dr. Ellis had a more per-pupil approach to her answer:

"10,000 (per pupil) a year by getting an additional 10,000. Yeah, I can do some of the things that the volunteers do probably, let me say 20,000. (laughs) This money would have to meet basic needs like clothing and then provide that entertainment, fun activities."

Here Dr. Ellis focuses on the amount of money that would allow her to purchase similar services for her students. Mr. Dent takes a similar approach to his valuation of the money.

"It really depends on the amount of hours. Mmm. For us it costs roughly around almost round it out almost 10,000 a year to educate when you include the federal money as well. So you can look at it like that. I mean, anything from five to 10,000 per student, it could be a, could be a ballpark figure because some of these after-school programs are almost, some of them are most a million dollars a year to run. So it's very expensive."

170

Mr. Dent highlights after-school programs as something he would spend the money on. This suggests that for Mr. Dent the money spent of Volunteer Corps for extra personnel might be reallocated towards creating consistent after-school experiences for his students, which is just one component of what Volunteer Corps does. This observation by Mr. Dent speaks to a larger funding equity issue as the school leaders are not given the real choice between enough funding for these programs and incorporating volunteer programs in the hopes that those programs will offer quality services.This may suggest that school district may need to evaluate the cost of programs, and organizations that work, particularly ones that have long standing histories with the district like volunteer corps and find ways to provide a similar value to schools. When taken together, this all suggests that school leaders are favorable of the money saved in using Volunteer Corps. Each leader articulated that given the discretion to allocate the money that is being used on the organization, they would opt to find, or replicate services offered by the organization. This shows the importance of the organization and the level of trust the school leaders have in this partnership.

The school leaders in the study also made commentary on money as a benefit outside of just the Volunteer Corps partnership. In most cases these comments serve to further express the fact that in resource constrained environments school leader are looking to these partnerships to fill in budget gaps or needs. Mr. Dent speaks to this with the following comment:
"But that's why it's important for me to get the donations. Well, people who want to donate and want to help because I don't have the budget anymore to actually pay people." This comment was in response to a follow-up question on getting more tutoring and after-school services into the school. Getting donations allows him to have the money to run programs for his students. Dr. Childs speaks to donations as well. She comments:

171

"So, we also have forgot about this one up Liberty mutual, they donated $500. For grief

sense, you know, for, for, for the kids who were grieving. So now I can send my

counselor and social workers to different PDs, you know, and pay for their registration

with that money."

Here she is using additional funds to support the professional development of members of

her staff. This shows that any additional money goes to an expense that will support overall

school goals. Dr. Ellis also provides similar commentary on the usage of additional money. She

states:

"Those students who have positive behavior points we try to take them out of the building

to field trips that are not necessarily school funded through school funds, like take them

to the movies or take them bowling or take them to CJ Barrymore, so those funds are able

to support really fun field trips that the students work towards by behaving and following

expectations that we couldn't normally take them just based on the school budget so these

partnerships also help with our school budget meaning our school checking account, so

that we can write checks to take them bowling take them skating and where else have we

been just places that our title budget doesn't support we are able to use those funds as

incentives for our students, and that helps with our climate and culture because every

month the students know there's a trip that they could look forward to going on that they

just simply have to earn by behaving so that helps our discipline data as well."

Here she is following on the discussion from the previous section on using partnerships to

support school goals. Here she explicitly names the title one budget and the school budget as not

being sufficient in providing these types of opportunities for her students. This approach is

emblematic of a school leader strategically leveraging resources to support multiple facets of the

school space. Across all three narratives we can see examples of this trend which challenges the

notion that school funding has arrived at a point of equity. This section provides several examples that suggest that schools may still need more to function properly.

Sub-theme Five: Connections as Abstract Resources

There are other benefits from external partnership organizations that are harder to define or track. For this section, I have labeled these as abstract resources. The previous section that carried that label directly addressed the provision of workers or human capital. This section more directly focuses on connections, or access to other types of programs, experiences and exposure. This section will discuss Volunteer Corps, and how organization helps facilitate connections. Once again, we start with Sean, who offers a broad example of the ways Volunteer Corps contributes to this construct. He states:

> "There are also things that we do on a Volunteer Corps Detroit staff side where we are able to partner with particular organizations that actually set up grant-writing opportunities for corps members. So, the thing I'm specifically referencing is an organization called Bookstock, and they put up grant-writing opportunities for corps members to do literacy initiatives in their school. And it's an organization, a coalition of folks that care about literacy for the Metro Detroit area, and the funding comes from an annual book sale at, I forget which mall, but it's a Metro Detroit Mall where they have this massive book sale. And so, they sell books for anywhere from $1-5, and it's really big. But a portion of that funding goes back into literacy programming at schools, and they open up a particular stream of that funding for corps members to actually get practice at writing grants. So, each year, the last two years, we've actually been able to get a project funded through that Bookstock organization for every one of our schools."

The members of the organization can get grants for literacy programs through this relationship with Bookstock. If it were not for the existence of the Volunteer Corps organization, it is likely

that the schools that are in need would not have received the resources from this organization. This serves as an example of the ways partnerships often branch off into other partnerships and provide other resources.

When speaking with the school leaders, there were similar comments on the ways the Volunteer Corps partnership helped in generating different partnerships, and access to more resources. Dr. Ellis provides significant detail on the ways Volunteer Corps has obstructed her school building with additional connections:

"So Volunteer Corps works around planning different student activities which may have them go out and seek sponsorship for student incentives and student give away to support the overall attendance initiative as well as our behavior initiatives um they sponsor our battle of the books, which they provide the books for the students because we don't have a functioning library so that has been really key in making sure our students have access to the books how they partner with book stock and provide the novels for our kids to read for the battle of the books as well as nutrition night where they bring in healthy eating habits and nutritionist to talk about healthy eating and work out where there is a Zumba class or something for the day just to get parents and students in the right frame of eating healthy, so it varies from year to year as to how Volunteer Corps supports by bringing in other sponsorships and other organizations to support our overall goals."

In this quote Dr. Ellis refers to the literacy program mentioned by Sean earlier, and the different programming the organization contributes to. It is also important to note that these types of practices are outside of the standard functions of Volunteer Corps. This is also because Dr. Ellis has allowed the organization to have the flexibility to function in this way. In contrast, Mr. Dent sees the organization's role as only being the provision of tutoring and in-class support, which

174

may restrict the different events members of the organization can work on. This speaks to a key area where the school leader's impact can influence the organization's work.

Sub-theme Six: The Cost of Time

The role of school principal is a challenging undertaking, as the principal is often responsible for managing several different issues and stakeholders. This reality makes time one of the most valuable resources for school leaders. Effective time management is a pivotal part of the leadership role, and a successful principal is one who manages to effectively and efficiently allocate appropriate time to each task . One construct of "time-use" literature is the time spent on external partnership work. In school environments where school leaders are managing multiple partnerships, like the DCPSD under the new policies. This means there can be an inherent time cost in acquiring, utilizing and maintaining partnerships with organizations. This section discusses time as a cost for the use of external partnership organizations. School leaders provide insight on the time they spend working with organizations and engage in hypothetical on the ways they would spend their time if they did not have to pursue partnership work.

To get an understanding of the time school leaders spent maintaining partnerships, I ask them each to estimate how much time they were using. The exchange with Dr. Ellis went:

> Interviewer: "How much time would you say goes to the maintenance of multiple
>
> partnerships in a percentage if you had to give a percent daily?"
>
> Dr. Ellis ":Mmm, maybe 10 to 15%."

This amount of time is consistent with some literature on principal time use. It is also emblematic of the structure in her school, where many of the tasks related to partnership are distributed. When Asked the same question Mr. Dent responded:

> "Oh wow. Yeah. So again most of my day I definitely purposely had to dedicate it to the
>
> students of our building. Mmm. I do dedicate at least around 5% of dealing with other

things by the 10% Oh, other things that can help benefit us. I try not to go over that. I

really honest to that because that can it up to 20% and 30% easily real quick. The

monitoring, the amount of people who really want to give back. And that's what I would

say when you asked that feeling that you could get somebody just coming with some

some things. So potentially weed out people even before you even sit down with them.

Because I don't know how many times I've sat down with groups and it's more on the side

where it doesn't work out that it does. And I find myself many a days that I just wasted

just time."

Here Mr. Dent shows how the work of maintain partnerships can easily snowball to encompass

more time than originally intended. Dr. Childs offered similar observations around time use. She

states: "I try to give about 25%, 25 and 30 because of the major thing. And I'll say let's keep it at

20 to 25 because of, okay, focus for me is to be in the classrooms, making sure they're going

instruction, you know, teaching and learning is happening." She tries to keep the time spent at a

level that still allows for the primary emphasis to be learning, which was something all three

school leaders emphasized in their discussions.

As a follow up to asking about time spent, I asked the school leaders about what they

would do if they had all their needs met and did not need to spend as much time maintaining

partnerships. Each school leader stated they would focus more on instructional time. Dr. Ellis

articulate this in the following quote: "Then I would be in the classrooms. And making sure that

the students are on track and my teachers are giving 100% every day all day. I would just spend

time in the classrooms." Which shows that the time cost of managing partnerships is interfering

with her ability to spend more time in the classroom. Mr. Dent reaffirms this sentiment in his

own quote:

176

"You would spend it on the main core mission: Academic achievement. So you would

spend more time on that even though we try to spend as much time as we can on that, but

knowing that you have some additional partners that can help, you do wanna spend time

with that because that ultimately helps the ultimate goal. But it would be spending more

direct time in dealing with academia if I had the ability to do that where others were

definitely holding down the partnership area."

He emphasizes the partnerships are important, since when used properly they can support the

overall goals of the school. But overall states how academic achievement would be foremost. Dr.

Childs' comments provide more context to the tensions in using time for multiple programs. She

comments:

"Just, you know, Harper Hill there was about 35 partnerships. It was too much, you

know, as the principal of the high school, middle school and alternative school that was

too much there as a new principal coming in. And then they have all these partners one

day, that I had about eight meetings in one day. And, yeah, and I was so overwhelmed, I

was so tired. I was so upset because I just couldn't believe that. How can I do

observations? How can I meet with the kids? How can I do all of these things? And you

have eight meetings cause you have all of these partners."

She moved to a school that had several established partnerships prior to her arrival, and it creates

strain on her ability to manage her other responsibilities. This means school leaders who are

using partnerships need to place a limit on the amount that is in the building because of the time

use.

Even when partnerships are successful, they still incur a time cost on the principal and the

school. Dr. Ellis discussed a successful partnership with a community organization to conduct a

Christmas drive. She explains:

"I did a Christmas drive for my students where every single student received at least five gifts. Mmm. Which was the best day ever because every student was in school that day because they wanted their gift and to see their expressions because they had, they were able to fill out a wish list. So there they got things. They were personalized. So the family's at Walt Lake. So each wish lists and items for that student, wrapped it up, put their names on it, which was the best Mmm. Partnership ever. It was very time consuming because they called every day wanting, is there any new students or such and such, didn't turn in their list, it drained me, but to see the outcome of it was worth it."

Even though there is clearly a benefit to partnering with this organization, Dr. Ellis still expresses the fact that it was a time-consuming endeavor and draining as well. When there is a clear understanding of the benefits, the school leaders will absorb this cost because of the potential for benefits. Mr. Dent explains:

"It's one of the things that happen in as a school leader you do have to be able to manage these type of things because you would be surprised how many people really want to help schools and so you'll have people just pop in you'll have people who want to get on your agenda, your schedule so one of the things I like to communicate with my front office is that when they come in, my instructions are I would like to hear them out first because they may have something that we may need."

This shows that school leaders in these types of situations, in schools that require the use of partnerships, must operate with some level of flexibility to properly manage potential partnerships. There always must be some time to meet, because of the potential of getting access to a resource. For the school leader working in urban settings, time is a valuable resource that is essential for change. Using time to build and maintain partnerships has the potential to generate resources and affect the school community.

178

Sub-theme Seven: Needing Space

One thing I did not consider when starting this project was the limitations space may place on a school's ability to effectively partner with organizations. Many of the organizations that provided after-school programs required space to operate. Dr. Childs expressed that Little typically had the space to accommodate all the different organizations, but this was not the case for all the schools. As a result, the school leaders in building without space, had to prioritize some organizations, which caused them to miss out on others. This inherently disadvantages schools where the building is shared by two schools, as the services rendered by an organization my only be appropriate for on age group over the other. This disparity presents another issue with equity in the school district.

For some schools, this dynamic created a tension, where the school leader had to weigh options and determine which organization would provide the most benefit to the school. Dr. Ellis speaks to this tension in the following quote:

> "Lunch program mentoring program. I told them, you know, they had to use the auditorium. They didn't like that space because, you know, I get it. It's not personal and it's, it's huge, but that's the only space I could offer. So spacing is a problem. For me, I don't have enough space for my teachers. You know, I have teachers sharing classrooms. I don't have a staff lounge for my teachers to even, you know, eat lunch at. So for a volunteer or a, the organization that come in at one space yeah, we, I lose some partnerships because I can't provide that space. I've already had to, you know, Volunteer Corps has to have a space. So Volunteer Corps takes up my, whatever extra space I might have."

Even though the Volunteer Corps relationship with the district yields many positives regarding organization, this space concern creates some issues. Since, the school is in some ways required to sue this organization, Dr. Ellis is automatically losing out on the ability to utilize other organizations if she wanted to. This presents a sort of paradox where the school leader really doe not have a true choice on the types of services they want to implement. She continues describing the space dynamics of her school as it relates to organizations and enrollment:

> "And spacing, spacing has limited some of the partnerships. But I don't look at it as a bad thing because if you really wanted to impact children, you will make this little closet space work. And that's all I have. I'm not just had empty rooms and refusing to let you use it. You every room is in use and when they can't get past the fact of not having space, that's just, you know, it's a, it's a no brainer then it's not, it wasn't meant to be. So I don't know if other schools have real estate at Hope is, it's tough. Very, very difficult. So I don't talk about space anymore. Even if the superintendent, I don't ask me about enrollment, I can't increase enrollment because I don't have the space."

Here Dr. Ellis, connects the space issue for organizations with an overall enrollment issue. This suggests that limited space as a resource is having a negative effect on her ability to acquire additional services, but also on the ability to recruit more studies. Knowing what we know about school funding, this could have adverse effects on the amount of monetary resources the school can have. She then describes how she has lost out on partnerships with organizations.

> "And so space use is a problem. Cause you know, we share with the high school. So space spacing is a, a very sensitive subject because I don't have the space and the way the school is, is divided, I simply don't have that space. And so that becomes a problem with partnerships as well because everyone wants space. They want their own space. And I had to a few partnerships didn't come back because I just couldn't provide the space."

Part of the issue with space for Hope, is the fact that the building houses two separate schools, with two different student populations. Mr. Dent expresses a similar sentiment but incorporates safety and security in his answer. He explains:

> "Those types of things and they've been finding a spot for them in the building and say, have to really think about your physical space. So many things had to be thought about. Physical space, security, sustainability. Especially many, the average person that you have come in to help, it's going to be after school. And do you have to be able to have a safe environment? You can't have them in parts of the building that are not secure. You can't have them in parts of the building where you don't have an accurate eye on them, you have to be cognizant of time. There's groups that have come in that wants to help. They volunteer and they volunteer program. The program was supposed to end at six."

Here Mr. Dent shows how a space consideration can morph into issues with safety, security, and parents picking up their students. It becomes a liability issue for the school when there are not enough considerations for how space is used. School leaders who are in schools that use partnerships are in a position where they may not utilize any partnerships due to space constraints. Space puts a limit on the number of organizations that can work with a school at one time, which might limit the services students can have access to.

Sub-theme Eight: Sustainability

An unfortunate reality with non-profit work is that many organizations are funded by exhaustible grants, which may affect the longevity of the program. This creates a dynamic where an organization that supports a school one year, may not exist in the following year. Also, some businesses and other organizations aim to partner with different schools each year, which affects consistency. This can be difficult for schools that have come to rely on specific partnerships for resources. This pressure is what helped in generating the sub-theme *sustainability*. The school

leaders all stressed the need to consider sustainability when conducting partnership work. Each

school leader recalled a scenario where an organization or individual could not provide the same

services consistently and the effect that had on the students. Dr. Ellis elected to share about the

Christmas drive and the school's inability to keep the program. She describes:

"So, and the kids were kind of looking forward to it again this Christmas and it was like,

no, that was just, I think they select different schools, and they didn't select Durfee this

time. So that was disappointing because the kids really was looking forward to it. And

that was one partnership I would have liked to have every year just because it benefited

all of our students. And students were coming to school and behaving because they knew

on December 17 their Christmas gifts were going to arrive. So out of all the partnerships,

that's the only one that didn't continue. And most disappointed that it did not because it

was wonderful."

In this scenario Dr. Ellis had no control in the sustainability of this partnership, but it still

influenced the students. This reveals that school leaders need to put extra emphasis on vetting

how sustainable a partnership is going to be ahead of time. Mr. Dent describes a similar scenario

in the following quote:

"I mean that gave you an example going back to when I had that professional golfer come

in. I mean we got some benefits of it, but the whole packet that we really wanted, it

would have been a cost on the school and it wasn't, that they were looking for profit.

They were just looking to buy some additional equipment because a lot of the equipment

that they had received was donated, but it was outdated. And so we were trying to teach

the kids the fundamentals of golf, but we were dealing with some real old gear. And so

the expertise was there for them to learn. But for us to take it to a step further, we would

have had the, even having an expense to buy some equipment. So those are some of the

negatives that you run into."

This comment demonstrates the role money plays in program sustainability. Some opportunities

wind up being too expensive to continue for students, and school leaders have to prioritize the

more cost-effective programs that directly address goals. Dr. Childs described a how money

affected a partnership at her school. She recalled:

"When it came to STEM genius, STEM genius we had at the SIG grant, excuse me, you

know, the school improvement grant from the state of Michigan, we had that and he (the

director of STEM genius) was getting paid. It was about $27,000, actually. Yeah. Before,

I think it was probably between 40 and 50. It went down to 27,000, you know, my second

year, because again, they cut the funds. It was different, not with me and him. We have a

great relationship. I think that someone downtown maybe felt like he was getting too

much money or something like that. And I didn't have any budget anyway, but I would

have given him, you know, 26 cause I know what he does with the kids. He takes them

everywhere. He exposed them to everything and he's very hands on. So for him it was

more than about the money, it was about the kids. but, but it could have went another

way, but I do have other partnerships. You know, when I, when I couldn't bring them

back, they weren't happy. No, I'm not gonna mention names, but you know"

Money almost cost her an important partnership with an individual was supporting academic

achievement for the school. This was a partnership she prioritized over others, which caused her

to lose partnerships, and upset some of those other partners. This speaks to the delicate balance

of sustaining external partnership relationships.

Sub-theme Nine: Racial "Cost" of White Volunteers

This Sub-theme extends a conversation started in the section on culturally responsive practices. In that section the school leaders and members of Volunteer Corps, discussed the training that corps members underwent to prepare to work with Black students. Some school leaders also discussed their approaches to working with white volunteers, whether it be screening them beforehand, or setting aside time to train them themselves. This action, teaching white volunteers to interact with Black students, is more than just a time-use issue, as it requires a different level of critical engagement. This section highlighted the racial cost of using white volunteers. This quote from Dr. Ellis resonates with this point:

> "Most of my partnerships the, the volunteers are Caucasian. You know, all of, right. They're all Caucasian actually. So I have to be very careful because what I don't want is for the volunteers to feel sorry for my students or to have pity for them because I think that's a fine line that I don't like. I don't want to cross. I don't want to, you're not going to feel sorry for us."

This quote shows that navigating race relations is more than just a time consideration. There is a level of awareness that must be fostered in volunteers to prepare them for this work properly. There is also challenging white supremacy, white pity and white saviorism, which while it takes time to undo these things, it requires much more. With the schools that are using Volunteer Corps, the organization itself incurs most of the cost. Volunteer Corps is also a good example for this because, as Sean stated earlier, the organization is actively pushing towards an anti-racist orientation. This has caused changes in recruitment, training, and continual reflection with corps members, which validates the complexities of race work.

5.12. Summary: Theme Three

An important takeaway from all of this is that the benefits and costs of schools engaging with external partnerships are complicated. Participants discussed the ways organizations can provide money, human capital, programs, items that support student needs, and resources to support school goals. However, school leaders must balance these benefits with the costs of time, space, sustainability, and the racial cost of using white volunteers. Balancing the costs in and the benefits creates a situation where it may not beneficial for a school to create partnerships with several organizations, as there may not be the capacity for partnerships. This also forces school leaders to prioritize and effectively rank the organizations they must use.

The racial factor is extremely important as many of the organizations that provide volunteers to schools in urban districts are predominantly white, which creates the potential for contentious racial dynamics. While school leaders were confident in the Volunteer Corps organization's approach to preparation, they had to do the work of cultural responsiveness with other organizations.

5.13. Summary of Chapter Five

Taken together, this chapter captures the unique experiences of Black school leaders in urban educational settings. Urban schools are complex sites that have a history of race-based disenfranchisement and resource constraint. We often push the school leader in these environments to negotiate their own perceptions, with cultural and community contexts to make decisions that affect the lives of their students. These factors come into consideration when school leaders generate external partnerships to meet the needs of their students. While this partnering opens the door for many benefits, it also presents new challenges and costs to the school leader. A school leader must be strategic when engaging in partnership work to navigate this complex context. In the following chapter I will expand the analysis to include frameworks

of sensemaking, culturally responsive leadership, and some tenets of critical race theory. Further, the following chapter will compare the finding and themes to existing scholarship in the field. Finally, chapter five discuss implications and contributions from this study.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Introduction & Organization of Chapter

The preceding chapter was an attempt to summarize the experiences and approaches by individuals working with external partnerships in Detroit, Michigan. Throughout the chapter I shared several narratives that captured the unique nuances of each participants' experience in either working with organizations, or in managing the ways organizations interact with the school space. These narratives helped form three essential themes: a) the value of information and organization, b) the influence of community context, race and culture, c) the complexity of benefits and costs, which allowed for comparisons across the study. These themes help frame the considerations school leaders must make when engaging with external partnership organizations in a predominantly Black student context. Chapter five uses relevant literature to analyze and interpret the interview, observation, and document data. This interpretation is all in service of answering the previously outlined research questions. This chapter also includes recommendations for research on educational leadership and policy, and the guidance for preparing urban educational leaders. To being this conversation, we must revisit the research questions that were stated in earlier chapters:

1) How do school leaders successfully partner with and implement resources from external partnership organizations?

2) What social factors (race, class, community content,) influence school leaders decision-making when collaborating with external partnership organizations?

3) What are the school leaders' perceived costs and benefits of partnering with external organizations?

6.2. Framing Chapter Five

The findings helped weave a complex narrative around the use of external organizations in urban, predominantly Black school contexts. The stories shared by each of the participants, across the three schools, helped explicate the considerations school leaders have to make when managing the school space when procuring external agents. I found that school leaders engage in a significant pre-screening and information-gathering process prior to considering organizations. With Volunteer Corps, the organization and the district help facilitate informational sessions to provide as much information as possible. For other organizations, the school leaders made time for meetings to discern an organization's "fit" for the school and the students. Also, with Volunteer Corps the organizations provision of in-building "managers" to help facilitate the organization of resources in the building. This included incorporating members from the Volunteer Corps in faculty meetings, including them on the administrative team, and partnering them with the teachers who would most effectively use them in the classroom. The decisions made by schools' leaders were informed by their own sense-making process, which was influenced by their engagement with external entities.

Participants' comments also helped elucidate the ways community and racial context interact with the school leaders' sensemaking around the use of external organizations. All the schools included in the study were nestled in communities with a long history of racialized disenfranchisement. Participants offered commentary on their understanding of the community that surrounded their schools, and it marked some of that commentary with shades of deficit conceptualizes of the students and families in the community. However, further conversations with school leader specifically helped clarify their stances, which located the disenfranchisement in a historical and legislative context. Their stances influenced the supports they looked for in

organizations. There was also an emphasis on cultural responsiveness and how work needs to be extended to include volunteers who often are coming from communities other that Detroit.

Five of the seven participants (including all three school leaders) were Black and from Detroit, which influenced the ways they sought help. For Volunteer Corps this was most apparent in the organization's approach to training, which was largely culturally responsive, but leadership from the organization expressed an interest in committing to an explicit "Anti-racist" orientation. When working with people who were not from Volunteer Corps, the school leaders engaged in their own, screening, training, and advocacy strategies towards a goal of cultural responsiveness and protection of student dignity.

Inevitably there were comments on the benefits of creating connections with partnership organizations, but they combined these comments with complex considerations on the costs. Here school leaders and team managers from Volunteer Corps spoke to the generative power of partnerships and the ways they can add human capital and actual capital to schools, and material goods and services to the community. School leaders looked forward to and spoke positively of partnerships because of this. However, school leaders talked about the time, and space they regularly negotiated to maintain organizations in the school. This created some tension, as school leaders now had to consider the efficacy of having too many organizations in their buildings and judging the right balance to get the most out of partnerships. There was also a racial "cost" to using white volunteers, in a predominantly Black space, as training and prepare those volunteers took more time and resources. In this study, it was found that Volunteer Corps as an organization, incurred that burden on behalf of school, with their training process, but school leaders had to train and prepare volunteers coming from other organizations and foundations.

6.3. Discussing the Link Between Themes and Research Questions

      I designed this dissertation project to address a specific set of research questions that have been detailed in the sections above. The themes generated from the research findings: a) the value of information and organization, b) the influence of community context, race and culture, c) the complexity of benefits and costs, which allowed for comparisons across the study are useful in addressing each of the research questions. The first research question, how are school leaders perceiving and deploying organizational resources, is primarily addressed by the theme, value of information and organization, but has elements reflected across all three themes. This is the case with each of the research questions. The following sections will discuss the various themes and subthemes and meaningfully link them to the research questions.

6.4. The Value of Information and Organization Revisited

      Across the literature information is positioned as a vital resource in shaping the decision-making process for school leaders. This notion is emphasized in much of the sensemaking literature which helps in outlining the process by which school leaders attain information about phenomena (in most cases implementation of something), mediate that information with internal and external pressures, create a perception of the phenomena, and engage in enactment (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017; Shaked & Schechter, 2019; Weick, 2012). Schechter et. al. (2018) articulated these steps as a part of a "mapping" technique where school leaders systematically work through problems to implement new reforms in their schools. The collection of information is necessary as it helps with perception and understanding of roles (Fullan 2002; Birken et al, 2012). Dr. Ellis, Dr. Childs, and Mr. Dent each engaged in the information-gathering process, by attending meetings and talking with the peers, or community members. The volunteer corps organization was useful to the end, as the organization had structured opportunities (professional development, summer training, monthly meetings) to share information with the school leaders.

Sean expresses this when speaking about the Volunteer Corps organizations' approach to summer professional development. Having Roger, Michelle, and Robyn in the building aided in keeping the flow of information current for all involved parties.

Information Drives Perception, Alignment, and Deployment

Access to information influenced the school leaders' perceptions of the organizations, their examination of organizations' alignment with mission and vision, and the structures put in place to implement change. Gawlik (2015), uses sensemaking as a frame for understanding how school leaders influence the understanding of accountability policies and translate that understanding to others in school for practice. Gawlik outlines the conditions for sensemaking as rooted in social interaction. The author explains:

> "Sense-making, however, does not occur in isolation, but rather is cultivated in social interaction and negotiation. Individuals make sense of messages. in the environment and construct shared meanings via conversation and interaction with others. Moreover, for school leaders, sense-making is deeply embedded in their context. The norms and routines of the school, organizational values and traditions, and professional culture provide multiple lenses through which leaders can make sense of new messages, and ultimately shape appropriate responses. (Gawlik, 2015 pp. 396).

This framing is useful as it helps in discussing the school leaders in this study, as all of them are responding to a specific context, resource constraint and a policy encouraging the creation of partnerships. The social interactions with the organizations helped the school leaders in developing their perceptions. Unanimously the school leaders showed confidence in Volunteer Corps and allowed for varying levels of autonomy with the organization because of their interactions in professional development and meetings. Michelle and Roger, the team managers from Volunteer Corps, also spoke to the importance of their constant interactions with the school

leaders, citing this as a reason for the successful partnership between the school and volunteer corps. Volunteer Corps programmatic goals of increasing student attendance, improving test performance and supporting behavior initiatives aligned well with the district and by extension the schools.

When discussing other external partners, the school leader still underscored the importance of conversation, being able to sit and speak with members of the organization, as being crucial to their perception and implementation. Dr. Childs and Mr. Dent both emphasized how they sit and meet with everyone who comes into the school wanting to help. Specifically, Dr. Childs, referenced the community organization that supports her school, and they way that they reached out to her when she started working at the school (the community organization existed prior to her arrival), which influenced her favorable perception of the group. This helps them in determining whether the organization lines up with the schools' goals, and how the organization, and their resources, should be implemented into the school building. Dr. Ellis, also relied on meetings and discernment to determine the value of other organizations, but she also mentioned delineating responsibility to her team that handles external partnerships. When asked about the non-Volunteer Corps organizations in her building, stated:

> "I guess for those, those partnerships and the relationships are bet they're valuable too. Seeing the overall success of a school. You can't do it by yourself. So you, you need, you need community partners. So I guess, when you form a good partnership I think it leads to other partnerships and other opportunities for other organizations to help support the school goals as well."

This statement highlights her perception of other community organizations and the way she sees them contributing to her school's success. These other organizations are essential and necessary to school operations, and she based much of that perception on information and interactions with

members from the organizations. All these examples provided by the school leaders fall in line with the literature around the sensemaking process. The school leaders face the reality of needing to provide for their students in resource constraint and gather information through formal and informal processes and shape appropriate responses to the reality (Maitlis & Christianson 2014; Gawlik, 2015; Weick 2020).

For the actual implementation of Volunteer Corps organization, the school leaders all approached it in similar ways. Their collective perspective of the organization helped set the parameters for what members of Volunteer Corps should and should not be doing in the school space. The major differences appear when examining the minutia of the implementation process. Mr. Dent explained that he primarily split the duties with his assistant principal and did not meet with the members of the organization as frequently. Michelle, the Volunteer Corps team member at his school, corroborates this account, saying that her team meets with the AP on a weekly basis and with Mr. Dent quarterly. Mr. Dent also stated that he mostly allows Volunteer Corps to focus on their work outlined by the district, choosing to not influence the process as much. This is likely since this year was Mr. Dent's first time working with the organization.

Dr. Ellis described an approach just incorporated the corps members in more ways. She mentioned having two monthly meetings with team managers, inviting corps members in faculty meetings, having quarterly "data-checks" with members, managing the corps members schedules, and working with Robyn, the team manager at her school, to optimize teacher-corps member pairs. She incorporates the corps members in this way because she views the group as "support staff" and not outside agents.

Dr. Childs holds a similar viewpoint to that of Dr. Ellis, where she views the Corps members as a part of the building, so she also includes them in instructional team meetings, staff meetings, and assessment strategy meetings. Roger, the team manager at Little elementary

shared another important way Dr. Childs assisted in the deployment of Volunteer Corps members. He recounted the times she would advocate on behalf of the organization to the teachers, which was crucial in getting organizational support from the teachers, which resulted in corps members having more time and more trust in the classrooms. With other organizations, the leaders elected to distribute tasks among staff members.

Once again, employing a sensemaking framing can clarify the deployment/implementation decisions made by the school leaders. Zuckerman (2019) applied a sensemaking lens to understand rural school- community partnerships. The author described this sensemaking process as the school leader attending to context and shaping the structure of the partnership based on continuous conversation driven improvement. The author also stresses the process being adaptive (changing a program based on context) rather than adoptive (using the program as is) when school leaders are engaging with established federal, or district wide initiatives.

Even though this work applied for rural contexts, there are traces that are visible in the narratives of Dr. Ellis, Dr. Childs, and Mr. Dent. Each school leader "shaped" the partnership with Volunteer Corps based on their understanding of the program and through continuous discussions/engagement with members from the organization. The discussion of adapting a program or simply adopting a program is visible when comparing how Mr. Dent, who was new to the Volunteer Corps partnerships, involved the partnership to Dr. Childs, and Dr. Ellis' methods of engagement. Sleegers et al. (2019) suggest that the difference in implementation could be because of a difference in experiences, a concept that is more apparent in the sections that address race and culture.

Lack of Formal Preparation and Collaboration

One information area that emerged of the course of the research involved opportunities for training and collaboration regarding external partnership organizations. This concept initially emerged when discussing how school leaders were learning about different organizations in the community. Dr. Ellis lamented she did not have many opportunities to talk to other school leaders about what partnerships were working in their school buildings. This prompted me to explore the formal ways school leaders were being introduced to external partnership work. All three school leaders expressed that their formal leadership preparation programs did not provide "real" opportunities to engage with organizations in the community. Dr. Ellis also shared that the time spent in administrator professional development was prescriptive that there was little room to brainstorm and collaborate with other school leaders on this topic.

That school leaders felt formally unprepared for external partnership work is not a new concept. Grissom and Loeb (2011) conducted research that broke school principal responsibilities in to six dimensions. The school leaders who took part lowly rated one dimension, external relations, which deals with the leaders' capacity to fundraise and partner with outside organizations. Many of the leaders expressed low confidence in their ability to engage in external relationship work. This could be due to the lack of explicit focus on this topic in leadership preparation or in professional development as expressed by Dr. Ellis, Dr. Childs, and Mr. Dent. To mediate this lack of preparation, the leaders leaned heavily on their own sensemaking to learn from community sources, informal conversations, and experience much in the way suggested in the literature (Zuckerman, 2019; Schechter et al. 2018; Grodzki, 2011).

6.5. Understanding Racial, Cultural and Community Context

Participants in this study were cognizant of the way they intertwined race and community context in their external partnership work. For the school leaders in the study, their experiences

growing up in Detroit and being Black leaders in predominantly Black schools and communities shaped their perceptions and decisions. Michelle and Robyn, who also grew up in Detroit espoused beliefs, social justice and community wellbeing fueled by their Black woman, and community insider identities. Sean and Roger spoke from a place of informed allyship and explicit anti-racist framings. These viewpoints and understandings of race, culture, and community help illustrate the necessity of considering these factors when advocating for reform in school districts. Also, it offers support for research that centers leader, and other faculty identity as a factor in school-based reform efforts.

Perceptions of Community

Discussing race, culture, and community context is an important part of understanding the processes involved in principal decision making. Some of this addressed in the sensemaking literature, as researchers have found that racial context, racial identity, and community context are all important considerations when making reform decisions (Coburn, 2005; DeMatthews, 2015; Evans, 2007; Irby, 2018; Meyer & Patuawa,2020). According to the literature, sensemaking is reliant on the interplay between the school leaders' constructed identity (a composite of life experience and positionality) and their constructed reality (school context, etc). (Ribgy, 2015; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Weick, 2010).

When race and equity are involved in school, leaders lean heavily on their own personal positioning within the U.S. identity hierarchies to guide decision making (Arnold & Brooks, 2013; Evans, 2007). Maloney and Garver (2020), illuminated the difference school leaders had in their thoughts on equity based on school context by comparing leaders from predominantly white schools to those from schools with higher minoritized student populations. Taken together, this suggests that individuals working in predominantly Black school environments are invariably deciding through a racialized sensemaking process.

196

Across the schools, this process was most visible when the participants were discussing their perceptions of the community surrounding their school. Understanding this perception was useful in analyzing the organizations the school leaders prioritized and the ways they deployed resources from organizations. Dr. Ellis discussed her community as being "needy" and cited some adverse effects of poverty as the major challenge in her school. This led to her prioritizing hygiene kits and other types of goods from external partnership organizations. Dr. Childs similarly focused on poverty when asked to describe the community. In both cases the school leaders are in a complex position as they are speaking from firsthand experience (Dr. Childs often drew parallels between her upbringing and the students) but framing the community with a deficit lens. Mr. Dent, named poverty, but often couched it within a context of historical, governmental neglect, locating the issue in a system rather that in the families from the community. With this perspective, he emphasized partnering with organizations that aided in feeding students and families. In all instances the school leaders spoke from a caring and well-meaning positioning, but the discussion about student need indicates the ways we frame communities and schools in broader academic and educational discourse. With Dr. Childs and Dr. Ellis, their reliance on some deficit language is less informed by malicious or damaging intentions and more is a function of their experiences grappling with the very tangible reality of poor communities, and not having the appropriate language to characterize these communities.

Black School Leader Identity

As stated previously, the sensemaking process is influenced by a combination of context and identity, and as such it was important to engage the participants in discussions of their own identity. The three principals in this study were Black leaders, working in predominantly Black school contexts, which according to the research would affect decisions and approaches to governance. Literature consistently frames the Black school leader as a person who navigates the

complexities of expected administrative duties and "ethno-humanist" care (Lomotey,1993; Brown, 2005; Tillman, 2008). Lomotey's definition for ethno-humanism is articulated as the school leaders' efforts for the social development of Black youth by not only focusing on education, but the skills successfully navigate an oppressive society. Sun (2019) defined the socially just behaviors of Black school leaders, such as mentoring, modeling, and community participation, which fit within the scope of Lomotey's work. Black leaders are also often positioned as socially just advocates pushing to increase educational equity, improve communities, and the lives of parents and students (Alston, 2005; Murtahda & Watts, 2005; Shields, 2010; Theoharis, 2009; Wilkerson & Wilson, 2017). Additional research on Black school leaders has found that these leaders' practices are often guided by adherence to civil rights, life purpose, morality, and spirituality (Dantley, 2010; Witherspoon & Mitchell, 2009).

There is also a body of Black leadership literature that interrogates the unique intersections of race and gender. Much of this work constructs a continuum that illuminates the often-obscured historical role Black women have occupied in Black liberation movements and theoretically connects that action to their current day actions as educational leaders (Alston, 2015; Horsford, 2012; Johnson, 2006; Loder, 2005). Black women school leaders are charged with governing schools while navigating multiple oppressed identities, engaging in "othermothering" of students and communities, and actively resisting repressive school policies (Aaron, 2020; Flores, 2018; Loder, 2005; Reed, 2012). "Othermothering" is a term borrowed from Black feminist research to describe Black women did work on behalf of the Black community by expressing ethics of accountability and care (Collins, 1991). Other literature highlights the uniqueness of Black male schools' leaders' approach to care and social justice, which is also intertwined with a history of activism (Smith, 2021; Bass & Alston, 2018). The

examples provided across the literature all serve the purpose of demonstrating the complex position Black school leaders often occupy.

The participants in this study were aware of their Black identity and the way it influenced their approaches to leadership. This articulation of identity and its meaning also helped in elucidating the logics of their decision making with external partnership organizations. For example, Dr. Ellis describes her commitment to working with her students stating that she wanted to "be the best and provide the best" for her Black students because they deserve the best, which has led to her seeking outside help to raise funds for programs and events. She remained in Detroit for work because it provided the best opportunity to affect the live of Black students. Dr. Childs again mentioned her choice to work in Detroit to improve the community and helping students who "grew up like her".

Throughout her narrative she describes several practices that were reflecting off "ethnohumanism" and "othermothering" She describes teaching her students about "code-switching" as a means of survival in the white professional world. Mr. Dent articulates his role as modeling best practices for students, and empowerment for students, parents, and other community members. Even Robyn and Michelle, who are leaders, expressed deep commitment as Black women from Detroit, and spoke to the ways this identity influence the training of their corps members. All the narratives surrounding Black leader identity corroborated the claims across the literature that Black school leaders are community oriented in their thought process and seek to empower and impact the lives of the students and the community. All of this occurs while navigating the demand of formal learning and cultural learning to bolster survival in a white society.

Culturally Responsive School Leadership

Across the study, the deployment and implementation of resources from external partnership organization was often meted out through culturally responsive school leadership behaviors. Culturally responsive school leadership as concept maintains that school leaders, especially those in minoritized communities, need to adopt various practices to best serve marginalized students. These practices include remaining critically self-aware of how their own values, biases, and beliefs influence their views of students (Khalifa, et. al. 2016, Furman, 2012), building strong connections with students, parents, and communities (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Riehl, 2000), taking part in community issue advocacy (Dugan, Ylimaki, & Bennett, 2012), and designing instruction and professional development around community knowledge (Murakami, 2012). Mayfield and Garrison-Wade (2015) demonstrate the importance of culturally responsive school leadership in their study at a middle school that was successful in closing opportunity gaps. They found students responded well when there was authentic whole-school alignment with culturally responsive practices. This required the school leaders to restructure the curriculum and engage in continuous critical professional development. These are examples of things that align with the broader literature.

With the Volunteer Corps organization, the principals favorably reviewed the ways the organization approach culturally responsive training. Dr. Ellis expressed how she has only observed good behaviors from the Volunteer corps members. This was because the organization devotes time in both the recruitment and training process to ensure corps members are coming into the school aware of privilege and power. Sean, the program manager who oversees training, spoke to the ways training directly discussed history and privilege. Sean also provided training schedules that showed how the organization screened documentaries about Detroit, and brought in professors, community organizers, and other activists to assist with the training. Roger,

Robyn, and Michelle each spoke continuous nature of the engagement with these topics. Roger had a weekly meeting with his corps members where he slowly taught them about all the connections between race, politics, policy, and education. Robyn helped shed light on the recruitment process to show how they screen out people who do not have a proper understanding of privilege and oppression. This is all necessary work as most of the volunteers who serve in the organization are white, and not from the Detroit area. This organizational commitment to cultural responsiveness and social justice helps lessen the burden on the school leaders, who do not have to worry about corps members inflicting racial harm on students.

The school leaders elected to discuss how they approached cultural responsiveness with organizations that were not Volunteer Corps. For Dr. Ellis, her culturally responsive behavior sought to preserve the dignity of her students by having personal meetings with organizations to do her own privilege screening and refusing to accept hand-me-down items for her students. Dr. Childs expressed a similar process of screening for viewpoints on privilege. Mr. Dent described engaging in training any volunteers who came into the building the same way he would train teachers. In each instance, the school leader must devote time to ensure that personnel coming into their building, who were mostly white, were adequately prepared to work with Black students. This communicates that there is a certain "cost" to using white volunteers, a concept that will be covered in more detail in a following section. The narratives on cultural responsiveness provided by the school leaders serves to demonstrate the activities that must be considered when partnering with external partnership organizations, particularly those that provide volunteers. The culturally responsive school leadership covers this to a degree as it suggests that school leaders should aim for whole-school alignment, but this should more explicitly include volunteerism if it is an expected element of school reform.

Antiracism, White Saviorism, White Pity

Anti-racism, white saviorism and white pity were some other concepts that emerged over conversations with the participants. Sean from Volunteer Corps spent some time during our discussion speaking to the ways the organization needed to move from a pursuit of cultural responsiveness to move towards an explicitly anti-racist orientation. He also speaks to how this was necessary in guarding against a white savior mentality among the corps members. Blakeney (2005), outlined the definition and theory of antiracist education. The author situated antiracist pedagogy in critical theory, leaning heavily on Critical Race Theory (CRT), as a frame. This work discussed antiracist pedagogy within the context of professional development for teachers. From this perspective,, teacher candidates should be required to grapple with the permanence of racism as a starting point (Brown, 2002). Kishimoto (2018), centered faculty self-reflection, course content, and antiracist organizing for institutional change as hallmarks of antiracist approaches to education. With Volunteer Corps the organizations commitment to corps members understanding privilege is a start towards fulfilling these requirements. Sean's desire to see the organization be more antiracist comes from his perception that the organization is not doing much to challenge the status quo. He explains that the organization is good for working within the current system, filling in resource needs for urban schools, but could be revamped in ways to create more opportunity and push for change in funding and equity.

An antiracist orientation with volunteers would also aid in challenge notions of white saviorism and pity. Dr. Ellis shared that in her screening process with other organizations, she actively looked to avoid who wanted to pity the students. Volunteers operating from a space of constant self-reflection, and historicizing of contexts would help volunteers understanding why it is problematic to pity the Black students in the school. Overall, the discussion on antiracism, white pity and white saviorism demonstrates the orientations a school leader might have to

navigate when engaging in external partnership work with organizations that provide volunteers. As stated, before the Volunteer Corps partnership helps mitigate as the organization positions itself as a socially just, progressive entity, but with other organizations that work would be left up to the school leaders. It is also interesting to note that none of the school leaders used the language of antiracism, even though many of their beliefs, practices and strategies reflect some hallmarks of antiracist work. This can suggest that evolving academic language is simply finding alternative ways to characterize the work individuals have been doing for years.

6.6. Determining Benefits and Costs.

One discussion around education that has persisted for decades is the cost of effectively educating students. This discussion is complicated by a history of racial segregation and location-based funding mechanisms that have generated educational inequity. Detroit, the city that is the subject of this study, has been one of the most discussed examples of a complicated educational funding landscape. The move to encourage partnership with external organizations was largely orchestrated to support schools nestled within the context. Across the discussion with participants there was implicit and explicit references to funding and how partnership organizations help navigate this. Mr. Dent stared that his decision-making process with partnership organizations is influenced by an internal (according to his perception) cost-benefit analysis of the program. With Volunteer Corps, Sean articulated a similar principal, stating "is a dollar spent on Volunteer Corps the best potential use of that dollar within a resource constrained environment?". The underlying notion from both statements being that there is some sort of tradeoff when engaging in partnership work.

Educational policy literature has discussed at length the difficulties with estimating cost in schools. Studies in cost effectiveness support approaches that outline resources or "ingredients", assign monetary values to those ingredients, sum the ingredients to estimate a total

cost, and calculate how cost may be distributed across entities (Hummel-Rossi & Ashdown, 2002; Levin, 2001; Rice & Malen, 2003; Shand et al. 2018). Sometimes, schools bring in volunteers, or receive services or items from external organizations—with no market transactions. Levin (2001) defines these types of contributions as shadow-prices. Hummel-Rossi and Ashdown (2002) analyzed how cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis were covered in educational literature compared to the health, human services, and medical fields. What they found was that educational literature had difficulty in neatly capturing all costs, and in defining what outcomes were associated with educational improvement. However, the authors discussed the potential value of engaging in cost analysis, as it could aid policy makers in data-based decision making.

This study was concerned with school leaders engaging in a school level management of external partnerships. Given this context, and the literature on sensemaking in the previous sections, it was necessary to lean on the leaders own perceptions of value, costs, and benefits since according to the literature, there is a no universal agreement on what ingredients or outcomes are valuable. There is however a body of literature that outlines the potential benefits for urban school leaders who engage in partnership work, ranging from an influx of resources, and various levels of social capital (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2017; Green, 2017; Green & Gooden, 2014). The participants' comment showed the complex interplay between the benefits of partnerships and the costs of maintaining those partnerships.

In-kind Goods

One of the prevalent benefits discussed across the participants was the provision of free goods for the schools. The school leaders discussed this phenomenon across the partnerships with Volunteer Corps and other organizations. These goods included food, hygiene kits, clothes, a washing machine, books, and access to a laundromat. The school leaders placed value on these

items based on their perception of the communities. For example, Dr. Ellis cited poverty as one of her biggest concerns with the students from her community; This led to her prioritizing clothing and hygiene for students whose families did not have running water, and food for students who came to school hungry. These things also supported school goals, as according to Dr. Ellis, hungry students are less likely to pay attention in schools. These types of things fit the "shadow price" description outlined by Levin (2001).

Human Capital Impact

Participants also discussed the human capital benefits of creating partnerships with external organizations. They design volunteer Corps as an organization around the model of brining more people into school building to work with children. These individuals are paid for by the school district and incur no additional cost to the schools themselves. Sean described "with Volunteer Corps, you are getting 8-10 young people with a shared mission and a sense of purpose". The school leaders articulated similar feeling about this organization. Dr. Childs praised the volunteers for their positivity, willingness to step in and assist. She likened the members of the organization to being a part of her basketball team, stating that prior to their arrival she was in a game playing "four versus five", and that while they may not be "all-stars" a warm body is good enough. Dr. Ellis made similar observations, focusing on how the presence of the corps members helped lessen the burden on her teaching staff and how she leveraged some corps members' skills, like data analysis, to support school goals. Mr. Dent outright stated that there was a lack of "manpower" in the building and that Volunteer Corps offered relief. All of this speaks to an accounted staffing issue, since all three principals alluded to similar needs with staffing and praised the organization for its infusion of talent in their schools.

As stated before, it is difficult to estimate the value of human capital in schools, particularly when that value is not captured by funding or finance documents. To help

understand the value of more "bodies" in school it is necessary to explore staffing issues in schools. Most of the existing literature focuses only on teachers who remain one of the most important school-based factors influencing student achievement (Aaronson, Barrow & Sander, 2007; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2013). Schools with greater proportions of marginalized students often have the greater difficultly recruiting and keeping teachers resulting in staffing shortages (Clark, et al. 2013; Goldhaber, et al. 2019; Sutcher, at al., 2016). High personnel turnover has also been found to have negative effects and achievement (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Following this logic, we can conclude that less teachers create less opportunity for achievement. Dr. Childs expressed how when she was missing teachers for a year, the Volunteer corps members helped keep the school afloat. This reveals how the presence of more actors helped counteract staffing deficiencies. Also, the nature of Volunteer Corps places members in the classrooms, as opposed to just supporting after-school programs. This makes the members like teaching staff. Since this study deals with perceptions, the school leaders' assessment that there is a staffing issue is significant, which then explains why they valued organizations that could provide volunteers.

Programming and Saving Money

Participants also discussed the ways organizations provided programs and initiatives that supported school goals and ultimately saved money for the school. Dr. Ellis discussed how she never had to spend any budget on field trips or celebratory events. Dr. Childs and Mr. Dent mentioned how all their after-school programming was essentially provided by distinct entities. When asked how much additional budget would be necessary to replicate these things, each school leader specified it would require at least 10-20 thousand per pupil, which is significant. Also, school leader argued these incentives were not just frivolous, they helped support school goals. Dr. Ellis discussed how the end of the year event sponsored by Keller Williams, supported

behavior and attendance, as students had to be in school a certain number of days without incident to take part. What this suggests is that school may have what suffices for general operations, but not enough to cover things that would help support school goals.

Time Use

There were also costs associated with utilizing partnerships with external partnership organizations. As outlined in previous sections, partnerships with different organizations incurred no monetary cost to the school. It is difficult to analyze cost traditionally. Participants in the study articulate non-monetary costs that affected their day-to-day operations. The school leaders spoke at great length about time as a cost of managing external partnership work. Multiple studies explore the importance of principal time use to create associations between time spent on activities and student achievement (Grissmon et al. 2013; Horng & Loeb, 2010; Lee & Hallinger, 2012). While there are dissenting opinions on how time used on specific activities truly affects achievement, one thing remains clear in the literature, more time spent on one activity invariable detracts from other activities. A school leader who spends the bulk of their time on behavior would not have the time necessary to spend on instructional planning, financial management, or external partnering. Lee and Hallinger (2012), argue that school context may drive the things school leaders can spend time on, which again would ultimately hurt other areas.

For the principals in this study, the time spent of Volunteer Corps was already highly scheduled because of the structure of the organization or delineated to other members of the leadership team. Partnerships with other organizations required more meetings, more observations and more strategizing, which could add a lot to the principals' plates. Also, because of the partnership agreement, school leaders were now overseeing ten or more partnership in their school building. Dr. Childs presented an interesting dilemma with this. Her vice principal went out and found over thirty partners who all wanted to provide for the school, which on the

surface sounds good. However, Dr. Childs was now responsible for meeting with, and managing all those partnerships, which completely ate into her time to do anything else. This presents an efficiency consideration for partnerships organizations where at a certain number, increases in partnership organizations may have a negative impact on the school.

Space and Sustainability

Two of the school leaders, Dr. Ellis and Mr. Dent, also voiced a "cost" of physical space. This is something that affected these two school leaders more since their schools "co-locate" with other schools. The school leaders described having to limit the number of partnerships they made specifically with organizations that wanted to run programs. Dr. Ellis described a scenario where two organizations wanted to use the library of the school, which is already shared with another school. This limits the overall potential of bringing in partnerships and pushes the leader to prioritize some organization over others. Mr. Dent described how using spaces after school also created issues with needed security and to arrange with parents for after-school pickup. In this example, space is a valuable resource because it is necessary for running programs that enrich students. At Dr. Ellis' school Volunteer Corps uses the library as their office, which limits other organizational ability to use it for tutoring and other services. Besides space, there was a cursory reference to the sustainability of organizations as well. Basically, stating that there is not guarantee that all the organizations will have the same funding ability year to year, as showed with Dr. Childs, who could not continue using a STEM support program once the founder ran out of grant money.

Racial Cost of White Volunteerism

The final cost discussed in this research is more of an abstract concept. As many of the school leader have described the volunteers from Volunteer Corps and from other organizations are predominantly white, in contrast to the predominantly Black student population. This reality

caused varying levels of screening and training across organizations. The process of training white volunteers to engage with Blacks students is more than just a time use cost. This is clear in the amount of research that is generated to white teachers to minimize harm, challenge biases, embrace cultural responsiveness, forward goals of justice, and contribute to equitable education of students (Fergus, 2017; Matias, 2013; Warren. 2015). This work requires so much more than just traditional training. The Volunteer Corps partnership helps mitigate this cost through the organization's social justice orientation and extensive training on issues of race and justice. However, with other organizations the burden falls of the school leader to screen volunteer groups, like Dr. Ellis and Dr. Childs, or to implement their own culturally responsive training like Mr. Dent. They could divert the time spent doing this to other key management areas, so this represents a "racial cost" of white volunteerism.

6.7. Theoretical Considerations–Critical Race Theory as an Analytic Tool.

"Applying the concept of sensemaking to the construct of race is necessarily fraught with complexity. Both are socially constructed, context-specific, value-laden, and subject to interpretation. Fluidity, a term often used to describe oft-changing meanings of race, also applies to sensemaking because it is, as Weick (1995) described, "ongoing" and "enacted in sensible environments" (p. 17). Thus, neither race nor the sensemaking of race means the same thing all the time in every context. Yet, there is pervasiveness about race, in all of its social, political, ideological, structural, and cultural manifestations, which helps to frame it to make sense of it. These manifestations and the consequences of them provide the text, the message, and subsequently the meanings we should derive, interpret, and challenge about the notions of race and racism in schools." (Evans, 2007).

The above quote by Andrea Evans was presented in an article that used aspects of CRT to understand the ways school leaders made sense of issues related to race and power in schools.

The quote speaks to the difficultly of naming and discussing race in educational spaces, because of the ever-changing meaning of race and its interpretations. However, the crux of the quote speaks to the idea that race influences multiple levels of the social sphere, and that sensemaking is important for navigating race and racism in schools. For me, the quote encapsulates the dilemma I encountered when initially analyzing the data for this project. In my initial conceptual framing, I centered the role sensemaking plays in school leaders' decision-making. While this was appropriate for discussion for my first research question and theme, which deal with the successful partnerships, and the role information and organization has in that success. However, once the discussion extended into issues of race, Black leadership, community context, and costs and benefits, sensemaking could no longer explain all the occurring phenomena.

After much reading and consideration, I arrived at taking tenets of Critical Race Theory and using them with Sensemaking as logical ways to frame the analysis of this study. Specifically, I draw on the following tenets: 1) the permanence of racism, 2) whiteness as property, 3) critique of liberalism, and 4) counter-storytelling. These tenets contextualized some findings and analysis of the participants' stories. These tenets also aided in understanding the ways participants were making sense of communities and enacting policy initiatives. This is most clear when discussing funding in schools, and that for their three school leaders in the study, external partnership work exists to save money through the provision of human capital and other abstract resources. Because of school funding, and the traceable impact of history and community context on school funding (racism, white flight, residential segregation), it is clear to see some ways CRT can augment the findings of the study.

The tenet that is often viewed as foundational to CRT is the *permanence of racism* (Bell, 1991; Crenshaw, 1988). In articulating the permanence of racism, Derrick Bell called for the adoption of a "realist view" of racism that suggests that "racist hierarchical structures govern all

political, economic and social domains" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). The inherent racism in these societal structures assigns status and privilege to groups by race, which helps reify discrimination and other like practices (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Crenshaw, 1988). The goal of acknowledging the permanence of racism is not to focus on overt or blatant displays of racism but to focus instead on critiquing white supremacy and its inherent relationship to power, hegemony, and access to resources (Horsford, 2010).

An example of permanence is racism is demonstrated by the ways Dr. Childs and Dr. Ellis construct their conceptualizations of the community. As stated, before both school leaders spoke to the neediness and abject poverty of the studies and families that attended their schools. This poverty is informed by history, residential segregation, white flight, restriction of opportunities through deindustrialization, and dispossession all based on race (Sugrue, 2005). While the school leaders were doing their best to describe a context, their description was missing an explicit naming of the fact that the poverty itself was rooted in structural racism. This racism is reflected in the ways that the school leaders were socialized to make sense of the community. Mr. Dent touched on some of this but also did not explicitly name the racism that was leading to the conditions of the community, which is paramount in a CRT-informed perspective. Understanding this would also help the school leaders in located the origin of the problems in their school community in racism and not in the students and families, which could bias their approaches and responses to various situations.

Another tenet of CRT is the idea of *whiteness as property.* Harris (1995) argued that because of the history of race, rights, and the distribution of resources in the United States whiteness could be considered a "property interest" (p. 280). Harris continued to explain that property functions on varying levels (the right to possession, use, enjoyment, and disposition), and that "whiteness" provides the bearer tangible and economically valuable advantages in

211

society (Harris, 1995; Horsford, 2010). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) created an analog for this in education by emphasizing the fact that whiteness within educational spaces often provided access to high-quality classes and curriculum for white students through mechanisms designed to exclude nonwhite students, like tracking, and honor programs (Oakes, 1995: Solorzano & Ornelas, 2002).

Whiteness as property, or a sensemaking interpretation of this topic, can be seen in the way Dr. Childs, Dr. Ellis, and Mr. Dent each refer to the disparity between their schools and more privileged, predominantly white schools. Their perspectives are informed by their long histories in education where they each had the opportunity to observe and hear about the work being done and resources available at schools in the predominantly white suburbs. For example, Dr. Ellis touches on this concept when she describes the origin of a robotics program at her school. She explains:

> "We had our first robotics team here this school year and oddly enough the robotics coach came from Bloomfield hills public schools because she came for a cleanup day, a volunteer day, with Keller Williams and she just wanted to, she spent the day with the kids and just wanted to bring robotics to Durfee because robotics is functioning very well at BH high school and then she brought in BH high school students to teach my students the robotics"

This was a white volunteer, coming from a predominantly white township, with a school that has had access to robotics programs for years. This same opportunity was non-existent at Dr. Ellis' school until this person, who decided to help by chance, brought it to the school. The critical race perspective would probably construct the access to robotics programs as a function of whiteness as property, as Dr. Ellis' predominantly Black school had no prior access to a program like this, without the goodwill of an individual.

212

Considering the relationship between whiteness and privileges CRT refutes neoliberal or other ideological stances that attempt to minimize the significance of race in society through the tenet, *critique of liberalism* (Guiner & Torres, 2004). This tenet eschews notions of colorblindness (race does not matter), meritocracy (success is based on individual accomplishments, and neutrality of law (laws do not treat people differently based on race), as these approaches all cannot recognize the ways race and racism interact with the law, policies, and practices for communities of color (Horsford, 2010; Parker & Villapondo, 2007). These viewpoints concentrate on de jure signals of racial justice, as opposed to any kind of structural change that involves the equitable redistribution of resources (Guiner & Torres, 2002).

Roger, the Volunteer Corps team manager at Noble, provided an example that helped in operationalizing a critique of liberalism, by speaking to the ways the city approached funding schools, He states: "And so just sort of seeing those things and doing research on property taxes for school funding versus like... In Detroit, we get funding from the state lottery as well, but that's equal across the state, not equity-based in terms of who needs it or where that money on the lottery is spent." In this quote, Roger speaks to the act of funding schools through property taxes and lottery and names the inherent inequity in this practice. Particularly with lottery taxes, state policymakers could argue that equally distributing taxes from lotto revenue is a fair and colorblind process, but as Roger alludes, this process takes money from the places that engage in the lotto more frequently and does not pour that revenue directly back into those specific communities. Thus, a seemingly colorblind funding structure is disadvantaging communities.

The final tenet that is relevant for this study is *counter-storytelling*. Matsuda (1995) explained that counter-storytelling is the process of telling a story that challenges, or casts doubt on master narratives, myths, and beliefs of the majority group (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). CRT scholars argue that counter-storytelling is essential as it allows space for the voice and

experiential knowledge of communities of color (Horsford, 2010; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This is particularly in educational spaces, which Ladson-Billing and Tate (1995), argue that research on education in marginalized communities is essentially useless if it is absent of the voices of people who make up that community (teachers, parents, students, administrators, community members).

A counter-storytelling approach is apparent across the narratives of all the participants, as each of them finds ways to engage in the community in different ways. Dr. Ellis had the contributions of the community organization that held space for her to have afterschool activities. For Mr. Dent, this came through conversations and input from the community members and churches. Dr. Childs has the support of the local community center who helped her understand the community and the available resources. Volunteer Corps invited many community scholars, community organizers, and historical organizations to educate corps members and implement various programs in the schools. In each of these scenarios, the participants were accessing the experiential knowledge and expertise of the people who made up the community. From a CRT perspective, these narratives and partnerships would serve as counter-stories that push against the master narrative of Black communities and families not being invested in education. Additionally, the school leaders leveraging of the Black school leader identities could also serve as an example of counter-story.

Engaging in Critical Race discourse is a necessary part of understanding how the school leaders in this study made sense of and approached partnership work in this study. As Evans (2007), argued race and understanding race is an important part of understanding how schools' function and the types of ways school leaders need to respond to combat inequity. As such, CRT helps contextualize the various challenges and triumph school leaders experience within the urban educational space. For example, when Mr. Dent, Robyn, Michelle, Roger and Sean speak

directly about the lack of resources and staffing for the school, the CRT tenets of the permanence of racism and critique of liberalism tells would suggest that the history of race-based disenfranchisement in Detroit is directly responsible for the described conditions. When Dr. Childs, and Dr. Ellis mention "other principals" who do not have to deal with the effects of poverty in their schools, they are really speaking to whiteness as property, where students in the who attend schools in the white suburbs that surround Detroit, have more access to opportunity. Even the notion of Volunteer Corps, and organization that sends mostly white volunteers into predominantly Black and Brown academic spaces, could be designated as an operationalization of interest convergence, the idea that progress only occurs for racially minoritized groups when it can serve the interests of the majority. Most of the volunteers serve altruistically, but there is also an award for continuing education and some prestige connected to the program.

Taken together, critical race discourse allows us to understand the unique positionality of being a Black principal in a historically Black city that has been ravished by gentrification and metropolitan neglect. The various theorists who have contributed to critical race theory over the years, position the field to understand the ways race interacts with societal structures, and given Detroit's unique history it is important to emphasize the challenges the racialized history of the city would produce for those working within the city. For example, passaging proposal A, a policy that tied school funding to enrollment in Michigan, is helpful for schools in theory, and logically had a lot of support at the time of its passage. However, a policy does not occur in a vacuum, and the history of property valuation, segregation, and white flight in Detroit created a situation where schools in predominantly Black neighborhoods were being underfunded. While proposal A was an attempt to mitigate this, the policy was coupled with an expansion of school choice, which led to students leaving the Detroit public schools, which hurt enrollment, which affected funding for the students (mostly Black) who could not leave. CRT helps in looking at

this scenario and understanding the highly racialized nature of the policy and the inadvertent harm it causes for certain communities.

With a complete understanding of this context, we have to consider the school leaders who choose to lead schools in these communities. Because of history and context, these school leaders are in environments where there is an inherent fiscal advantage because of racial widespread disenfranchisement. Their need to be proficient at the use of partnership organizations is not something that other school leaders in less diverse school districts would need to worry about. This specific context may also explain why leadership preparation courses may not provide the content that adequately addresses the realities of working in predominantly Black urban locations. This may also explain why some of the Black school leaders, still used deficit language to describe the community, because their preparation as teachers and as school leaders, may not have used a critical theory like CRT to interrogate the challenges of urban communities and urban life. Also, being Black and from Detroit placed an additional amount of pressure on each of the school leaders. Their identity was deeply tied to the success of their students and each of the school leaders expressed their joy in the job came from their ability to help students from the neighborhood matriculate to healthy successful lives. This is likely true for any principal, but given the way, Dr. Childs, several times throughout our conversations directly tied her upbringing to the experiences of her students I believe the shared identity adds a different dimension to the relationship. There is an understanding of shared values, community norms, and beliefs that Black school principals can draw on when interacting with Black students and parents, and all of the principals speak to their abilities to leverage this in different ways.

This study was aimed at sparking the conversation on these topics to push leadership preparation, schools' leaders, organizations, and school districts to critically analyze all the things occurring within the school space. CRT is useful because it allows us to identify potential

216

societal "blind spots" and figure out the best solutions for the marginalized. Using the theory is not about blame, but about understanding systemic oversights that reproduce oppressive behavior. The contributions from the school leaders and other participants in this study helped show some of the complexity when engaging in race work and hopefully this can be an informative starting point for dialogue and future research.

6.8. Scholarly Contributions/Implications for Research

External Partnerships

This project is within a broader research traditional tasked with understanding what is in the proverbial "Black box" of urban education. This research is also aimed at analyzing an emerging trend in educational reform. Increasingly urban school districts and schools are relying on external partnership organizations as major levers of change. For example, AmeriCorps has several organizations that work in education. Two of those programs, City Year and Reading Corps reportedly serve over 500,000 "disadvantaged youth. There are many more organizations with people working in schools across the nation every day. These are just examples of highly organized efforts and do not account for the number of community organizations that exist in cities. While there is work that measures the impact of this work (Bowden et al. 2018; Corrin, 2016), and research that encourages school leaders to leverage partnerships (Green, 2017) there was very little about process. This research elucidates process by providing a step-by-step process of the ways school leaders approach partnership work. The utilization of sensemaking as a guiding frame, and in-depth phenomenological interviewing help in gaining a detailed exploration of the thought processes that influenced decisions and helped uncovered what contributes to successful partnering in the minds of school principals.

There has been an increase in the literature calling for educational leadership preparation programs to strengthen and authentically prepare school leaders for the work of community

engagement (Betrand & Rodela, 2018). As a part of that call, this study provides a detailed look at the sensemaking and thought process of partnership, which can serve as an example for prospective school leaders within similar educational contexts. This is like other qualitative educational leadership studies that provide exemplars of justice, cultural responsiveness, community engaged work, parent engagement and other like topics (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Khalifa, 2012; Lopez, Scribner & Mahitivanichcha, 2001; Wilson, 2016). Research on understanding how Black school leaders navigate partnerships in Black school contexts can help prospective school leaders understand the many considerations of partnership. The discussion of context also presents the reality for leaders in urban schools and provides help for strategically navigating that reality. From a critical race perspective this research can also be informed through counter-storytelling as a method, which would privilege the narratives and experiences of Black school leaders (Horsford, 2010; Yosso, 2002).

Cost Effectiveness/Shadow Pricing

This research also grapples with cost effectiveness and the nebulous nature of "shadow-pricing" in education. Much of the research discusses the cost effectiveness of educational programs and reform strategies (Belfield, 2015 et al. 2015; Garcia & Weiss, 2015; Levin et al. 2017). However, school finance literature deals exclusively with concrete market transactions (Levin, 2001). This research suggests the importance of having a better understanding of shadow pricing. The findings showed that using external partnership organizations presents many opportunities for in-kind donations and other types of rendered services. However, if these values are not properly tracked and understood, policy makers could operate under the assumption that schools are receiving enough funding for operations. This trend is most harmful when considering communities comprising student with marginalized identities, where schools are often intentionally under-funded. The school leaders are creating opportunities with

partnerships, but the services and items provided suggest that inequity is still persistent and will not go away without increased action.

Understanding what school leaders' value from organizations can provide opportunities for targeted reform strategies. For example, the school leader's reliance on Volunteer Corps to provide human capital for more classroom support indicated a staffing issue. That school leaders expressed issues with attendance, but prioritized organizations that allowed for the provision incentives, which bolstered attendance, shows a need for more funding. Even though this study captured perceptions, which do not directly conflate with outcomes, these school leader perceptions provide policymakers useful pieces of information of the challenges school leaders feel they face. This can help with strategizing, or even outright funding of efforts that attend to the different problem areas outlined by the school leaders throughout the study.

Considering Race in Volunteering

Partnering with external organizations creates more opportunities for schools to receive volunteers. While volunteers are received well and add great value to the school community, there are some considerations that must be made based on race and culture. There is a body of literature that addresses white school leaders, white teachers, and white teacher candidates and the ways they must engage and learn to work with Black students (Fergus, 2017; Swanson & Welton, 2019; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011; Warren, 2015). However, it is difficult to find any literature that explicitly names the tension and training effort made with white volunteers. This research suggests that those who intend to volunteer is schools and work with Black students need to undergo similar processes to learn about privilege and oppression. Literature on culturally responsive school leadership creates space for this in the tenet, "promote culturally responsive/inclusive school environments" (Khalifa et al. 2016 p. 1283), but this research

suggests there should be an explicit mentioning of volunteering. This is necessary if external partnerships that provide volunteers are going to be a fixture of educational reform efforts.

Volunteer Corps presented an interesting case in this work as the organization absorbed the cost of needing to prepare volunteers for racial work. The research helped in illuminating practices adopted by the organization that could help other organizations, or school leadership teams prepare volunteers. The organization's focus of justice, culturally responsive training, and community-based knowledge are all techniques supported by the extant literature but are typically relegated to teacher/leadership preparation (Leithwood et al. 2020; Civitillo et al. 2019; Vass, 2017). Volunteer Corps is not a perfect example, as many of the practices do nothing to challenge systems more directly, but the model can serve as a good starting point for other similar volunteer providing organizations.

Tensions

This research also brought about several key tensions in the work of school leaders who engage in community partnership work. First, much of the literature on sensemaking positions it as an active process. For school leaders, this represents an additional burden when needing to seek out, understand and incorporate an organization into their school building. In many cases, school leaders may have a team of individuals supporting them to this end but it still takes dedicated time, which is a valuable resource for school leaders, to make these things work.

Additionally, when considering the costs and benefits of organizations it is important to understand that the reliance on organizations is another example of neoliberal, market-based reform strategies, similar to that of school choice. All of the potential partnerships that exist are effectively marketplace options that provide a particular "service" to schools. The school leader tests the market and chooses what organizations to devote time and effort in hopes of getting a return on investment. All organizations are not created equal, and all "good" organizations

220

cannot possibly exist at every school, which creates an organizational scarcity. Schools with school leaders who are unable to build partnerships with reliable organizations will still struggle to reach achievement goals. This entire discussion also highlights the conundrum: if schools need good partnerships to run effectively, are they being funded appropriately by the state? How can there be equity if certain schools need extra help to reach baseline goals? I believe this dissertation helps in highlighting these tensions to consider and helps in presenting the reality of working in urban school districts.

Regarding the race of volunteers, there is additional tension with the burden of the provision of culturally responsive or anti-racist training. Mr. Dent explained that in his school he was comfortable carving out the time to provide training to volunteers, but it begs to question whether we should encourage school leaders, who are already overburdened for time, to engage in more time-consuming practices. Volunteer Corps as an organization took it upon themselves to prepare volunteers to work with underprivileged students, something that provided relief for the principals working with the organization. If this phenomenon is prevalent enough the should a precedent for organizations or even districts to carry the burden of training and screening volunteers as opposed to allowing principals to engage in this work.

Future Research

This dissertation is only the first stage of a larger project. The second stage of this project will look to expand to capture the prevalence of this issue in urban school districts. The second stage will incorporate the perspectives of school leaders from this study to develop a survey tool for capturing the perspectives of more leaders. One step in the process for survey design is an expert critique of items. The school leaders in this study viewed and critique my interview protocol and offer suggestions for questions that would better capture data for more school

leaders. Using this information, I would hope to design an instrument that could assess the ways schools' leaders view and utilize external partnership organizations in their schools.

Future research could also attempt to estimate the value of support from external organizations. We still do not understand the effects the resources and services from external organizations have on student achievement. There is no understanding of how these effects differ based on preexisting contextual factors. Studies could attempt to estimate the monetary value of the services, and associate that value with student achievement, behavior, or other outcome measures, this could help in understanding the utility of schools engaging in external partnership relationships, and support district efforts to encourage school leaders to commit to this work.

The discussion of racial cost if volunteerism has implications for the ways schools and school districts approach partnership work. Researchers could employ ethnographic methods to investigate the ways volunteer organizations approach racial training and how that racial training is implemented in the school. Researchers could attend training, observe interactions, and speak with students and teachers to better understand the ways volunteers interact with the school ecosystem. This research would be necessary since volunteers are an important part of the fixture of school buildings and interact with students regularly. If the research is suggesting that the entire school needs to be aligned with goals of cultural responsiveness, then volunteers, who are a part of the schooling framework, need to be understood.

6.9. Implications for Practice

Leadership Preparation

Comments from the leaders in this study suggest that there could be changes to make leadership preparation and professional development more effective. The school leaders in this study expressed feeling unprepared to do the work of establishing and maintaining external partnership relationships, even though it became a major part of their jobs. This sentiment is

supported by research that has showed that school leaders often feel less confident in their ability to effectively manage external partnership relationships when compared to other functions of the principal role (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). To address this, I outline some suggestions from the school leaders below on practices that would help better prepare them for this work:

1) Leadership preparation programs could provide opportunities for school leaders to meet with and learn about organizations that exist in the spaces they work. This could take the form of bringing leaders of the organizations into the classroom to build relationships, or even bringing school leaders to see the work of organizations in their community.

2) Programs could also teach prospective school leaders to engage in practices like community-based equity audits (Green, 2017) to get them to learn more about the assets available in their communities. Some school leaders in the study expressed difficulty in naming "spaces of opportunity" in their communities and how difficult it was to engage in this work once already in the leadership role. Introducing leaders to this earlier could help in transition into their schools.

3) Professional development for school principals could allow for spaces where school leaders can think and strategize around the use of external partnership organizations. This way school leaders are not only relying on their sensemaking or immediate circles but have a wider pool of expertise to lean on and strategize.

This study also reemphasizes the need for educational preparation programs to engage in perspectives informed by cultural responsiveness and critical race perspectives. This is important in preparing urban educational leaders to work in marginalized communities. An emphasis on critical race perspectives can help school leaders acknowledge the permanence of race (Lopez, 2003) and the politics of whiteness as property and interest convergence (Bell, 2004; Ladson-

Billings & Tate, 1995) as ways of locating and historizing the context of schools in marginalized

communities. This emphasize would also encourage the curriculum to include counter-

storytelling all to reduce damage centered narratives of students and their communities

(Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

School Leaders

Discussions with the participants also provided insights on ways school leaders could improve

their practice regarding partnership work. These recommendations were generated through and

informed by the comments of the participants on the strategies they believed led to success when

implementing resources from an external organization.

1) School leaders should leverage their leadership teams when engaging with
   partnerships to make sure the work is disseminated among staff. This way, the school
   leader is not the sole point of contact and can focus on other priorities more
   effectively.

2) School leaders should communicate regularly with the leadership of the organization.
   Regular contact should be for understanding the goals of the organization, and for
   assessing benchmarks towards those goals.

3) School leaders should incorporate volunteers from volunteer-providing organizations
   directly into the school process. This means inviting them to faculty meetings and
   building trust between volunteers and faculty members to promote a shared vision.

4) School leaders should seek to partner with organizations that have access to
   community knowledge or that are driven by parents located within the community.

5) School leaders should leverage corporate organizations for connections to other types
   of resources.

6) School leaders should help ensure that volunteers are working with students in culturally responsive ways.

Throughout the discussions with school leaders there was an emphasis on communication and making multiple points of contact. There was also discussion an being open to the number of possibilities that may present themselves when working with organizations.

Partnership Organizations

The interviews also helped in understanding key behaviors for organizations when partnering with urban schools.

1) When working with a student of color, volunteer-providing organizations should adopt explicitly anti-racist, culturally responsive orientation in their recruitment, selection, and training process to help reduce the burden on school leaders.

2) Organizations should have leverage community members, leaders, advocates, and researchers when training volunteers to prepare them adequately for a city-specific context.

3) Organizations providing donations should consider the dignity of communities when offering to provide services or goods.

4) Organizations should have a point of contact person, when possible, who is regularly in the school building and can act as a liaison between the people who work directly in the building, the school faculty and staff, and the upper management of the organization.

Much of this comes from the discussion of the volunteer corps organization, one partnership that was commonly cited as being successful across all three school contexts.

6.10. Implications for Policy

This research presents some considerations for policy implementation. The emphasis on external partnership organizations provided information on the things these organizations provide to schools at no cost to the school. These things help school leaders provide resources and events for students that help drive school goals. This phenomenon is difficult to measure because of shadow-pricing when dealing with donations and free services, but it still is necessary to attempt. Districts could try to track and value the amount of additional capital schools are acquiring through partnerships. Then, districts could engage in studies to determine the association between these additional funds and student achievement. If a positive association exists, there needs to be a reconsideration of funding policy to meet the needs of students more appropriately. While the district pays for something like Volunteer Corps, they are only paying for the value of the members of the organization. The organization itself brings in other resources that are not accounted for in the original price. If schools are increasing achievement and surviving based on the ability to acquire and manage resources from external partners, the system of funding is not equitable and needs to be restructured.

Applying a CRT perspective to this phenomenon could strengthen this equity argument. According to some of the tenets of CRT (permanence of racism, whiteness as property and criticism of liberalism) we must operate from the understanding that all systems mete out privileges and disadvantages based on race and that laws and policies are not neutral but are influenced by this context (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Dixson & Rosseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1998). This study, which was conducted in Detroit demonstrates some of the ways these tenets are operationalized through history and context (Green, Sanchez & Castro, 2019; Mirel, 1991; Sugrue, 2005). On a broader scale emerging research has demonstrated how racialized discrepancies in funding and resource provision exists in districts across the U.S. (Aleman, 2007;

226

Klupchak; 2014, Vaught, 2009; Young & Diem, 2014). This research, and any future research informed by it can help in providing more examples of the ways systems converge to perpetuate racism in funding.

The participants of this study all made some comments about capacity in school buildings. Volunteer Corps as an organization helps with this by providing human capital to school buildings, however, in Detroit, the organization only exists at ten schools. If schools need more personnel, districts need to consider ways to bring in more permanent staff to support the goals of the leaders in the building. Considering Volunteer Corps, while the organization provides volunteers, the group of volunteers changes every year. Research has shown that turnover like this could negatively impact schools, especially those with marginalized youth. (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). With a more permanent expansion to staffs, schools could have more adults in the building who can help meet the needs of students, and more consistency in that staff which has been associated with achievement gains (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013).

6.11. Limitations of the Study

This study focused on a purposeful sample of seven participants working in one urban school district. The participants in this study different in race, gender, experience, expertise, and role. The principals of this study served as the primary unit of analysis. Each school also had different contexts that helped flush out how school leaders interacted with external partnership organization. This information is useful for elucidating the mechanics involved with school leaders working with external partnership organizations, but the findings of this study cannot be said to represent any principals outside of this group.

As a setting, the Detroit Public Schools Community District provided opportunities and constraints for this study. The school district's history allowed me to engage with issues of race

and policy. The district's recent restructure and partnership agreement allowed for an analysis of nascent policy and provided ample material for interrogating the role of external partnership organizations. This study took place during the COVID-19 crises, which affected regular operations. These unique conditions make findings from this study untransferable to other school districts or even DPSCD in the future.

The small sample of principals in this study and the limited duration of this study, partly because of the pandemic, posed limitations to the study. The sensemaking process is iterative (Weick, 2020). Once data collection is over, findings cannot be said to have captured the totality of a sensemaking process. These findings represent a snapshot of how a school leader views external partnership relationships at a specific time. That sense is likely to change as time goes on.

A further limitation of this study is on the perspective of this study. Most of the perspective comes from school principals, even though there are perspective represented from members of the Volunteer Corps organization. Teachers, students, and other stakeholders' perspectives were not included in the study. I relied primarily on discussions and other information from principals and Volunteer Corps representatives. Perspectives from teachers, students and members from other organizations could help confirm or dis-confirm the way principals act and described their actions.

6.12. Concluding Thoughts

In this study, principals and other participants shared enlightening stories around the work being done in the Detroit schools. The principals offered honest explorations of their thoughts and feelings regarding the city, community, and students. In each of these discussions I could feel the care, compassion, and commitment to mission from the school leaders. The school leaders also showed savvy when examining the ways, they navigate a resource constrained

educational environment. In all these stories the school leaders openly shared their perspective, which was not always filled with perspectives that center joy as opposed to damage. However, this perspective that centered the communities' deficiencies ultimately drove school leaders to pursue responsive resources for their students.

This study was about how school leaders made sense of external partnership relationships in their schools. The participants helped show the fact that there is still a lot of work to do for equitable outcomes from marginalized student populations. The school leaders and the leaders from Volunteer Corps presented positive stories which emphasized the goof work being done on the ground, but that this work must be done, suggests that policies and funding for schools still are not meeting the challenge of providing for students. This lack of attention from policymaker and government creates an environment of constraint, problems, and difficulties that the actors in the school district must navigate. Changing the system will go a long way to pushing towards a goal of equity for all students.

I am grateful to all the participants of the study for their participation, but also for their zeal and devotion to their schools and students. They shared their voice and stories with me and that is not something that I do not take lightly. I hope this dissertation will help readers recognize and acknowledge the difficulty of urban educational leadership. I also hope that this dissertation helps establish the fact that urban educational leaders, and we should not evaluate their behaviors and actions without a critical examination of history and context.

APPENDICES

CONSENT FORM
How Community Context Informs School Leader Resource Deployment

The purpose of this form is to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether to participate in this research.

You have been asked to participate in a research study that will examine the interactions between community context and school leader decision making. This project seeks to understand what factors influence school leaders' decisions around navigating a district policy that brought in more "resources" and how the school community responded to these decisions.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in at least one interview. (Please note that it is our intention just to interview you once, though with your agreement we may come back in person or via phone/email if we have additional or follow-up questions.) This study will take place at a designated location or a public location of your choice and will last for at least one hour. If an in-person meeting is not possible, the interview may take place via video conference (e.g. Skype). The risks associated with this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life. You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Michigan State University being affected.

Research records will be stored securely and only Alounso Gilzene will have access to the original records. Additionally, all audio tapes will be stored securely and Alounso Gilzene will have access to the audio tapes. The audio tapes will be used for research publications and will be held for up to three years before being destroyed. If you decide to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make you uncomfortable. You can withdraw at any time without your relations with the University, job, benefits, etc., being affected. Please contact me (gilzenea@msu.edu) with any questions about this study.

This research study has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects in Research, Michigan State University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, you can contact the Social Science, Behavioral, Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB), 4000 Collins Road, Ste. 136, Lansing, MI 48910. Phone: (517) 355-2180. E-mail: irb@msu.edu.

Please be sure to have read the above information, asked questions, and received answers to your satisfaction. You may take a copy of this consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant: _____   Date: _____

Printed   Name:
_____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ Date: _____

Printed   Name:
_____

APPENDIX B: Interview Protocol 1: 1st Principal Interview

Alright, so I'd like to thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview component of my study. As I mentioned before this study seeks to understand how the principal interacts with outside organizations how they consider context and other things when making decisions around that. So really what is going to happen is we will do this interview and it will last about an hour. And I will be asking you for this interview, the first interview for what brought you to the profession and get into some details about how you run your day-to-day and those sorts of things. We also have already gone through the consent form that I have your permission to record this conversation, thank you for that. So, before we begin to you have any questions?

1. So, for the first question can you tell me a little bit about your school's history?
2. How long in total have you served as a school leader? And what led you to decide to become one?
3. What would you describe as your main responsibilities as a school leader?
4. You described some of your main responsibilities, just as an experiment, walk me through like what a standard, and I know that's impossible, but what does a standard day look like for you?
5. What kind of school leader, and you talked about this a little bit, what kind of school leader do you see yourself as?
6. What is your general vision for the school?
7. I wanted to talk a little bit about context, the school that you are serving is in a large urban school context or city context, given that what would you say or see as some of the challenges of working in an urban school district?
8. On the flip side, what do you see as some of the positive aspects of working in an urban school district?
9. how would you describe the community surrounding the school so directly around, taking it from big picture, urban school district, to smaller picture the community that feeds into your school? How would you describe that?
10. One of the things mentioned was external partnerships, would you mind talking to me more about some of these partnerships with external organizations and sort of what prompted you to make those connections?
11. Specifically, your school uses Volunteer Corps as one of its main partnerships, what has that relationship been like?
12. Earlier we spoke about community and district context, that the, or how do you see the utilization of different partnerships like Volunteer Corps and some of the other ones that you mentioned as sort of helping with context?

APPENDIX C: Interview Protocol 2: 2nd Principal Interview

All right. So, I just want to thank you for taking the time to participate in the second part of this study. So far. I'm breaking up this part of the, interview, into two sections so I'm going to ask specifically about the Volunteer Corps partnership and then I'm going to ask about other partnerships since they came up often in our first conversation.

1. So, starting with the Volunteer Corps, how did that partnership form and how were you introduced to the organization?
2. To your knowledge, how is this organization funded?
   a. Follow up with changes following the district restructure.
3. How did you decide to define the roles that you would be using the organization, within your school? What was that process like?
4. What is your process for incorporating members into your school's operations? Like what does their onboarding look like?
5. And then are there any spaces that you would say that you are explicitly filling using this organization? I do not want to call them gaps, but anything that's sort of like a space that you see this is like filling up for you?
6. How often do you interact with volunteers from this organization?
7. We are going to move into other organizations. So, before you listed different partnerships that you've cultivated for your school whether it be the laundromat or other things like that, would you mind just listing off some of the things that some of the partnerships that you like had a hand in kind of like creating for your school for different purposes?
   a. Follow up on specific organizations.
8. So I know with your Volunteer Corps partnership, there is a process to incorporating them into the school. What is your process for other types of volunteers, like creating these spaces for them to come to do these things? What does that process look like?
9. What do you do to keep yourself organized with all of this going on in the school?
10. Do you communicate with other principals in similar schools about their process for partnerships and if so, what do those conversations look like?
11. Would it have been helpful to have a formalized process for this and what is your opinion would be useful for helping this?
12. So, during our first interview we talked a little about community context, and looking at the school itself and some information at school, there's a predominantly black student population. So how do community context and racial context influence the way that you utilize partnerships?
13. What are some other ways that you like to prepare people for working with like your kids, their backgrounds, things like that?
14. And then for specifically thinking about like, the partnership with Volunteer Corps since that is something from the district, how, are you preparing those volunteers to work with your students?

15. What advice would you give a principal just starting? A similar type of school, you know, predominantly black. A similar type of community, things like that? Who is looking at you to utilize volunteers and partnerships? What advice would you give them in terms of the kind of standing your ground with those types of conversations?
16. So first thinking about partnerships you form, what are, what would you say are some of the benefits of all of these partnerships that are going on in your school? If you had to categorize benefits?
17. Would you, how much would you say that like making these partnerships help with like budget things?
18. How valuable would you say it is having additional people in your school building, especially Volunteer Corps, or how valuable do you see that extra kind of human capital?
19. So for organizations that donate, whether it be food items, remodeling, or other services if you have to put a value on that yearly, just adjust the "guesstimation" really just as a thought experiment, what would that be?
20. Hypothetically, how much of an increase in your budget would be necessary to make some of these types of programs, whether it be volunteers, afterschool, things like that, a permanent fixture in your school. And this is just another, just throwing a number out there. What do you think?
21. How much time would you say goes to the maintenance of multiple partnerships in a percentage if you had to give a percent daily?
22. What, would you say are some of the costs of bringing multiple organizations into the building?
    a. Follow up with things mentioned.

APPENDIX D: Interview Protocol 3: Volunteer Corps Interviews

Good afternoon. Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this interview. As I stated in my email this is a conversation about the specific ways that Volunteer Corps, the Volunteer works with the school to make change happen. This is a semi-structured conversation where I'm going to be asking some general questions, and whatever answers you feel like providing would work for that. Also, some of the questions were developed through conversations with the principal at your school. With that let's begin.

Biographical

1. So, for my first question, what made you decide to do Volunteer Corps?
2. How long have you been doing this work?
3. What is your specific role in the organization?
4. What has your experience been at the school?

Context Questions

5. Volunteer Corps states that one of its major goals is to promote equity and social justice to mitigate educational disparities, what informs your understanding of systemic education disparities and things like that?
6. How does the work of your organization intersect with this system, you think? What do you see?
7. Thinking of justice and systems of power, and considering the context of the schools your organization is in, how does the organization build an awareness of the community in corps members? How are they educating corps members about the community that they're serving in?
8. On the same note, given how most Volunteer Corps members are white, and the schools in Detroit that your organization exists in are predominantly Black how did you or the organization prepare the corps members to work with their students, with students who may be different from them?

Process Questions

9. How are the corps members incorporated into the school context?
10. In my conversations with principals, it seems like a big part of the success is set at the beginning of the year. What does that process look like at the beginning of the year?
11. What does that process look like early on when you're pairing them up with teachers or getting them in the classrooms?
12. How would you describe a successful principal partnership? What needs to be there for your relationship or your partnership with the principal at the school, what needs to be there for that to work?
13. So, what do you think has led to the success with that specific partnership, with that specific principal?
14. One of the principals called your organization a tree with many branches because of the way the organization brings in other community partners. In your experience with Volunteer Corps Detroit have you seen this process of the organization building bridges and bringing in more community partnerships in schools? What has that looked like at your school?

Program Manager Interview

I just want to thank you for taking out the time to participate in this interview. This is an interview towards the completion of a dissertation on how principals make use of partnerships to their goals or in forwarding some sort of goal of school improvement.

1. How long have you worked with the organization?
2. Can you describe your current role in the organization?
3. What is the history of the partnership between the organization and the schools?
4. With the partnership schools, how are schools selected for participation in the program?
5. How does funding for the organization work?
6. How is that distributed, organizationally?
7. What would you say is the scope of the work? What's the reach of Volunteer Corps Detroit right now?
8. So organizationally and just generally, how do you all evaluate and manage your impact?
9. What do you think contributes to that success in terms of getting people in buildings and making positive connections with principals?
10. A lot of organizations, there is a tendency when working in predominantly Black communities that some organizations will provide volunteers, but a lot of those volunteers may not come from the same backgrounds as the students. So, the principals have named the ability of the corps members to work through that and their trust in the organization's ability to build a culturally responsive sort of response in the corps members. Where does that orientation come from?
11. So I know there's the focus on attendance behavior and course work. There's an additional focus on, just really supporting the schools where they're at.. Right? How often have you seen things like this in the organization during your time in this role?
12. If you had to boil down what characterizes a successful Volunteer Corps-principal partnership, what components need to be present?
13. Where do you see Volunteer Corps as kind of fitting in within the framework of educational change for Detroit?

APPENDIX E: Interview Protocol 4: 3rd Principal Interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our third and final interview. This interview was developed using things from our first two conversations and from the conversations I had with the managers from Volunteer Corps. This interview is also an attempt to bring everything together and reflect on some of the comments made throughout our interviews. Again, thank you for participating.

1. We talked a lot before about the different ways you've led your school. If you had to put it all together if you had to make a summation statement about what does it mean to lead a school, what would you say are the essential elements of running a school?
2. And we have also talked about your position in Detroit, in the city, and how those things kind of interact. So, looking back at that, what do you think is the root cause of budget and staffing issues in cities like this?
3. So when you reflect on what you've been doing in education and your position as a principal, where do you see your work fitting in in the large scope of education? How do you see your work?
4. In our earlier discussions, you talked about cultural responsiveness and making sure people understand your kids. What drives your desire to ensure that anyone in your building understands your kids?
5. So taking it a step further, you're in a unique position when it comes to being a principal in that you are a black school leader in a predominantly black school. What has that meant to you personally?
6. So after reflecting on your experience in your community and the school that you've been working in, what are some of the things that bring you joy in your position as a principal?
7. So switching gears a little bit, a big focus of our conversations have been partnerships. Some have been specifically about the Volunteer Corps partnership; some have been about the other organizations and things like that. And I know before you had mentioned spending a certain percentage of time working with or ensuring that these partnerships are going well in your school building. But on the flip side, if you didn't have to spend the time doing that, what would you do with your additional time? How would you use that?
8. Similarly, Now, hypothetically, in a perfect world, if you were to get... If the district was like, "You know what? We are not doing this anymore. But we are going to give you... The money that we were spending on that we're just going to give to you directly", what would you do with that? How would you spend that?
9. Did your training to become a principal or any type of leadership preparation that you did cover partnerships? Did they talk about that at all?
10. Do you think it would have been helpful to have more explicit conversations about what? About the work of partnership or what that looks like or?
11. What are some of the things that you valued most in your experience as a Principal?

12. So, for this last question, I want to ask you to walk me through a story (reference a partnership from a previous interview). Tell me about a partnership leading up to an event or something like that, or an event or some sort of deliverable, and just walk me through how it started, how the connection started, what did plan look like, and how did you feel at the end of whatever the deliverable was?\

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Aaron, T. S. (2020). Black Women: Perceptions and Enactments of Leadership. *Journal of School Leadership*, *30*(2), 146-165.

Aaronson, D., Barrow, L., & Sander, W. (2007). Teachers and student achievement in the Chicago public high schools. *Journal of labor Economics*, *25*(1), 95-135.

Alemán Jr, E. (2007). Situating Texas school finance policy in a CRT framework: How "substantially equal" yields racial inequity. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *43*(5), 525-558.

Alexander, N. A., & Jang, S. T. (2019). 'Synonymization'threat and the implications for the funding of school districts with relatively high populations of black students. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *22*(2), 151-173.

Alonso Luaces, M., Alvarado, A. R., Keeton, J., Chang, K., Novorr, J., Murrell, T., & Ramaswamy, M. (2019). An Urban School District-University-Industry Partnership to Increase Diversity in the Health Professions: Lesson Learned from the University of Kansas Health Science Academy. *Journal of Best Practices in Health Professions Diversity: Education, Research & Policy*, *12*(2).

Alston, J. A. (2005). Tempered radicals and servant leaders: Black females persevering in the superintendency. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *41*(4), 675-688.

Alston, J. A. (2015). Leadership as soul work: Living, leading, and loving the work. In *Living the Work: Promoting Social Justice and Equity Work in Schools around the World*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Amanchukwu, R. N., Stanley, G. J., & Ololube, N. P. (2015). A review of leadership theories, principles and styles and their relevance to educational management. Management, 5(1), 6–14.

Anyon, J. (1997). Ghetto Schooling - A Political Economy of Urban Education Reform. Teacher's College Press.

Anyon, J. (2005). Radical Possibilities- Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement. New York and London: Routledge.

Arnold, N. W., & Brooks, J. S. (2013). Getting churched and being schooled: Making meaning of leadership practice. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, *16*(2), 44-53.

Arsen, D., & Ni, Y. (2012). The effects of charter school competition on school district resource allocation. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(1), 3-38.

Astin, A. W., & Astin, H. S. (2000). Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change.

Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., & Delamont, S. (1999). Ethnography: post, past, and present. *Journal of contemporary Ethnography*, *28*(5), 460-471

Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R. A., & Hernandez, S. J. (2013). Equity Issues in Parental and Community Involvement in Schools: What Teacher Educators Need to Know. Review of Research in Education, 37(1), 149–182. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12459718

Barker, M. J., & Avery, J. C. (2012). The impact of an institutional Black male leadership initiative on engagement and persistence. *College Student Affairs Journal*, *30*(2), 73.

Barone, D. M. (2006). Narrowing the literacy gap: What works in high-poverty schools. Guilford Press.

Bartz, D. E., & Rice, P. (2017). Enhancing Education for African American Children. In National Forum of Teacher Education Journal (Vol. 27, pp. 1–11).

Bascia, N., & Hargreaves, A. (Eds.). (2014). *The sharp edge of educational change: Teaching, leading and the realities of reform*. Routledge.

Bass, L. (2012). When care trumps justice: The operationalization of Black feminist caring in educational leadership. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *25*(1), 73-87.

Bass, L. R. (2020). Black male leaders care too: An introduction to Black masculine caring in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *56*(3), 353-395.

Bass, L., & Alston, K. (2018). Black masculine caring and the dilemma faced by black male leaders. *Journal of School Leadership*, *28*(6), 772-787.

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. The qualitative report, 13(4), 544-559.

Beese, J., & Xin Liang. (2010). Do resources matter? PISA science achievement comparisons between students in the United States, Canada and Finland. Improving Schools, 13(3), 266–279. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480210390554

Belfield, C. R., Nores, M., Barnett, S., & Schweinhart, L. (2006). The high/scope perry preschool program cost–benefit analysis using data from the age-40 followup. Journal of Human resources, 41(1), 162-190.

Belfield, C., Bowden, A. B., Klapp, A., Levin, H., Shand, R., & Zander, S. (2015). The economic value of social and emotional learning. *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis*, *6*(3), 508-544.

242

Bell, D. (1991). Racial realism. *Conn. L. Rev.*, *24*, 363.

Bell, D. (2004). *Silent covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the unfulfilled hopes for racial reform*. Oxford University Press.

Berkovich, I. (2017). Educational reform hyperwaves: Reconceptualizing Cuban's theories of change. *Journal of Educational Change*, *18*(4), 413-438.

Bertrand, M., & Rodela, K. C. (2017). A Framework for Rethinking Educational Leadership in the Margins: Implications for Social Justice Leadership Preparation. Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 1942775117739414.

Bertrand, M., & Rodela, K. C. (2018). A framework for rethinking educational leadership in the margins: Implications for social justice leadership preparation. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *13*(1), 10-37.

Bickel, R., Howley, C., Williams, T., & Glascock, C. H. (2001). High school size, achievement equity, and cost. education policy analysis archives, 9, 40.

Birken, S.A. , Lee, S.D. and Weiner, B.J. (2012), "*Uncovering middle managers' role in healthcare innovation implementation*", *Implementation Science* , Vol. 7, April, p. 28.

Bloom, N., Lemos, R., Sadun, R., & Van Reenen, J. (2015). Does Management Matter in schools? The Economic Journal, 125(584), 647–674. https://doi.org/10.1111/ecoj.12267

Bourke, B. (2014). Positionality: Reflecting on the research process. The qualitative report, 19(33), 1-9.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*.

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (2002). Schooling in Capitalist America Revisited. Sociology of Education, 75(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.2307/3090251\

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2017). Them That's Got: How Tie Formation in Partnership Networks Gives High Schools Differential Access to Social Capital. American Educational Research Journal, 54(6), 1221–1255. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217717815

Bridwell-Mitchell, E. N. (2020). Between What Is and What Is Possible: Theorizing the Role of Institutional Interstitially in State-Led School Turnaround. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *95*(4), 423-438.

Brown, C. S. (2002). *Refusing racism: White allies and the struggle for civil rights*. Teachers College Press.

Brown, K. D. (2005). *Race, law and education in the post-desegregation era: Four perspectives on desegregation and resegregation*. Carolina Academic Press.

Brunner, E. J., & Imazeki, J. (2004). Fiscal stress and voluntary contributions to public schools. Developments in school finance, 39-54.

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Easton, J. Q., & Luppescu, S. (2010). Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Bryman, A., Bresnen, M., Beardsworth, A., & Keil, T. (1988). Qualitative research and the study of leadership. *Human relations*, *41*(1), 13-29.

Buendía, E. (2011). Reconsidering the urban in urban education: Interdisciplinary conversations. *The Urban Review*, *43*(1), 1-21.

Bulpitt, H., & Martin, P. J. (2010). Who am I and what am I doing? Becoming a qualitative research interviewer. *Nurse researcher*, *17*(3).

Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership New York. NY: Harper and Row Publishers.

Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2014). School leadership models: What do we know?. School Leadership & Management, 34(5), 553-571.

Buszin, J. S. (2012). Beyond school finance: Refocusing education reform litigation to realize the deferred dream of education equality and adequacy. Emory LJ, 62, 1613.

Campbell-Evans, G. H. (1991). Nature and Influence of Values in Principal Decision Making. Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 37(2), 167-78.Palinkas et al. (2015),

Capper, C. A. (2015). The 20th-year anniversary of critical race theory in education: Implications for leading to eliminate racism. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *51*(5), 791-833.

Card, D., & Krueger, A. B. (1996). School resources and student outcomes: an overview of the literature and new evidence from North and South Carolina. Journal of economic Perspectives, 10(4), 31-50.

Carrell, S. E., & Hoekstra, M. (2010). Are School Counselors a Cost-Effective Education Input? Journal of Educational Leadership.

Carrell, S. E., & Hoekstra, M. (2014). Are school counselors an effective education input? Economics Letters, 125(1), 66–69.

Castro, E., Presberry, C. B., & Venzant Chambers, T. T. (2019). Twelve Years Un slaved: Lessons From Reconstruction and Brown for Contemporary School Leaders. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *14*(4), 308-330.

Civitillo, S., Juang, L. P., Badra, M., & Schachner, M. K. (2019). The interplay between culturally responsive teaching, cultural diversity beliefs, and self-reflection: A multiple case study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *77*, 341-351.

Clark, M., McConnell, S., Constantine, J., & Chiang, H. (2013). Addressing Teacher Shortages in Disadvantaged Schools: Lessons from Two Institute of Education Sciences Studies. NCEE Evaluation Brief. NCEE 2013-4018. *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance*.

Coate, D., & VanderHoff, J. (1999). Public school spending and student achievement: The case of New Jersey. Cato J., 19, 85.

Cobb-Clark, D. A., & Jha, N. (2016). Educational achievement and the allocation of school resources. Australian Economic Review, 49(3), 251–271.

Coburn, C. E. (2005). Shaping teacher sensemaking: School leaders and the enactment of reading policy. Educational policy, 19(3), 476-509.

Coleman, J. S. (1966). Equality of educational opportunity.

Collins, P. H. (2002). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. routledge.

Condron, D. J., & Roscigno, V. J. (2003). Disparities within: Unequal Spending and Achievement in an Urban School District. Sociology of Education, 76(1), 18. https://doi.org/10.2307/3090259

Corcoran, R. P. (2015). Preparing Principals to Improve Student Achievement. Child & Youth Care Forum, 46(5), 769–781. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-017-9399-9

Crenshaw, K. W. (1988). Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in antidiscrimination law. *Harvard Law Review*, 1331-1387.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Mapping the field of mixed methods research.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). A concise introduction to mixed methods research. Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into practice*, *39*(3), 124-130.

Crotty, M., & Crotty, M. F. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage.

Crow, G. M., & Scribner, S. P. (2014). Professional identities of urban school principals. Handbook of urban education, 287-304.

Cuban, L. (1990). Reforming again, again, and again. *Educational researcher*, *19*(1), 3-13.

Dantley, M. E. (2010). Successful leadership in urban schools: Principals and critical spirituality, a new approach to reform. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 214-219.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Race, inequality and educational accountability: the irony of "No Child Left Behind." Race Ethnicity and Education, 10(3), 245–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320701503207

Darling-Hammond, L. (2013). Inequality and school resources. *Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every child an even chance*, 77.

Darling-Hammond, L. Friedlander.(2008). Creating excellent and equitable schools. Educational Leadership, 65(8), 14-21.

Davis, B. W., Gooden, M. A., & Micheaux, D. J. (2015). Color-blind leadership: A critical race theory analysis of the ISLLC and ELCC standards. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *51*(3), 335-371.

DeCuir, J. T., & Dixson, A. D. (2004). "So when it comes out, they aren't that surprised that it is there": Using critical race theory as a tool of analysis of race and racism in education. *Educational researcher*, *33*(5), 26-31.

Delgado, R. (2001). Introduction in Delgado, R. and Stefanic, J. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, 2.

Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. Harvard educational review, 58(3), 280-299.

DeMatthews, D. (2015). Making sense of social justice leadership: A case study of a principal's experiences to create a more inclusive school. *Leadership and Policy in schools*, *14*(2), 139-166.

DeMatthews, D. (2018). Social justice dilemmas: Evidence on the successes and shortcomings of three principals trying to make a difference. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *21*(5), 545-559.

DeMatthews, D. (2018). Social justice dilemmas: Evidence on the successes and shortcomings of three principals trying to make a difference. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *21*(5), 545-559.

DeMatthews, D., & Mawhinney, H. (2014). Social justice leadership and inclusion: Exploring challenges in an urban district struggling to address inequities. Educational Administration Quarterly, 50(5), 844–881.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive biography* (Vol. 17). Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Strategies of inquiry. Handbook of qualitative research, 2, 367-378.

Dhuey, E., & Smith, J. (2014a). How important are school principals in the production of student achievement? Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue Canadienne D'économique, 47(2), 634–663.

Dhuey, E., & Smith, J. (2014b). How school principals influence student learning. Empirical Economics, 1–32.

Diamond, J. B., & Spillane, J. P. (2016). School leadership and management from a distributed perspective: A 2016 retrospective and prospective. *Management in Education*, *30*(4), 147-154.

Dixon, A. D., & Rousseau, C. K. (2005). Toward a CRT of education. *CRT in education: All God's children got a song*, 11-30.

Dixon, A. D., & Rousseau, C. K. (Eds.). (2006). *Critical race theory in education: All God's children got a song*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Downes, T., and Stiefel, L. 2015. "Measuring Equity and Adequacy in School Finance." In Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy, 2nd ed., edited by Helen F. Ladd and Margaret E. Goertz, 244–59. New York: Routledge

Dugan, T., Ylimaki, R., & Bennett, J. (2012). Funds of knowledge and culturally responsive leadership: Transforming a failing school in a postcolonial border context. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, *15*(3), 56-65.

Eastman, N. J., Anderson, M., & Boyles, D. (2017). Choices or rights? Charter schools and the politics of choice-based education policy reform. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *36*(1), 61-81.

Evans, A. E. (2007). School leaders and their sensemaking about race and demographic change. Educational Administration Quarterly, 43(2), 159-188.

Eyal, O., & Yarm, M. (2018). Schools in Cross-Sector Alliances: What Do Schools Seek in Partnerships? Educational Administration Quarterly, 0013161X18765268.

Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Duffett, A. (2003) Rolling up their sleeves: Superintendents and principals talk about what's needed to fix public schools. New York: Public Agenda.

Fergus, E. (2017). The integration project among white teachers and racial/ethnic minority youth: Understanding bias in school practice. *Theory into Practice*, *56*(3), 169-177.

Ferrarotti, F. (1981). On the autonomy of the biographical method. In D. Bertaux (Ed.), Biography and society: The life history approach in the social sciences (pp. 19–27). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Ferreyra, M. M. (2007). Estimating the effects of private school vouchers in multidistrict economies. *American Economic Review*, *97*(3), 789-817.

FitzGerald, A. M., & Quiñones, S. (2018). Working in and With Community: Leading for Partnerships in a Community School. Leadership and Policy in Schools, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2018.1453938

Fitzgerald, R. (2015). Philosophy Rather than Finance: Redirecting the Discourse Concerning Inequitable School Funding in Illinois. *Philosophical Studies in Education*, *46*, 52-61.

Flores, O. J. (2018). (Re) constructing the language of the achievement gap to an opportunity gap: The counternarratives of three African American women school leaders. *Journal of School leadership*, *28*(3), 344-373.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. *Handbook of qualitative research*, *2*(6), 645-672.

Fullan, M. (2002). Principals as leaders in a culture of change. *Educational leadership*, *59*(8), 16-21.

Furman, G. (2012). Social Justice Leadership as Praxis: Developing Capacities Through Preparation Programs. Educational Administration Quarterly, 48(2), 191–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11427394

Galman, S. C. (2016). *The good, the bad, and the data: Shane the lone ethnographer's basic guide to qualitative data analysis*. Routledge.

Ganon-Shilon, S., & Schechter, C. (2018). School principals' sense-making of their leadership role during reform implementation. International Journal of Leadership in Education, 1-22.

Gawlik, M. A. (2015). Shared sense-making: How charter school leaders ascribe meaning to accountability. *Journal of Educational Administration*.

Gay, G. (1994). A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education. Urban Monograph Series.

Goldhaber, D., & Hansen, M. (2013). Is it just a bad class? Assessing the long-term stability of estimated teacher performance. *Economica*, *80*(319), 589-612.

Goldhaber, D., Strunk, K., Brown, N., Chambers, A., Naito, N., & Wolff, M. (2019). Teacher staffing challenges in California: Exploring the factors that influence teacher staffing and distribution. *Getting Down to Facts II Technical Report*, 2018-09.

Goodman-Scott, E., Hays, D. G., & Cholewa, B. E. (2018). "It Takes a Village": A Case Study of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Implementation in an Exemplary Urban Middle School. The Urban Review, 50(1), 97–122. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0431-z

Grande, S. (2018). Aging, precarity, and the struggle for Indigenous elsewheres. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *31*(3), 168–176.

Grant, C. A., & Sleeter, C. E. (1993). Race, class, gender, and disability in the classroom. Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives, 48-67.

Green III, P. C., Baker, B. D., Oluwole, J. O., & Mead, J. F. (2015). Are We Heading toward a Charter School Bubble: Lessons from the Subprime Mortgage Crisis. U. Rich. L. Rev., 50, 783.

Green, T. L. (2015). Leading for urban school reform and community development. Educational Administration Quarterly, 51(5), 679–711.

Green, T. L. (2017). Community-based equity audits: A practical approach for educational leaders to support equitable community-school improvements. Educational Administration Quarterly, 53(1), 3–39.

Green, T. L. (2018). School as community, community as school: Examining principal leadership for urban school reform and community development. *Education and Urban Society*, *50*(2), 111-135.

Green, T. L., & Gooden, M. A. (2014). Transforming out-of-school challenges into opportunities: Community schools reform in the urban Midwest. *Urban Education*, *49*(8), 930-954.

Green, T. L., Sánchez, J. D., & Castro, A. J. (2019). Closed schools, open markets: A hot spot spatial analysis of school closures and charter openings in Detroit. *AERA Open*, *5*(2), 2332858419850097.

Greenwald, R., Hedges, L. V., & Laine, R. D. (1996). The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement. Review of Educational Research, 66(3), 361. https://doi.org/10.2307/1170528

Grissom, J. A., Loeb, S., & Master, B. (2013). Effective instructional time use for school leaders: Longitudinal evidence from observations of principals. *Educational Researcher*, *42*(8), 433-444.

Grissom, J. A., Loeb, S., & Mitani, H. (2015). Principal time management skills: Explaining patterns in principals' time use, job stress, and perceived effectiveness. Journal of Educational

Grodzki, J. S. (2011). Role Identity: At the Intersection of Organizational Socialization and Individual Sensemaking of New Principals and Vice-Principals. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*.

Grubb, W. N. (2008). Multiple Resources, Multiple Outcomes: Testing the "Improved"School Finance With NELS88. American Educational Research Journal, 45(1), 104–144. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831207308636

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Ectj*, *29*(2), 75-91.

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. Ectj, 29(2), 75.

Guiner, L., & Torres, G. (2002). The Miners Canary: Enlisting Race. *Resisting Power, Transforming*.

Guinier, L., & Torres, G. (2004). Whiteness of a different color. *Off white: Readings on power, privilege, and resistance*, 411-430.

Gurn, A. M. (2016). Courting Corporate Philanthropy in Public Education: Multi-Disciplinary Literature Review of Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Urban Public Schooling. SAGE Open, 6(2), 2158244016635714.

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading Educational Change: reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. Cambridge Journal of Education, 33(3), 329–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764032000122005

Hallinger, P. (2018). Bringing context out of the shadows of leadership. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 46(1), 5–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143216670652

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the Principal's Contribution to School Effectiveness: 1980-1995∗. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 9(2), 157–191.

Hanselman, P., & Fiel, J. E. (2016). School Opportunity Hoarding? Racial Segregation and Access to High Growth Schools. Social Forces. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sow088

Hanushek, E. A. (1986). The economics of schooling: Production and efficiency in public schools. Journal of economic literature, 24(3), 1141-1177.

Hanushek, E. A. (1994). An Exchange: Part II: Money Might Matter Somewhere: A Response to Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald. Educational Researcher, 23(4), 5. https://doi.org/10.2307/1176255

Hanushek, E. A. (2003). The failure of input-based schooling policies. The Economic Journal, 113(485).

Harris, C. I. (1995). Whiteness as property. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.), Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement (pp. 276– 291). New York: New Press.

Harris, C. I. (1996). Finding Sojourner's Truth: Race, Gender, and the Institution of Property. Cardozo L. Rev., 18, 309.

Hedges, L. V., Laine, R. D., & Greenwald, R. (1994). An Exchange: Part I: Does Money Matter? A Meta-Analysis of Studies of the Effects of Differential School Inputs on Student Outcomes. Educational Researcher, 23(3), 5. https://doi.org/10.2307/1177220

Henry, L. M. (2014). Just Love: A Collaborative Evaluation of a Faith-Based School-Family Community Partnership Through the Voices of the Children.

Holmlund, H., McNally, S., & Viarengo, M. (2010). Does money matter for schools? Economics of Education Review, 29(6), 1154–1164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2010.06.008

Holton, J. A. (2007). The coding process and its challenges. The Sage handbook of grounded theory, (Part III), 265-89.

Horng, E. L., Klasik, D., & Loeb, S. (2009). Principal Time-Use and School Effectiveness. Working Paper No. 34. National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

Horng, E., & Loeb, S. (2010). New thinking about instructional leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *92*(3), 66-69.

Horsford, S. D. (2012). This bridge called my leadership: An essay on Black women as bridge leaders in education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *25*(1), 11-22.

Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2018). The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling. Routledge.

Horsford, S. D., Scott, J. T., & Anderson, G. L. (2018). *The politics of education policy in an era of inequality: Possibilities for democratic schooling*. Routledge.

Huberman, A. M., & Miles, M. B. (1994). Data management and analysis methods.

Hummel-Rossi, B., & Ashdown, J. (2002). The state of cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses in education. *Review of Educational Research*, *72*(1), 1-30.

Irby, D. J. (2015). Urban is floating face down in the mainstream: Using hip-hop-based education research to resurrect "the urban" in urban education. *Urban Education*, *50*(1), 7-30.

Irby, D. J. (2018). Mo'data, mo'problems: Making sense of racial discipline disparities in a large diversifying suburban high school. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *54*(5), 693-722.

Irby, D. J., Meyers, C. V., & Salisbury, J. D. (2020). Improving schools by strategically connecting equity leadership and organizational improvement perspectives: Introduction to special issue. Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR), 25(2), 101-106.

Ishimaru, A. (2014). Rewriting the rules of engagement: Elaborating a model of district-community collaboration. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(2), 188-216.

Ishimaru, A. M., & Galloway, M. K. (2014). Beyond individual effectiveness: Conceptualizing organizational leadership for equity. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *13*(1), 93-146.

Ishimaru, A. M., Torres, K. E., Salvador, J. E., Lott, J., Williams, D. M. C., & Tran, C. (2016). Reinforcing deficit, journeying toward equity: Cultural brokering in family engagement initiatives. *American Educational Research Journal*, *53*(4), 850-882.

Johnson, L. (2007). Rethinking successful school leadership in challenging US schools: Culturally responsive practices in school-community relationships. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, *35*(3).

Jordan, D. H., & Wilson, C. M. (2017). Supporting African American student success through prophetic activism: New possibilities for public school–church partnerships. *Urban Education*, *52*(1), 91-119.

Kahrl, A. W. (2016). The power to destroy: Discriminatory property assessments and the struggle for tax justice in Mississippi. Journal of Southern History, 82(3), 579-616.

Kang, L. (2015). *The Dismantling of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1980-2014* (Doctoral dissertation).

Khalifa, M. (2012). A re-new-ed paradigm in successful urban school leadership: Principal as community leader. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(3), 424-467.

Khalifa, M. (2018). *Culturally responsive school leadership*. Harvard Education Press.

Khalifa, M. A., Douglas, T. R. M., & Chambers, T. T. (2016). White gazes of Black Detroit: Milliken v. Bradley I, postcolonial theory, and persistent inequalities. *Teachers College Record*, *118*(3), 1-34.

Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. Review of Educational Research, 86(4), 1272–1311.

Khalifa, M., Arnold, N. W., & Newcomb, W. (2015). Understand and advocate for communities first. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *96*(7), 20-25.

Kinloch, V., & San Pedro, T. (2014). The space between listening and storying: Foundations for projects in humanization. *Humanizing research: Decolonizing qualitative inquiry with youth and communities*, 21-42.

Kishimoto, K. (2018). Anti-racist pedagogy: From faculty's self-reflection to organizing within and beyond the classroom. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *21*(4), 540-554.

Klupchak, S. A. (2014). Critical race theory: a lens for viewing racism in American education policy and school funding.

Knight, D. S. (2017). Are high-poverty school districts disproportionately impacted by state funding cuts? School finance equity following the Great Recession. *Journal of Education Finance*, 169-194.

Kozol, J. (1991). Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools. New York Crown.

Kumashiro, K. K. (2015). Against common sense. Taylor & Francis.

Horsford, S. D. (2010). Mixed feelings about mixed schools: Superintendents on the complex legacy of school desegregation. *Educational administration quarterly*, *46*(3), 287-321.

Lac, V. T., & Cumings Mansfield, K. (2018). What do students have to do with educational leadership? Making a case for centering student voice. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *13*(1), 38-58.

Ladson-Billings, G & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. American educational research journal, 32(3), 465-491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education?. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, *11*(1), 7-24.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. Educational researcher, 35(7), 3-12.

Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2002). Teacher sorting and the plight of urban schools: A descriptive analysis. Educational evaluation and policy analysis, 24(1), 37-62.

Lather, P. (2004). Critical inquiry in qualitative research: Feminist and poststructural perspectives: Science "after truth.". *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*, 203-215.Lyon, L., & Driskell, R. (2012). The community in urban society, 2da ed., EUA.

LeCompte, M. D. (2000). Analyzing qualitative data. *Theory into practice*, *39*(3), 146-154.

Lee, M., & Hallinger, P. (2012). National contexts influencing principals' time use and allocation: economic development, societal culture, and educational system. *School effectiveness and school improvement*, *23*(4), 461-482.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormond, J. E. (2016). Practice research: Planning and delivering. *London: Pearson Lindsley, D., Brass, D., & Thomas, J.(1995). 'Efficacy-performance spirals: A multilevel perspective'. Academy of Management Review*, *20*, 645-678.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2000). The effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. Journal of Educational Administration, 38(2), 112-129.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School leadership & management*, *40*(1), 5-22.

Leithwood, K., Riedlinger, B., Bauer, S. , & Jantzi, D. (2003). Leadership program effects on student learning: The case of the Greater New Orleans School Leadership Center. Journal of School Leadership, 13(6), 707-738.

Lenhoff, S. W., Singer, J., Pogodzinski, B., & Cook, W. (2020). Exiting Detroit for school: inequitable choice sets and school quality. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1-23.

Levin, H. (2001). Waiting for Godot: cost-effectiveness analysis in education. *New directions for evaluation*, *2001*(90), 55-68.

Levin, H. M. (1975). Cost-effectiveness analysis in evaluation research. Handbook of evaluation research, 2, 89-122.

Levin, H. M. (1975). Education, life chances, and the courts: The role of social science evidence. Law & Contemp. Probs., 39, 217.

Levin, H. M., & Belfield, C. (2015). Guiding the development and use of cost-effectiveness analysis in education. Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 8(3), 400-418.

Levin, H. M., & McEwan, P. J. (2000). Cost-effectiveness analysis: Methods and applications (Vol. 4). Sage.

Levin, H. M., McEwan, P. J., Belfield, C., Bowden, A. B., & Shand, R. (2017). *Economic evaluation in education: Cost-effectiveness and benefit-cost analysis*. SAGE publications.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Establishing trustworthiness. *Naturalistic inquiry*, *289*(331), 289-327.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry (Vol. 75). sage.

Lipman, P. (2004). High stakes education: Inequality, globalization, and urban school reform. Routledge.

Lipman, P. (2004). *High stakes education: Inequality, globalization, and urban school reform*. New York: Routledge Farmer.

Lipman, P. (2011). The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race and the Right to The City.

Loder, T. L. (2005). African American women principals' reflections on social change, community othermothering, and Chicago public school reform. *Urban Education*, *40*(3), 298-320.

Lomotey, K. (1993). African-American principals: Bureaucrat/administrators and ethno-humanists. *Urban Education*, *27*(4), 395-412.

López, G. R. (2003). The (racially neutral) politics of education: A critical race theory perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *39*(1), 68-94.

Lopez, G. R., Scribner, J. D., & Mahitivanichcha, K. (2001). Redefining parental involvement: Lessons from high-performing migrant-impacted schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, *38*(2), 253-288.

Madhlangobe, L., & Gordon, S. P. (2012). Culturally responsive leadership in a diverse school: A case study of a high school leader. *NASSp Bulletin*, *96*(3), 177-202.

Maitlis, S., & Christianson, M. (2014). Sensemaking in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward. *Academy of Management Annals*, *8*(1), 57-125.

Maloney, T., & Garver, R. (2020). Preparing Future School Leaders. *Journal of Education*, *38*(1).

Mangiante, E. M. S. (2011). Teachers matter: Measures of teacher effectiveness in low-income minority schools. Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 23(1), 41-63.

Marks, H. M., & Printy, S. M. (2003). Principal Leadership and School Performance: An Integration of Transformational and Instructional Leadership. Educational Administration Quarterly, 39(3), 370–397. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X03253412

Marzano, R. J., & Waters, T. (2009). District leadership that works: Striking the right balance. Solution Tree Press.

Matias, C. E. (2013). Check Yo'self before You Wreck Yo'self and Our Kids: Counterstories from Culturally Responsive White Teachers?... To Culturally Responsive White Teachers!. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning*, *3*(2), 68-81.

Maxwell, J.A. (1996). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mayfield, V. M., & Garrison-Wade, D. (2015). Culturally Responsive Practices as Whole School Reform. *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies*, *16*.

McDuffie, K. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (2008). The contributions of qualitative research to discussions of evidence-based practice in special education. Intervention in School and   Clinic, 44(2), 91-97.

McKenzie, K. B., Christman, D. E., Hernandez, F., Fierro, E., Capper, C. A., Dantley, M., … Scheurich, J. J. (2008). From the Field: A Proposal for Educating Leaders for Social Justice. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(1), 111–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X07309470

McLaren, P., & Jaramillo, N. E. (2009). Critical pedagogy, Latino/a education, and the politics of class struggle. In *Critical pedagogy in uncertain times* (pp. 55-78). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

McNamara, A. R., Akiva, T., & Delale-O'Connor, L. (2020). Opportunity gaps in out-of-school learning: How structural and process features of programs relate to race and socioeconomic status. *Applied Developmental Science*, *24*(4), 360-375.

Meredith, J & Anderson M (2015). Analysis of the Impacts of City Year's Whole School Whole Child Model on Partner Schools' Performance. Policy Studies Associates.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from" Case Study Research in Education.". Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104.

Mertens, D. M. (2010). Transformative mixed methods research. Qualitative inquiry, 16(6), 469 474.

Meyer, F., & Patuawa, J. (2020). Novice Principals in Small Schools: Making Sense of the Challenges and Contextual Complexities of School Leadership. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 1-18.

Meyers C. V., & VanGronigen, B. A. (2018). So many educational service providers, so little evidence. *American Journal of Education*, *125*(1), 109-139.

Milner, H. R. (2006). Classroom Management in Urban Classrooms.

Milner IV, H. R. (2012). But what is urban education? Sage Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA.

Milner, H. R. (2013). Analyzing Poverty, Learning, and Teaching Through a Critical Race Theory Lens. Review of Research in Education, 37(1), 1–53. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12459720

Mirel, J. (1999). *The rise and fall of an urban school system: Detroit, 1907-81*. University of Michigan Press.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage publications.

Mumford, M. D., & Gustafson, S. B. (2007). Creative thought: Cognition and problem solving in a dynamic system. Creativity research handbook, 2, 33-77.

Murtadha, K., & Watts, D. M. (2005). Linking the struggle for education and social justice: Historical perspectives of African American leadership in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *41*(4), 591-608.

N. Amiot, M., Mayer-Glenn, J., & Parker, L. (2020). Applied critical race theory: educational leadership actions for student equity. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *23*(2), 200-220.

Nelson-Royes, A. M. (2018). Tutors can improve students' reading skills. Reading Improvement, 55(1), 32-38.

Neumerski, C. M. (2013). Rethinking instructional leadership, a review: What do we know about principal, teacher, and coach instructional leadership, and where should we go from here?. Educational administration quarterly, 49(2), 310-347.

Nickerson, B. J., & Deenihan, G. M. (2002). From Equity to Adequacy" The Legal Battle for Increased State Funding of Poor School Districts in New York. Fordham Urb. LJ, 30, 1341.

O'Malley, M., Voight, A., Renshaw, T. L., & Eklund, K. (2015). School climate, family structure, and academic achievement: A study of moderation effects. School Psychology Quarterly, 30(1), 142–157. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000076

Oakes, J. (1995) Two cities' tracking and within-school segregation, Teachers College Record, 96, 681–690.

Oakes, J. (2005). Keeping track: How schools structure inequality. Yale University Press.

Odden, A. (2003). Equity and adequacy in school finance today. Phi Delta Kappan, 85(2), 120-125.

Odden, A. R. (2011). Strategic management of human capital in education: Improving instructional practice and student learning in schools. Routledge.

Odden, A. R., & Picus, L. O. (2008). School finance. A policy perspective.

Okpala, C. O., Okpala, A. O., & Smith, F. E. (2001). Parental involvement, instructional expenditures, family socioeconomic attributes, and student achievement. The Journal of Educational Research, 95(2), 110-115.

Olivos, E. M. (2009). Collaboration with Latino families: A critical perspective of home—school interactions. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, *45*(2), 109-115.

Oltmann, S. (2016, May). Qualitative interviews: A methodological discussion of the interviewer and respondent contexts. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 17, No. 2).

Ouchi, W. G. (2003). Making schools work: A revolutionary plan to get your children the education they need. New York: Simon & Schuster

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015).Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 42(5), 533-544.

Paris, D., & Winn, M. T. (Eds.). (2013). Humanizing research: Decolonizing qualitative inquiry with youth and communities. Sage Publications.

Paris, D., & Winn, M. T. (2014). Navigating Institutions and Communities as Participatory Activist Researchers: Tensions, Possibilities, and Transformations.

Parker, L., & Villalpando, O. (2007). A Racecialized) Perspective on Education Leadership: Critical Race Theory in Educational Administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *43*(5), 519-524.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work*, *1*(3), 261-283.

Payne, C. M. (2008). So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools. Harvard Education Press. 8 Story Street First Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Peck, C. (2017). Urban school reform in the United States. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of education*.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of counseling psychology*, *52*(2), 137.

Reback, R. (2010). Noninstructional spending improves noncognitive outcomes: Discontinuity evidence from a unique elementary school counselor financing system. Education Finance and Policy, 5(2), 105–137.

Reed, L. C. (2012). The intersection of race and gender in school leadership for three Black female principals. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *25*(1), 39-58.

Reed, L. C., & Swaminathan, R. (2016). An urban school leader's approach to school improvement: Toward contextually responsive leadership. Urban Education, 51(9), 1096–1125.

Rice, J. K., & Malen, B. (2003). The human costs of education reform: The case of school reconstitution. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *39*(5), 635-666.

Riehl, C. J. (2000). The principal's role in creating inclusive schools for diverse students: A review of normative, empirical, and critical literature on the practice of educational administration. *Review of educational research*, *70*(1), 55-81.

Rigby, J. G. (2015). Principals' sensemaking and enactment of teacher evaluation. *Journal of Educational Administration*.

Rodela, R. (2013). The social learning discourse: Trends, themes and interdisciplinary influences in current research. *Environmental science & policy*, *25*, 157-166.

Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American educational research journal*, *50*(1), 4-36.

Ross, J. A., & Berger, M.-J. (2009). Equity and leadership: research-based strategies for school leaders. School Leadership & Management, 29(5

Rothstein, R. (2017). *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America*. Liveright Publishing.

Roulston, K., McClendon, V. J., Thomas, A., Tuff, R., Williams, G., & Healy, M. F. (2008). Developing reflective interviewers and reflexive researchers. *Reflective Practice*, *9*(3), 231-243.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data. Sage.

Saldana, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. OUP USA.

Sandberg, J., & Tsoukas, H. (2015). Making sense of the sensemaking perspective: Its constituents, limitations, and opportunities for further development. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *36*(S1), S6-S32.

Schechter, C., Shaked, H., Ganon-Shilon, S., & Goldratt, M. (2018). Leadership metaphors: School principals' sense-making of a national reform. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *17*(1), 1-26.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers college press.

Shaked, H., & Schechter, C. (2019). Exploring systems thinking in school principals 'decision-making. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *22*(5), 573-596.

Shand, R., Muroga, A., Rodriguez, V., & Levin, H. M. (2018). REACH Cost Analysis Report.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for information*, *22*(2), 63-75.

Shields, C. M. (2003). Good intentions are not enough: Transformative leadership for communities of difference. Scarecrow Press.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational administration quarterly*, *46*(4), 558-589.

Shields, C. M., & Hesbol, K. A. (2020). Transformative leadership approaches to inclusion, equity, and social justice. *Journal of School Leadership*, *30*(1), 3-22.

Shields, R. A., & Miles, K. H. (2008). Strategic Designs: Lessons from Leading Edge Small Urban High Schools. Education Resource Strategies.

Silverman, D., & Marvasti, A. (2008). *Doing qualitative research: A comprehensive guide*. Sage.

Singleton, G. E., & Linton, C. (2006). A field guide for achieving equity in schools: Courageous conversations about race. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Sipe, C. L. (1992). Report on Long-Term Impacts (STEP Program). Public/Private Ventures.

Sipe, L., & Constable, S. (1996). A chart of four contemporary research paradigms: Metaphors for the modes of inquiry. *Taboo: The journal of culture and education*, *1*(Spring), 153-163.

Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. Review of educational research, 75(3), 417-453.

Slavin, R. E. (1999). How can funding equity ensure enhanced achievement?. Journal of Education Finance, 24(4), 519-528.

Smith, J., & Wohlstetter, P. (2006). Understanding the different faces of partnering: a typology of public-private partnerships. School Leadership & Management, 26(3), 249–268. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430600737090

Smith, P. A. (2021). Black Male School Leaders: Protectors and Defenders of Children, Community, Culture, and Village. *Journal of School Leadership*, *31*(1-2), 29-49.

Solorzano, D. G., & Ornelas, A. (2002). A critical race analysis of advanced placement classes: A case of educational inequality. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *1*(4), 215-229.

Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. International journal of qualitative studies in education, 14(4), 471-495.

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). A critical race counterstory of race, racism, and affirmative action. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *35*(2), 155-168.

Spillane, J. P., & Lee, L. C. (2014). Novice school principals' sense of ultimate responsibility: Problems of practice in transitioning to the principal's office. Educational Administration Quarterly, 50(3), 431–465.

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Educational researcher*, *30*(3), 23-28.

Stake, R. (2000). „Case study" in: Handbook of Analitative Research.

Stich, A. E., & Cipollone, K. (2021). In and through the urban educational "reform churn": The illustrative power of qualitative longitudinal research. *Urban Education*, *56*(3), 484-510.

Stovall, D. (2013). Against the politics of desperation: Educational justice, critical race theory, and Chicago school reform. *Critical Studies in Education*, *54*(1), 33-43.

Stroub, K. J., & Richards, M. P. (2013). From Resegregation to Reintegration: Trends in the Racial/Ethnic Segregation of Metropolitan Public Schools, 1993–2009. American Educational Research Journal, 50(3), 497–531. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831213478462

Sugrue, T. J. (2005). The Origins of the Urban Crisis : Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit. Princeton University Press.

Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). A coming crisis in teaching. *Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the US*, 1-101.

Swanson, J., & Welton, A. (2019). When good intentions only go so far: White principals leading discussions about race. *Urban Education*, *54*(5), 732-759.

Taylor, R. T. (2010). Leadership to improve student achievement: Focus the culture on learning. Journal of Scholarship and Practice, 7(1), 10-23.

Terosky, A. L. (2014). From a managerial imperative to a learning imperative: Experiences of urban, public school principals. Educational Administration Quarterly, 50(1), 3–33.

Theoharis, G. (2007). Social Justice Educational Leaders and Resistance: Toward a Theory of Social Justice Leadership. Educational Administration Quarterly, 43(2), 221–258. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X06293717

Theoharis, G. (2009). *The school leaders our children deserve: Seven keys to equity, social justice, and school reform*. Teachers College Press. 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027.

Theoharis, G., & Haddix, M. (2011). Undermining racism and a whiteness ideology: White principals living a commitment to equitable and excellent schools. *Urban Education*, *46*(6), 1332-1351.

Thomas, R. M. (2003). Blending qualitative and quantitative research methods in theses anddissertations. Corwin Press.

Tillman, L. C. (2008). The scholarship of Dr. Asa G. Hilliard, III: Implications for black principal leadership. *Review of Educational Research*, *78*(3), 589-607.

Topping, K. J. (1996). The effectiveness of peer tutoring in further and higher education: A typologyand review of the literature. Higher education, 32(3), 321-345.

Trujillo, T. M., & Woulfin, S. L. (2014). Equity-Oriented Reform Amid Standards-Based Accountability: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of an Intermediary's Instructional Practices. American Educational Research Journal, 51(2), 253–293.

Tuma, A. P. (2020). The Organizational Landscape of Schools: School Employees' Conceptualizations of Organizations in Their Environment. *American Journal of Education*, *126*(2), 231-263.

Turner, E. O., & Spain, A. K. (2016). The multiple meanings of (in) equity: Remaking school district tracking policy in an era of budget cuts and accountability. Urban Education, 0042085916674060.

Tyack, D. B. (1974). The one best system: A history of American urban education (Vol. 95). HarvardUniversity Press.

Tyack, D. B., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia*. Harvard University Press.

Vasquez Heilig, J., Brown, K., & Brown, A. (2012). The illusion of inclusion: A critical race theory textual analysis of race and standards. *Harvard Educational Review*, *82*(3), 403-424.

Vass, G. (2017). Preparing for culturally responsive schooling: Initial teacher educators into the fray. *Journal of teacher education*, *68*(5), 451-462.

Vaught, S. E. (2009). The color of money: School funding and the commodification of black children. *Urban Education*, *44*(5), 545-570.

Vaught, S. E. (2011). Racism, public schooling, and the entrenchment of white supremacy: A critical race ethnography. Suny Press.

Voight, A., Hanson, T., O'Malley, M., & Adekanye, L. (2015). The Racial School Climate Gap: Within-School Disparities in Students' Experiences of Safety, Support, and Connectedness. American Journal of Community Psychology, 56(3–4), 252–267. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-015-9751-x

Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School Climate: a Review of the Construct, Measurement, and Impact on Student Outcomes. Educational Psychology Review, 28(2), 315–352. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1

Warren, C. A. (2015). Conflicts and contradictions: Conceptions of empathy and the work of good-intentioned early career white female teachers. *Urban Education*, *50*(5), 572-600.

Warren, C. A., & Venzant Chambers, T. T. (2020). The imperative of social foundations to (urban) education research and practice. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(5), 369-375.

Weick, K. E. (2010). Reflections on enacted sensemaking in the Bhopal disaster. *Journal of Management Studies*, *47*(3), 537-550.

Weick, K. E. (2012). Organized sensemaking: A commentary on processes of interpretive work. *Human Relations*, *65*(1), 141-153.

Weick, K. E. (2020). Sensemaking, organizing, and surpassing: A handoff. *Journal of Management Studies*, *57*(7), 1420-1431.

Weick, K., Sutcliffe, K., & Obstfeld, D. (2009). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Handbook of decision making*, *16*(4), 83.

Weiner, E. J. (2003). Secretary Paulo Freire and the democratization of power: Toward a theory of transformative leadership. Educational Philosophy and theory, 35(1), 89-106.

Weiner, L. (2000). Research in the 90's: Implications for urban teacher preparation. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(3), 369–406.

Weiss, C. C., & García, E. (2015). Student engagement and academic performance in Mexico: Evidence and puzzles from PISA. *Comparative education review*, *59*(2), 305-331.

White-Smith, K. A., & White, M. A. (2009). High school reform implementation: Principals' perceptions on their leadership role. Urban Education, 44(3), 259-279.

Wilkerson, R. D., & Wilson, C. M. (2017). "Beating against the Wind" The Politics of Race and Retention in Supporting African American Principal Advocacy and Growth. *Journal of School Leadership*, *27*(6), 772-799.

Wilson, C. M. (2015). Refusing Detroit's public school failure: African American women's educational advocacy and critical care versus the politics of disposability. *education policy analysis archives*, *23*, 125.

Wilson, C. M. (2016). Enacting critical care and transformative leadership in schools highly impacted by poverty: An African-American principal's counter narrative. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *19*(5), 557-577.

Wilson, C. M. (2019). Critical approaches to educational partnerships with African American families: The relevancy of race in ideology and practice. *Handbook of family, school, community partnerships in education*, 51-69.

Wilson, C. M. (2019). Critical approaches to educational partnerships with African American families: The relevancy of race in ideology and practice. *Handbook of family, school, community partnerships in education*, 51-69.

Wilson, J., & While, A. E. (1998). Methodological issues surrounding the use of vignettes in qualitative research. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, *12*(1), 79-86.

Witherspoon, N., & Mitchell, R. W. (2009). Critical race theory as ordinary theology of African American principals. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *22*(6), 655-670.

Wright, J. S., & Kim, T. (2020). Reframing community (dis) engagement: the discursive connection between undemocratic policy enactment, minoritized communities and resistance. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1-19.

Yeh, S. S. (2009). The cost-effectiveness of raising teacher quality. Educational Research Review, 4(3), 220-232.

Yin, R. K. (1994). Case study research: design and methods. 19

Yin, R. K. (2003). Case study research: Design and methods (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race media literacy: Challenging deficit discourse about Chicanas/os. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, *30*(1), 52-62.

Young, M. D., & Diem, S. (2014). Putting critical theoretical perspectives to work in educational policy.

Zuckerman, S. J. (2019). Making sense of place: A case study of a sensemaking in a rural school-community partnership.