# A CASE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS OF A NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

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# ABSTRACT

LETITIA S. HARRIS: A case study of the English second language programs of a North Carolina School District. (Under the direction of DR. DAWSON HANCOCK)

As the United States struggles with issues regarding the rapidly increasing immigrant population, so do public schools struggle with providing the youth of this non-English speaking population a quality education. Because of the requirements and structures of high schools, they may face the greatest challenge of educating these youth. Using an embedded case study approach, the researcher examined one suburban school district in North Carolina to assess the extent to which nationally accepted and research based strategies for ELLs were utilized during the 2008 school year. The researcher also identified the outcomes of the high school ELLs in terms of academic achievement and graduation.

After identifying the generally accepted strategies, the researcher grouped them into five categories, including data use and analysis, curriculum and programs, instructional strategies, leadership, and parental involvement. She also identified professional development needs in each area. The researcher then used this model to compare the recommended strategies to those found in practice within the district. The researcher found that the population of students in the district closely resembled those of the nation. She also found that the ESL program generally was aligned to the recommended strategies for the ELLs in the district; however, fewer of the strategies were in place uniformly across the district in the broader high school population.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Dr. Hancock, who served as chair, read countless revisions and offered helpful advice. His questions to me helped narrow the scope and focus of my research. I appreciate his patience and guidance as I completed this journey.

Always the curriculum historian and expert, Dr. Lock spurred my interest in program development for English Language Learners (ELLs). Information from his classes helped me make sense of the multiplicity of programs that are available to ELLs and served as a core of knowledge that allowed me to connect theoretical frameworks for regular education students to ELLs.

I first met Dr. Lyons in the early 1990s while working on my administrative certificate. His sense of equity for all students, his desire to improve educational leadership, and his concern for students of all backgrounds and ethnicities drew me to his classes.

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To Sandra Phillip, a long time friend, I express my thanks for not only proof-reading the first three chapters, but for reading numerous papers I wrote for classes. Suzanne Micallef, who also is an English teacher, gave of her time to re-read and edit this dissertation. These two friends were invaluable to me.

Last of all I must thank my husband, Wes, and my son, Beven, both of whom bolstered me when I needed support and encouraged me to see the project through. They were always ready to put their needs after my deadlines for completion.

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| | |
|---|---|
| AP | Advanced Placement |
| AYP | Adequate Yearly Progress |
| BICS | Basic Interpersonal Communicative Language |
| CALPS | Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills |
| DOPS | Dropout Prevention Specialist |
| ELL | English Language Learner |
| EOC | End of Course |
| ESEA | Elementary and Secondary Education Act |
| ESL | English Second Language |
| IPT | IDEA ® English Language Proficiency Tests |
| LEP | Limited English Proficient |
| LEA | Local Educational Agency |
| NCDPI/ NCPS | North Carolina Department of Public Instruction also known as North Carolina Public Schools |
| NCWISE | North Carolina Window of Information on Student Education |
| NCLB | No Child Left Behind |
| VIF | Visiting International Faculty |

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The year was 1968. Many Mexican American high school students were tired of traveling past quality schools for Whites to substandard facilities with limited resources and of listening to disparaging and demeaning remarks from adults who worked in the schools (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2004). As continued by Guajardo and Guajardo, the students decided to draft a list of grievances against the school district demanding repairs to their schools, access to information about higher education opportunities, and the opportunity to enroll in courses that included historical and cultural references to their backgrounds. After the school board rejected all of their demands, the students protested. The Edcouch-Elsa walkout led to a ruling by Federal District Judge Reynaldo Garza that students' rights to hold meetings and protests had been violated and that the suspended and expelled students should be reinstated. Although this ruling recognized the rights of Mexican American students to a quality education, almost 40 years later many students who speak English as a second language continue to face some of the same issues that prevailed in Texas in the 1960s.

This chapter maps the researcher's proposal for conducting an embedded case study of the English Second Language (ESL) program at the high school level in a suburban school district in North Carolina. It begins by presenting information regarding the judicial decisions and legislative acts that set the expectations for the educational opportunities in public schools for English Language Learners (ELLs), followed by a

section stating the purpose for the research and the research questions. A rationale of the need for and the significance of the study and an overview of the proposed methodology are presented next. The chapter concludes with a listing of the limitations and delimitations of the study and a glossary of key terms.

## Judicial Decisions and Legislative Acts Regarding the Education of ELLs

Even though the late 1960s and early 1970s saw numerous walkouts and protest demonstrations by students seeking equal education opportunities, minority groups actually demanded this access much earlier. A number of judicial cases and legislative acts clearly placed the responsibility for providing equal access to educational opportunities for immigrant and non-English speaking students on public schools, and challenged school systems to provide language and content instruction within the students' native languages if necessary. Table 1 presents a chronological order of federal court cases that affected the educational opportunities of ELLs.

Table 1

*Chronological Chart Listing Relevant Federal Court Cases Regarding Ells.*

| Case | Year | Court Level | Ruling | Citation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Plessy v. Ferguson | 1896 | U.S. Supreme Court | Approved the constitutionality of separate but equal accommodations for intrastate railroads and led to the states applying policies of segregation in other areas. | Guarjardo and Guargardo, 2004 |
| Mendez et al. v. Westminster et. al. | 1946 | U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit | Found that separate educational settings often resulted in nonequal opportunities for Mexican and Mexican American students. | Mendez, 1946 |
| Brown v. Board of Education | 1954 | U. S. Supreme Court | Ordered the desegregation of all schools and reversed the long-standing practice of separate but equal | Guarjardo and Guargardo, 2004 |

| Case | Year | Court Level | Ruling | Citation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lau v. Nichols | 1974 | U. S. Supreme Court | Ruled that providing equal access to facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum did not constitute equal educational opportunity if students were instructed in a language they did not understand. This ruling effectively required schools to provide bilingual, ESL, or other appropriate instructional programs to ELLs. | Ariza, Morales-Jones, Yahya, and Zainuddin, 2002; Lab at Brown, 2005; South Dakota Department of Education (SDDE), 2005 |
| Serna v. Portales | 1974 | U.S. Court of Appeals 10th Circuit | Ascertained that students with Spanish surnames (a) did not perform at the same academic levels as non-Spanish students, (b) did have higher dropout rates and truancy than White students, and (c) did order a bilingual and bicultural program to be developed. | Ariza et al., 2002; Lab at Brown, 2005. |
| Castaneda v. Pickard | 1981 | U. S. Court of Appeals 5th Circuit | Created a three prong test for determining the level of compliance of school districts for the education of Limited English Proficient students. Programs must be based on sound educational theory, implemented effectively with appropriate resources, and be proven effective. | Ariza et al., 2002; Lab at Brown, 2005; SDDE, 2005. |
| Plyler v. Doe | 1982 | U. S. Supreme Court | Decided it was unconstitutional to deny enrollment in public schools to children of undocumented immigrants | SDDE, 2005 |
| Gomez v. Illinois | 1987 | U. S. Court of Appeals 7th Circuit | Re affirmed the three prong test of Plyler v. Doe | Ariza et al., 2002; Lab at Brown, 2005; SDDE, 2005. |

Several federal legislative actions affirmed the responsibility of public schools to educate ELLs. Two, in particular, addressed the non-discrimination of ELLs and specified the design of ESL programs. They are:

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protected people in the United States from discrimination due to race, color, or national origin;

2. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 established federal policy and allocated funds for bilingual education programs for economically disadvantaged language minority students. This act required that programs be designed that allowed students to continue to use their native language while learning English.

For over 40 years the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has influenced ESL education. According to Echevarria and Graves (2003), the passage of the 1965 Title VII of the ESEA, established programs that delivered bilingual instruction to low-income students and ELLs in both English and content areas. Additional amendments to the ESEA in 1984 and 1988 provided program funding for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students with special needs, supported family English literacy programs, emphasized the importance of teacher development and training, and expanded funding for "special alternative" programs that use only English (Williams & Hopstock, 1995). Additionally, the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act reauthorized ESEA, reiterated previous legislation regarding LEP student education, and supplied additional funding for immigrant education.

Most recently the reauthorization of ESEA in 2002, commonly known as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), further identified the need for educating ELLs. NCLB forced school districts to develop a process for research based instruction, evaluation, and assessment of these students who may be specified under several subgroups (Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Wainer, 2004). Echevarria and Graves point out that school districts must develop individualized and programmatic instructional plans that assure the success

of the learner academically, socially, and behaviorally. The challenge of meeting these students' needs increases as they move into high school where state and local regulations and restrictions impact flexibility on site based decision making in areas such as credit hours required for graduation and courses of study.

Although shaped by federal legislation and judicial rulings, educating the public is ultimately a responsibility of the state. According to Article I, § 15 of the North Carolina Constitution, the people of North Carolina have a right to receive the privilege of education, and the state must protect and maintain that right. Further, Article IX, § 2 requires the General Assembly to maintain a free public school system providing equal opportunities for all students.

Recently North Carolina defined the right of equal opportunity to an education for "at-risk" students. *Hoke County Board of Education, et al. v. the State of North Carolina and the State Board of Education*, commonly known as *Leandro,* began as a challenge to the funding formula used in North Carolina. During the decade of trials and appeals the case became an analytic tool to determine elements and services that assured students a sound basic education. The North Carolina Supreme Court defined the term "sound basic education" using the identifiers below (Hoke, 2004, p. 11):

> 1. Students have sufficient knowledge of fundamental math and physical science to assure the ability to function in a complex, rapidly changing society;
> 2. Students have sufficient fundamental knowledge of geography, history, and basic economic and political systems to make informed choices with regard to issues that affect the students personally or affect their community, state, and nation;

3. Students have sufficient academic and vocational skills to engage successfully in postsecondary education or vocational training;

4. Students have sufficient academic and vocational skills to compete on an equal basis with others in formal education or gainful employment in a contemporary society.

The Court further defined the term "at-risk student." According to Hoke (2004) Students considered "at-risk" are students who (a) come from unstable homes, (b) have poor socioeconomic backgrounds, (c) are disadvantaged, (d) have parents with low levels of education, (e) are limited English proficient, and/or (f) are minorities identified as "at-risk." Several of these identifiers may be applicable to ELLs.

As is evident from the legislative acts and judicial decisions summarized in this section, public schools are responsible for providing all students with equal access to a free, basic, and sound educational opportunity. High schools face unique challenges in meeting this requirement. The following section outlines the purpose of this study and presents the research questions the researcher asked during an examination of one school district's ESL program.

## Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Three underlying assumptions were made by the researcher in this study. The first was that the majority of administrators, teachers, and staff members desired to fulfill the responsibility of educating all ELLs. Secondly, the researcher assumed that the research based recommendations were appropriate for the ELL population in the district. Lastly, the researcher believed that multiple strategies embedded within a holistic model were necessary for consistent and long-term improvement in student academic success.

The model contained five categories. The categories were (a) data collection and use, (b) curriculum and programs, (c) instructional practices, (d) leadership, and (e) parent and school engagement. This holistic model became the framework for the study.

A common strand within each category was that of professional development. Specifically, the researcher considered what professional development programs were provided to teachers and administrators regarding policies, curriculum requirements, instructional practices, and cultural issues. She sought to determine how the professional development was delivered, evaluated, and monitored. Finally, the researcher wondered how the district measured the effectiveness of the professional development. The professional development needs were embedded within each category.

The overarching purpose of this research was to explore the success of the English Second Language programs within this suburban school district specifically at the high school level. The primary research questions follow.

1. In what ways did the district's ESL programs and strategies currently in place adhere to identified national standards and best practices?

2. What outcomes were experienced by high school ELLs exposed to these ESL programs and strategies in the school district?

Secondary research questions were asked in each identified category area.

1. *Data Collection and Use:* How were the ELLs in the district similar and dissimilar to other ELLs at the national and state levels? How did the district utilize the data it disaggregated about the ELL student population?

2. *Curriculum and Programs:* To what extent were curriculum and program recommendations from state and national agencies, research organizations, and individual

researchers implemented within the system and at the school level? Why were certain programs chosen, and to what extent was the district using information about the special and individual needs of ELLs in designing the overall ESL program? How were the programs implemented, delivered, and monitored?

3. *Instructional Practices:* How did teachers plan for the instruction of ELLs? To what extent were high school teachers in the district employing research based instructional strategies specific to ELLs?

4. *Leadership:* How did the district plan for and distribute fiscal and human resources based on ELL needs? How were decisions made at the district and school level as to allocation and disbursements? How were ESL teachers screened, hired, and placed at schools? What role did principals, counselors, and teachers play in the success of ELLs?

5. *Parental Engagement:* What types of parent involvement strategies were utilized by the system and schools? What communications and interactions did the staff members have with students and parents outside traditional classroom settings? How were parents and students encouraged to participate in school functions?

## Need for Study

The researcher's interest in the education of "at-risk" students dates to the early 1970s when she entered the education field as a teacher. Her focus narrowed to ELLs when she was an assistant principal in the mid-1990s. At that time she coordinated system efforts to assign tutors at a school site to individual ELLs. Parents of these ELLs were generally white collar, highly educated, professionals who provided additional support outside the school setting for the students.

In the mid-1990s she began working at a middle school that had a large number of "at-risk" students. Simultaneously, the community began to experience a large influx of students from Mexico, arriving with their families who had taken jobs at a recently opened chicken processing plant. This school received more ELLs than any other middle school in the system. The strategies the system employed to work with the previous ELLs ceased to work. The numbers prohibited one-on-one tutoring. The researcher realized that she had much to learn about meeting the unique needs of these special students.

In the fall of 2004 when the researcher was an assistant superintendent in the school district, the system was notified by the state that it was to be identified as a LEA in Improvement. This designation was received in part because the district had failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading with Hispanic students at the high school level. The designation surprised district and school leaders because the LEA generally was considered high performing. The 2003-2004 school year was the first year of the implementation of NCLB and the district had not previously compared data in this fashion. As leaders in the system began to look for strategies to address the needs of these students, they realized that there was no central source of strategies or an instrument to assess current status of practices at the system or school level. One outcome of this study was a framework presented in the form of a matrix (Appendix E) for the strategies.

The influx of Hispanic families to the community and the challenges of meeting the needs of these students were not unique to the school district. The story was similar to ones that unfolded countless times in many areas of the country. In 1965, when the United States ended the quota system for immigration, the complexion and size of the immigrant population changed (Ariza et al., 2002; Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Hao &

Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Qin-Hilliard, 2002). Hao and Bonstead-Bruns indicated that unlike the Old World immigrant wave at the turn of the 20th century, the new immigrants were primarily Hispanic and Asian and from third world countries. As Qin-Hilliard, Echevarria, and Graves pointed out, speaking multiple languages and dialects and appearing physically different lessened the immigrants' opportunities for easy assimilation into the United States culture and may have limited their chances for economic gains.

Assuming immigration patterns continue, rapid immigrant population growth, especially in the Hispanic segment, is expected. Llagas and Snyder (2003) stated that during the 1990s the Hispanic population accounted for 38% of the nation's overall population growth, and in 2000, the population had grown to nearly 32.5 million or 12% of the total population. These minorities are now located in all 50 states, as well as Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam, (Ariza et al, 2002; Hill & Flynn, 2006). Predictions by the U. S. Census Bureau (2004) indicate that approximately 25% of the population will be Hispanic by 2050.

Several reasons indicate that natural population increases will occur. According to Llagas and Snyder (2003), Hispanics are now the largest minority group in the U.S. with a median age of 26.6, making them generally younger than any other racial or ethnic group. Kazarda and Johnson (2006), Llagas and Snyder, and Wainer (2004) combined the factors of rapid Hispanic population growth with their median age, and high possible fertility rate to explain the increase in Hispanic children by proportion to either White or Black. Llagas and Snyder expected that the growth of the Latino and Asian population will continue to increase in greater proportion than either White or Black.

The rapid growth of immigrants was seen in the classrooms of the U.S. where the percentage of Hispanic students increased 11% between 1972 and 2000 (Ariza et al., 2002; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Genesee, 1999; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Llagas & Snyder, 2003; Qin- Hilliard, 2002; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Ten states, including Texas, California, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Massachusetts have grappled with the instruction of large numbers of Spanish speaking students for at least 50 years and now other states, especially those in the Southeast, face the same challenges (Ariza et al.; Llagas & Snyder; Passel & Suro, 2005; Tornatzky, Pachon, & Torres, 2003; Qin-Hilliard; Wainer, 2004).

The Pew Hispanic Center (2004) projected that over the next 25 years the Hispanic student population will increase by 82%. According to Howe and Strauss (2000), the youth population, ages 15-24, total over 76 million and are the largest, as well as most culturally and ethnically diverse segment, of the population. Qin-Hilliard indicated that one in every five children in public school was either an immigrant or the child of an immigrant. Tornatzky et al. stated that even more striking nationally was that one of every two first grade students was of Hispanic descent. According to Echeverria and Graves (2003), Hispanic students represent approximately 75% of all ESL students.

North Carolina trends exceeded those of the nation. Kazarda and Johnson (2006) and Wainer (2004) reported that between the years of 1990 and 2000, North Carolina led the nation in immigrant population growth. Moreover, as in other states, the primary factor influencing immigrant location was job availability. Kazarda and Johnson indicated that while Hispanics lived in all 100 North Carolina counties, the greatest concentrations were found along the state's Interstate highway systems of I-40 and I-85,

the “urban crescent,” where jobs were plentiful in construction and service industries and in rural counties that had specialty markets of turkey, poultry, and hog processing.

The trends in immigrant growth in North Carolina also were reflected in the school systems. According to historical data found in the 2008 North Carolina Statistical Profile, between 2001 and 2008 the Hispanic and Asian student population grew by 97,126 students representing 63% of the total growth rate of all students. Within that percentage the overwhelming representative group was Hispanic (90%). A parent publication produced by the North Carolina Public Schools reported in 2002 that approximately 88.5% of ELLs were Spanish speaking with the next represented language being Vietnamese at 3.4%. According to Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000), both first and second generation Latinos were twice as likely to be identified as LEP as Asians.

The large influx of these students underscored the need for identifying specific strategies that should improve the opportunities for academic success for ELLs. Hill and Flynn (2006) stated that although Hispanic and LEP students comprised a significant representation in the public schools, especially in large urban areas in California, Texas, and Florida where they actually are the majority, they were among the most educationally disadvantaged of all groups.

The lack of an adequate education of ELLs, especially those of Hispanic descent, was reflected in workforce statistics from the early part of the 21st century. Although Hispanics represent 11% of U.S. residents, Capps, Fix, Passel, Ost, and Perez-Lopez (2003), reported that Hispanics accounted for 14% of all workers and 20% of the low wage workers. Lack of continuing education resulted in Hispanics being under-represented in jobs that paid higher salaries and demanded a high level of educational

skills or advanced training (Llagas & Snyder, 2003; Tornatzky et al., 2003). Hispanic males consistently earned less than White males with the same educational levels and fewer Hispanic and Black males and females held managerial or professional positions as compared to White men and women.

Public schools are the social institution charged with educating these youths, addressing the unique needs of this at-risk population, and keeping them in school. Within these systems, high schools face the greatest challenge of retaining students for several reasons. During the high school years, students become sixteen and legally are able to withdraw from school, are able to find low-paying entry level jobs, and are able to assume more household responsibilities. These factors, singularly or in combination with other risk factors, including state accountability issues, increase the possibility of students dropping out.

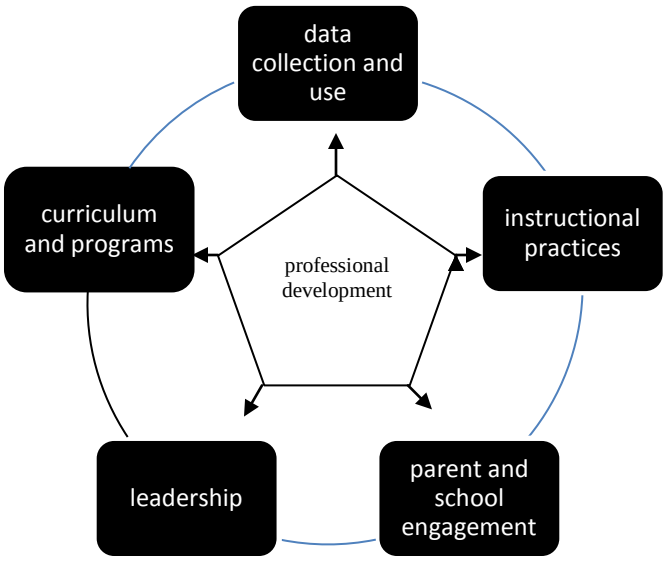
Perhaps Tornatzky et al. (2003) painted the future impact of failing to find strategies to educate Hispanic youth best. They reported that between 2015 and 2019, the early elementary students of today will enter the workforce and almost simultaneously the “baby boomers” will retire in mass. Because of the increasing numbers and projections of Hispanic students indicated previously, Tornatzky et al. interpreted this to mean that Hispanics will comprise a large percentage of working adults in the United States. Because dropouts are likely to be unemployed, live in poverty, be unhealthy, receive public assistance, enter prisons, and become single parents, failing to prepare these youths for continued higher education undoubtedly will have a negative impact on social and economic systems that will affect the general public (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006; Genesee, 1999).

## Overview of the Study's Methodology

Numerous studies have been conducted that explored individual elements of the school as they related to ELLs. Through a review of literature, the researcher identified a plethora of action strategies specific for ELLs that might be implemented by a school or district. The researcher then grouped these strategies into five categories creating a holistic model. Those areas included (a) data collection and use, (b) curriculum and programs, (c) instructional practices, (d) leadership and (f) parent and school engagement. Professional development activities which should support implementation of the strategies were identified within each area. No single category is more important than another, but instead work together to increase the likelihood of success for ELLs. The model is represented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

*Framework Representing Holistic Model of Support for ELLs*



Several factors that aligned to the qualitative research processes promoted by Hancock and Algozzine (2006), Merriam (1998) and Yin (2003) contributed to the researcher's decision to use an embedded case study design for this study. First, this study embraced a contemporary topic that was not suited to an experimental protocol. Secondly, qualitative strategies combined with available empirical data seemed best suited to determine if the actual implementation of the district's ESL program at the school level aligned to the intent of the district. Thirdly, the study was limited to one school district and was conducted during a specific time frame, the 2007-2008 school year. Lastly, the product of this study included an analysis of a descriptive type, including topics about processes, individuals, and groups of people.

Various sources of empirical data were analyzed. Information describing the district's student population relative to ELLs was compiled by using the state's and district's data sources. The LEA routinely administered the *Annual Student and Staff Safe School Surveys*. Selected questions from the student and staff surveys from the 2007 administration were used. In the fall of 2007 the district surveyed all teachers and administrators using the *Equity in Special Education Placement: A School Self Assessment*. The assessment gathered perception data concerning attitudes of school employees toward Latino and special education students. It measured the levels of awareness of faculty and staff about the ESL programs, the training offered for instructional techniques, and cultural awareness. The researcher selected relevant questions from these surveys and compared frequencies, means, and standard deviations of the answers.

Qualitative methods, including observations, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews were used in the field. The researcher observed student interactions with one another as well as staff, the allocation of space within the facility, and resources available to teachers. Artifacts such as student handbooks, parent letters, and general communication materials were examined. The researcher used the constant comparative analysis method as explained by Merriam (1998) to organize the collected data within the categories to search for answers to the secondary questions and to identify major themes. Comparisons were made between the framework of recommended strategies and the strategies that were found to be in place within the district. These findings supported conclusions regarding the extent of implementation of national standards and practices within the district and the influence of these strategies upon academic outcomes of ELLs in the system.

As generally is true of case studies, the information derived from this study was specific to the school district; however, similar districts may benefit from the framework developed by the researcher and districts could replicate the examination process. Using a mixed methods approach provided an opportunity to triangulate the information and examine both processes and relationships among central office and school level administrators, faculty and staff, parents, and students. Hopefully, by identifying areas of strengths as well as areas for improvement, the study will influence system policies and practices and as well as to contribute to future research.

## Delimitations and Limitations

This study had the following delimitations.

1. The Hispanic students within the system represented a population with a large variance. Some were undocumented immigrants, while others were first or second generation immigrants. They possessed varying degrees of language proficiency and academic capability. Data were not available to the researcher to fully identify the status and abilities of the students.

2. Hispanic parents, especially those who were undocumented, may have been hesitant to share family or background information for fear of reprisal. Because the researcher did not have direct contact with parents and students during the initial sampling process, it was difficult to gain the confidence of these parents and students and solicit their participation.

3. Because the researcher feared that school administrators, counselors, and faculty members might be hesitant to share information if they perceived the purpose of the study was to cast blame upon them, it was imperative that the researcher clearly stated that the focus was on processes used within the schools not the individuals.

4. The researcher previously was employed by the school system as a teacher, site administrator, and assistant superintendent. Although currently retired from the district, the researcher might have unknowingly held predetermined assumptions. To combat this bias, she used preapproved questions for interviews and focus groups, followed preapproved protocols, combined quantitative information from surveys and data collected by the state and district with the qualitative data, and measured the responses against a predetermined rubric.

This study had the following limitations.

1. Due to the transient nature of this population, follow-up information was difficult to retrieve from students.

2. The researcher did not speak Spanish; therefore, she was dependent upon translators to appropriately translate any surveys or verbal exchanges of the students and parents. Biases of the interpreters and translators may inadvertently have been inserted into the data collected from focus groups.

3. This study was limited to ELL students in Grades 9-12 enrolled during the 2007-2008 school year within the high schools of the school district.

4. The generalizability of the study might be limited because of the case study design; however, other schools and systems could use this study as a model for identifying preferred strategies, examples of similar data sources, and processes for interpreting data.

5. Although a comprehensive organization approach was undertaken, influencing variables may have been omitted.

## Definitions of Key Terms

The following key terms were used in this study.

*Academic Achievement:* Indicators of academic achievement include such items as class rank, grade point average (GPA), enrollment in honors and academic placement courses, graduation from high school, workforce readiness, and entry into higher educational programs upon graduation.

*Academic Language:* This represents the formal vocabulary of academic subjects (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Chamot and O'Malley, 1994; Echevarria and Graves, 2003).

*Academic Success:* Within this study the researcher defines academic success as graduation from high school.

*Advanced Placement (AP):* This is a program allowing high school students to complete college-level courses for college placement and/or credit (NCPS, 2006b).

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):* AYP is a measurement required by the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. It measures the yearly progress in reading and math of subgroups of students at the school, district, and state levels against specific targets set by the state. High schools face additional target goals for attendance and/or graduation. Schools must meet 100% of the targets to make AYP (NCPS, 2006b).

*Basic Interpersonal Communicative Language (BICS):* BICS is commonly referred to as social or conversational language (Echevarria et al., 2004).

*Bilingual program:* This program delivers the instruction of content, primarily in reading, in the first language of the student (Genesee, 1999).

*Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS):* Academic or content area language and terminology is associated with formal instruction (Ariza et al., 2002; Echevarria et al., 2004)

*Dropout Prevention Specialist (DOPS):* A faculty or staff member of the school assigned specifically to work with students in danger of dropping out of school.

*Dual language/two way language instruction:* This practice groups language minority students from a single language in the same classroom with native English speaking students. The goal is to provide instruction in both languages equally so that students become proficient in both languages (Ariza et al., 2002; Genesee, 1999).

*English Language Learners (ELLs):* ELL is used to describe students whose first language is other than English. These students are in the process of learning English and may need assistance to participate in the regular curriculum (NCPS, 2006b).

*End of Course Tests (EOC):* EOCs are state made standardized tests based on the North Carolina Courses of Study. They were administered at the end of each semester. In 2008 EOCs were designed to assess competence of high school students in the subjects of Algebra I, Algebra II, English I, Biology, Chemistry, Geometry, Physical Science, Physics, Civics and Economics, and U.S. History (NCPS, 2006b).

*Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):* This federal act originally was passed by the legislature in 1965. This is the primary legislation that affects K-12 education at the federal level. The most recent reauthorization occurred in 2002 and is commonly known as No Child Left Behind Act (NCDPI, 2006b).

*English as a Second Language (ESL):* ESL is a program model for nonnative English speakers learning English. It uses English as the primary instructional language although students may receive some support in their native language. The program generally is a pull-out program within the school day that is paired with accommodations in the regular classroom. In secondary settings, students may receive ESL instruction during a regularly scheduled class period (NCPS, 2006b).

*Equity Funding:* This term expands the concept of equality to include conditions. It promotes additional funding for schools if students attending them have factors resulting from circumstances beyond their control that may impede their learning. These conditions may include at-risk factors such as minority status, poverty, or physical or emotional impairments (King, Swanson, & Sweetland, 2003).

*Hispanic:* This term refers to persons originating in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Central and South America; designates ethnic origin and not race (Kazarda & Johnson, 2006).

*Home Language Survey:* This is a survey asking questions that determine if a student is a language minority student or National Origin Minority (NOM) and by federal law must be completed upon entry to a school system. If the answer to any question is "a language other than English," then the student is required to take a diagnostic placement test, such as the IDEA English Language Proficiency Tests, at initial enrollment. If parents or the student refuse to allow the test, documentation must be presented that indicates they understand that the student will not be identified as LEP, nor will the student be eligible to receive ESL services (NCPS, 2005b, 2006d).

*IDEA® English Language Proficiency Tests (IPT):* A test such as the IPT is used to determine the appropriate assessment and accommodation for LEP students in North Carolina in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (NCPS, 2005b, 2006d). Cut score ranges are used to identify students as (a) novice low, (b) novice high, (c) intermediate low, (d) intermediate high, (e) advanced, and (f) superior (NCPS, 2005a).

*Latino:* A Latino is a person of Latin American descent.

*Limited English Proficient (LEP):* LEP describes a nonnative English speaking student with limited English skills and who needs assistance to participate in the regular curriculum and assessment system (NCPS 2006b). Students are identified as LEP solely based on an IPT score that is less than superior in any one of the four domains as indicated on the IPT (NCPS, 2005b). While most LEPs receive support services through

some type of ESL program, some waive services or receive consultation services. Regardless, all LEP students must receive IPT testing each spring until they score superior in all domains (NCPS, 2006d). Some professionals believe this term to be a negative one, although it is generally utilized in legislation and other legal papers.

*Local Educational Agency (LEA):* LEA is a term used in North Carolina to refer to the local administrative unit for a school system. It indicates that a city or county public board of education or other public authority maintains control of the public school (NCPS, 2006b).

*North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI):* NCDPI refers to a state level department that oversees the administration of the policies adopted by the State Board of Education. This agency may also be designated as the State Education Agency (SEA) or North Carolina Public Schools (NCPS). It supports all public school systems in the state in the areas of curriculum and instruction, finance, technology, and personnel (NCPS, 2006b).

*NCWISE:* North Carolina Windows of Information on Student Education. This program is state level warehouse of student information which is being implemented throughout the state in waves. This information includes information such as basic demographics, scheduling, and attendance (NCPS, 2006b). The program is replacing the previous student information system (SIMS).

*No Child Left Behind (NCLB):* THE NCLB Act is the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It represents a sweeping change in the federal government's role in local public education. NCLB's primary goal is for all public school children to be proficient or above in reading and mathematics by 2013-14. Title I

schools that do not meet certain student achievement standards face sanctions under this law.

*Realia:* Realia are actual objects and/or artifacts that may be used by teachers to help students make connections to vocabulary and concepts (Echevarria et al., 2004).

*Sheltered English:* Generally, sheltered English classes are found in the secondary setting. Students are grouped for specific content classes with teachers who have received training in sheltered instruction techniques. Although English remains the instructional language, the teacher adapts the lessons to the proficiency of the students while teaching the standard course of study for the particular content area. Teachers are expected to have a language and content language objective for each lesson (Ariza et al, 2002; Echevarria et al., 2004).

*Standard Course of Study (SCOS or SCS):* The Standard Course of Study is the primary curriculum document for expectations of curriculum content for North Carolina public schools (NCPS, 2006b)

*Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages/Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL):* TESOL is a professional organization created in 1966 whose purpose is to unite teachers and administrators at all levels who share an interest in teaching English to nonnative speakers (Echevarria et al., 2004).

*Title I:* This federal act was previously known as Chapter I. It is the largest federal education funding program for schools. Title I funding is based on the number of low-income students eligible to participate in the free and reduced – price lunch program. Funding is targeted to assist students who are performing below expected grade level. Many requirements for NCLB are outlined in the Title I legislation (NCPS, 2006b).

*Visiting International Faculty (VIF):* VIF refers to an agency that recruits and sponsors visiting exchange teachers across the globe.

## Summary

This chapter presented an historical overview of judicial decisions and legislative acts that clearly defined the responsibilities of the public schools in regard to educating ELLs. That responsibility was to provide all students regardless of their immigrant status with the skills they need to be competitive in a knowledge-based economy. If special programs and strategies were needed to provide ELLs equal access to education, the schools were required to implement those strategies.

The overarching purpose of conducting this case study was to explore the success of the English Second Language programs within the school district, specifically at the high school level. Specific primary and secondary research questions were stated, followed by a rationale for the need for this study and an overview of the methodology. The first step of this study was to identify the best practices and procedures as determined through past educational research within each of the identified categories. Chapter 2 presents the strategies that are recommended to increase the probability of ELL success.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

Why have many ELLs failed to graduate from high school? What are the special needs of this unique stratum within the high school population? What strategies can high schools implement that are likely to keep students in school? The purpose of this literature review was to identify the research-based strategies that schools and districts may implement to meet the needs of ELLs and their probability of achieving academic success, leading to the completion of high school.

Two factors influenced the strategies presented in this review. The first was the predominance of research related to Spanish speaking ELLs. This emphasis was due in part to the large national influx of students from Hispanic descent into the United States (U.S.) over the past 40 years. Unless otherwise indicated, the reader should assume the recommended strategies specifically apply to Hispanic students. Secondly, during the last 40 years educational research offered a number of recommendations for generally improving schools and increasing the academic achievement of all students, particularly those at-risk. Many of these proposals paralleled recommendations for successfully teaching ELLs. Although the recommended strategies may prove beneficial to any student regardless of their native language background, these strategies are crucial to the success of ELLs.

A framework, consisting of five categories, emerged from the literature review. The categories included in the framework (Figure 1) were: (a) data collection and use, (b) curriculum and programs, (c) instructional practices, (d) leadership, and (e) parent and school engagement. A sixth area, professional development, was integrated within the subsections. Chapter 2 identified the research-based strategies of each of the categories found in the researcher's holistic model. This framework served as the core of the case study and became the basis of measuring the district's application of these strategies.

## Category 1: Data Collection and Use

According to the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (1998) districts are responsible for establishing ongoing data collection, identifying important risk factors to track, and disseminating that information to schools. Collecting information about ELLs can be a daunting task for school officials, especially with newly immigrated students, because these students may arrive in the country with few, if any, records, which are often written in a foreign language. Additionally, students may appear for enrollment with parents or guardians who have poor English skills or may be fearful of sharing too much information with school officials.

Research studies indicated the need for school districts to use specific data about ELLs as an underpinning strategy, first to determine needs of ELLs, and then to make appropriate programmatic decisions for them. One example, the Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME) study, conducted in by a team led by Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000), was a collection of demonstration projects that involved immigrants in secondary schools. Results from the project suggested that disseminating expanded data to the

classroom level helped develop teacher awareness of the students' academic and emotional needs and also influenced teachers' choices of instructional strategies.

In 2003, Llagas of the American Institute for Research and Snyder, Project Officer for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), led a team of researchers in publishing a comprehensive analysis entitled *Status and Trends in the Education of Hispanics*. The data for this report combined routinely collected information about all racial and ethnic student populations from kindergarten through postsecondary years from numerous organizations and state and federal agencies with that of data specifically collected by the NCES which included additional at-risk factors. NCES oversampled minorities and conducted interviews at random in Spanish to ensure that adequate numbers of Hispanic survey respondents were included in the comparisons.

Some of the suggested variables identified by these reports that schools should track were (a) ethnic distribution, (b) family structure and poverty levels, (c) the language spoken in the home, (d) academic backgrounds of families and students, (e) academic performance of students, (f) and both negative and positive student behaviors. The Category I section of this chapter presents national and/or state statistics for ELLs within each of these variables to describe the general population of ELLs across the nation. The concluding section of Category 1 describes the typical schools that ELLs attend.

*Ethnic Distribution*

Assuming that all ELLs within a broad ethnic grouping such as Hispanic or Asian are the same and need to progress through the same program may lead educators to place students incorrectly. The assumption may also lead mainstream classroom teachers to misdiagnose student abilities. Because a student's origin often reflects the opportunities

available to him or her, it is important to look within the broad groupings to the actual countries represented within. For example, Llagas and Snyder (2003) reported that within the Hispanic population in 1997 Mexicans accounted for almost two thirds of that population, while Central and South Americans accounted for 15%, Puerto Ricans accounted for 9%, Cubans made up 4%, and the remaining 6% represented all other Hispanic countries. Assuming this distribution is present within school systems, Spanish speaking students should be the predominate group within ELLs, and within the Hispanic group, Mexican ELLs should be the largest group.

*Family Structure and Poverty Levels*

Family structure and poverty appear to be related. According to Llagas and Snyder (2003), a logical assumption is that children living with both parents in the home may have access to more resources than children living in single parent homes, and poverty can diminish access to learning opportunities. A teacher from Georgia stated, "Unconscientiously, I suppose, we first look at socioeconomic level. We tend to expect more from kids with monied parents, just as we tend to not expect as much from lower SES kids" (Wainer, 2004, p. 12). Hess (2000) and Llagas and Snyder reported that even though Hispanics represented about 12% of the population and 21% of Hispanic individuals, almost 28% of Hispanic children lived in poverty. Llagas and Snyder interpreted this to demonstrate that although a smaller percentage of Hispanics currently live below the poverty level than in the past, Hispanics continued to be over-represented in poverty, whether compared as individuals, families, or children.

Llagas and Snyder (2003) further reported that fewer Hispanic children lived in homes with married parents than Whites, 65% as compared to 78%, although the

Hispanic percentage was greater than for Blacks (37%). Therefore, the expectation might be that Hispanic families would fall between Whites and Blacks in regard to poverty levels for married households. In reality, Llagas and Snyder reported that Hispanic married couple families were actually more likely to live in poverty than their White or Black counterparts.

Kazarda and Johnson (2006) reported that North Carolina Hispanic families reflected the national profile. They indicated Hispanic households in North Carolina were generally younger, as was demonstrated by the Hispanic head of household median age being 34 as compared to non-Hispanic which is 47. Findings of the report continued by stating that Hispanic families were more likely to contain children under age 18 and have extended family and nonrelatives living together with an average household size of 3.7 persons. Kazarda and Johnson also found that approximately 73% of Hispanic immigrants came from Mexico, were not as well educated as non-Hispanics having completed on average less than 8 years of schooling, and held low paying jobs. Finally, the report cited the poverty rate for Hispanics to be at 26.3% versus 15.5 % for all other ethnicities, making them a larger percentage of the working poor with an average household income around $32,000.

*Language Spoken in the Home*

Hess (2000) indicated that languages spoken within the home may relate to the acculturation of students. Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) reported that the share of all students with a native language spoken in the home, other than English, increased between 1980 and 1995 from 8.8% to 13.3%. These researchers concluded that since students from non-English speaking backgrounds tended to have lower academic

achievement and were nearly twice as likely to drop out, school districts should use this data to provide additional resources for parents. Examples of resources could be classes in English, translated documents such as forms or general school information, and interpreters.

*Academic Backgrounds*

ELLs exhibited great diversity in academic backgrounds, which was important to note because the amount of prior education is a strong predictor of academic success for immigrant students (Croninger & Lee, 2001; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). School administrators and teachers cannot assume that all Hispanic, Asian, or European students share the same educational experiences within their ethnicity any more than they can assume native U. S. students have equal educational backgrounds. Differences occur based on the region or country from which students originate and the class or wealth of their family.

For example, Erickson (2002) recounted that in Mexico status of wealth and place of residence influenced educational opportunity even before the Spanish conquistadors invaded in 1519. Unfortunately, that scenario continues today. Martin and Solórzno (2003) wrote that decades of under-funding, cronyism, and political unrest left a school system that was ineffective and that marginalized the poor.

Although Mexico has a national curriculum with standardized textbooks and materials that all public and private schools must follow, great differences in the resources and quality of instruction were found according to Arizpe, (2001) and Martin and Solórzno (2003). Arizpe asserted that students attending schools operated by the government generally came from lower to middle income families and on average only

two of fifty attended a college or state university. Further, she conveyed that classes may have up to 60 students with teachers often employing direct instruction techniques and providing little opportunity for teacher-student or student-student interaction. If these schools were located in rural areas, students likely completed no more than the mandated sixth grade (Bolin, 2003; Erickson, 2002; Martin & Solórzno, 2003). According to Erickson, students who did move to secondary settings were sorted into general education, university preparation, vocational/technical training or education training.

Private schools had additional instructional resources which allowed them to provide smaller class sizes (no more than 30 per class) and more opportunity for students to participate in interactive group work with open discussions, as described by Arizpe (2001). She reported that students who attended these schools came from middle to upper class professional families and most planned to attend a college or university. Additionally, she indicated that the improved school climate and resources generally attracted more qualified teachers.

Because the majority of Mexican students entering U.S. schools came from poor and limited backgrounds, they generally had attended government schools. They entered with stereotypical expectations of schools, their roles as students, the roles of teachers, and opportunities available to them. If teachers in U. S. high schools have not been trained to understand the differences between Mexican public and private schools and the opportunities these students have had, they may have unrealistic expectations of these students. Similar comparisons with other countries and within ethnicities could be made.

*Academic Performance*

In part, the differences found in educational opportunities of foreign countries

accounted for the gaps in learning that may exist within the ethnic groups of ELLs. Entry ELLs may be placed at the high school level due to social adjustment and age-related issues without regard to literacy within their own languages or past educational achievements. Students entering high schools from rural areas in Mexico may not have attended school in recent years, may not have completed the equivalent to sixth grade in the United States, and may have difficulty working at age-appropriate levels in their native language (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Yet, they must meet the same requirements for graduation as students who have been continuously enrolled in the public schools of the United States. The age of the student, as related to grade placement requires unique and individualized scheduling to help the student meet high school requirements.

Llagas and Snyder (2003) reported that high school completion rates for Hispanic students were lower than those for Whites or Blacks. Using data from the 2000 national dropout report, they found that 64% of Hispanic students received a high school diploma as compared to 93% of Whites and 84% of Blacks, and that no consistent trend was evident. They also indicated that these students were less likely to return to school for job training or completion of General Educational Development (GED) certificates.

Conley (2005) and Venezia, Kirst, and Antonio (2003) developed similar recommendations for improving the likelihood of all students graduating from high school and grasping opportunities to participate in postsecondary education. They recommended that high schools offer open access to advanced placement, honor, dual enrollment courses with community colleges, and college preparatory programs, and financially support students who cannot pay for Advanced Placement exams. This

strategy was supported by Valenzuela (1999) who recommended that these classes should be offered in the student's native language if a student qualifies but lacks proficiency in English. Teachers should encourage all students to participate in electives that actually contribute to postsecondary readiness and assist students in sequencing undergraduate courses that are linked to postsecondary education or employment (Conley, 2005; Venezia et al., 2003). This is no small task for high schools when faced with the academic diversity of ELLs.

Hispanic student participation in intellectually challenging curriculum may be measured by examining the number of credit hours earned, academic courses attempted, and performance on Advanced Placement (AP) and college entrance exams. Llagas and Snyder (2003) found that Hispanic high school graduates obtained more credit hours in 1998 than in 1982 and narrowed the gap in total hours earned when compared to Whites. Additionally, Hispanic students earned fewer vocational credits (4 credits in 1999 as compared to 5.3 in 1982) indicating that Hispanic students were successfully enrolling in and completing more academic classes.

Even so, Hispanic students were still under-represented in advanced courses. Approximately a quarter of Hispanic students successfully completed courses in mathematics as compared to 50% of Whites and 56% of Asians (Llagas & Snyder, 2003; Tornatzky et al., 2003). Llagas and Snyder reported that similar trends were found in science. They also reported that Whites completed advanced English courses at a higher rate than all other ethnicities with no significant difference evident between ethnicities. Interestingly, Llagas and Snyder further reported that this was not true in the area of advanced foreign language classes, where both Hispanic and Asians successfully

completed more courses than either White or Black students. Even when students were qualified to enroll in advanced classes, the lack of parental awareness and peer pressure resulted in a failure of students to register in them, according to Tornatzky et al.

*Student Behaviors*

Tracking and analyzing both negative and positive behaviors of students may be helpful in understanding how students interact within their learning environment. These factors may also be useful in predicting a student's possible integration into society, according to Llagas and Snyder (2003). This subsection presents examples of both types of behaviors, as well as national statistics that were available.

*Negative behaviors.* Dropping out is a negative behavior which has life-long ramifications. Since students who dropout are more likely to earn less than high school graduates, require government support, remain unemployed, and face a limited financial future, as well as confront health issues, decreasing the number of dropouts is crucial to the social and economic systems of the nation (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Hess, 2000; Llagas & Snyder, 2003). Interpreting district level data concerning dropouts allows districts to better design intervention strategies unique to the district's ELL population to keep students in school.

In the mid-1990s Hispanic youth were more likely to drop out of school than any other segment of youth. At that time approximately 30% of Hispanic students dropped out, versus 7-15% for other groups, as was reported by numerous researchers including Fry (2003), Hess, (2000), Olatuniji (2005), Van Hook (2002) and Wainer (2004). Hess found this rate even more alarming when compared to the 1972 rates because although Hispanic youth had a decrease of 4% over that time, Black dropouts decreased by 28%.

Even though dropout rates have declined over the last decade, dropping out of school continues to be a problem for Hispanic youth and demonstrates variance within groups. Variance existed between native born and foreign born generations of immigrants, between students educated in their native countries versus those educated within the United States, and within groups; but the lack of language ability and literacy were the primary common characteristic of Hispanic dropouts (Capps et al., 2003; Echevarria et al., 2004; Fry, 2003; Hess, 2000; Tornatzky et al., 2003; Wainer, 2004). The Hispanic immigrant dropout rate was almost double that of first, second, or third generation Hispanics living in this county, as reported by Hess and Ruiz de Valesco and Fix (2000). Specifically, Hess found that students of Cuban and South American descent had dropout rates resembling the national average, while the rates for students from Mexico, Central America, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic were higher.

The profile of Hispanic dropouts may also vary. Capps et al. (2003), Fry (2003), and Hess (2000) reported that Hispanic dropouts most likely were male, lived in poverty, had a ninth-grade education or less, and had limited ability in the use of English; however, two exceptions were found to this generalized profile. Olatunji (2005) compared the same group of students in Grades 8 and 10 and found Mexican females were more than twice as likely to dropout prior to 10th grade. Female Mexicans actually comprised 70% of dropouts among Mexican American youth, and the odds of early high school attrition were 3.5 times greater for Mexican-origin females than males in the mid 1990s. This indicated that females may dropout before or slightly after entering high school and not be captured in traditional dropout figures. A second study by Purcell (2000) called Hispanic females “submissive underachievers” and also found them at

higher risk of dropping out than males. In his report he inferred that mothers from low socioeconomic backgrounds may not encourage their daughters to pursue a career or continue their education due to gender stereotyping, lack of certainty as to their own futures, or simply their acceptance of the role of women within the Latino culture.

Dropping out is actually the end product that is influenced by a number of factors which districts should track with the goal of creating preventions and interventions. Llagas and Snyder (2003), as well as Bridgeland et al. (2006), Croinger and Lee (2001), and Hess (2000), identified variables including: (a) grade retention, (b) frequent absenteeism, (c) suspensions or expulsions relating to school violence and/or the use of drugs or alcohol, and (d) pregnancy rates, as possible predictors of dropouts. These behaviors may impact learning, motivation, and social well-being of students, as well as indicate a lack of engagement in the school.

Poor attendance and absenteeism were related directly to the loss of instructional time, and Tornatzky et al. (2003) related this loss to higher dropout potential. Nationally, Hispanic12th grade students had higher absentee rates than Whites, with 34% of Hispanic seniors being absent 3 or more days per month. Alcohol and drug use may be yet another factor of absenteeism due either to suspensions or simply the inability to physically attend school. Llagas and Snyder (2003) found Hispanic students reporting the use of alcohol within the prior month was about equal to Whites, but more than Black or Asian. Overall, more Hispanics between the ages of 12 to 17 reported using alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs during the same time period than other ethnicities. Teen pregnancy may also contribute to female absenteeism and dropping out. For example, Llagas and Snyder

reported the birth rate of Hispanic females (15-19 years of age) to be higher than females in other ethnicities.

*Positive behaviors.* Llagas and Snyder (2003) identified positive behaviors, such as the use of the Internet when it was used to expand students' knowledge and abilities, participation in community service, and participation in extracurricular activities as indicators of positive student interaction in schools. The knowledge and ability to use computers is now an integral part of our society. Tornatzky et al. (2003) found that computer knowledge and instruction helped students learn at a faster rate and increased students' positive attitudes toward instruction. In 1998 fewer Hispanic and Black students had access to computers and the Internet, either in the home or at school than White students.

Positive behaviors, centered on civic awareness and community service activities, may be indicators of future social contributions of youth. The data sources used by Llagas and Snyder (2003) related civic awareness to the number of times students participated in activities, such as reading national news stories, watching, or listening to national news, and/or discussing news events. According to this report, within Grades 6-12 just over 50% of Hispanic students reported participating in at least one of these activities per week. The report also indicated that Hispanic youth were less likely than either White or Black students to participate in community service activities.

*Description of Schools ELLs Attend*

According to Chang (2000) and Van Hook (2002), residential patterns influenced the ethnic and socioeconomic demographics of school populations. Using classical ecological theory, Van Hook predicted that newcomers within ethnic groups initially

settled in clusters in neighborhoods, but eventually dispersed to other areas or communities. These changes in neighborhood ethnicities were reflected in schools. In areas with few immigrants, ELLs were likely to attend schools with significant White populations; however, when large numbers of immigrants move to an area, the same trends and concentrations found residentially led to ethnic concentrations within schools as indicated by Van Hook.

The fluctuations in residency explained why district characteristics might not be representative of individual school characteristics. Nationally 77% of Hispanic students were enrolled in schools where minorities constitute over 50% of the student population (Chang, 2000; Llagas & Snyder, 2003; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Van Hook, 2000). Since Hispanic and Asian students were more likely to go to schools with high concentrations of ELLs, Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, and Van Hook indicated these students generally attended schools that were not only ethnically, but linguistically segregated.

These schools likely were large, urban, and more heterogeneous with higher rates of identified students living in poverty which placed a greater demand on limited school resources (Chang, 2000; Fry, 2005; Llagas &Snyder 2003; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix 2000; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005a ; Schwartz & Stiefel, 2004; Tornatzky et al., 2003; Van Hook, 2000). According to Rumberger and Palardy, larger schools often were more effective with students from stable backgrounds, but less effective than mid-sized schools with at-risk students. Studies by Fry and Rumberger and Palardy indicated that large schools had lower test scores and higher dropout rates for high risk students while small and mid-sized schools fostered more positive environments for disadvantaged students.

Fry (2005) reported Hispanic students disproportionately attended schools with more than 67% of the students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, including the high school level where 25% of all public high schools noted 45% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Within this group, 300 high schools were also the largest in the nation. Almost 25% of Hispanic students attended these schools as compared to 8% of Blacks and 1% of Whites.

In 1966 *The Coleman Report,* compiled by Coleman et al., credited the social composition of the student body as the second most important factor influencing student achievement. The report noted that the students from a specific background, if placed in schools primarily comprised of students from differing backgrounds and socioeconomic levels, varied in academic achievement. For example, the report found that if a White student with an educationally supportive family was placed in a school with other students who did not have supportive families, his achievement was likely to show little difference. However, when minority students who came from homes with weak educational backgrounds were placed in high achieving schools, the achievement of the minority students increased. The findings recognized that poor minority students who attended segregated schools generally had the lowest academic achievement.

Since the Coleman Report (1966), numerous studies have explored this phenomenon. Recently, Rumberger and Palardy, (2005b) used data from the base year of National Educational Longitudinal study and examined responses from a sample of 14,217 students, who attended 913 high schools in 1990 from across the country, to explore if segregation really mattered in terms of test scores and student learning. Their findings indicate SES, and not ethnicity, in high schools (Grades 8 through 12) was likely

to influence student academic outcomes. Recognizing that a student's academic and social class backgrounds contributed to a large degree in the success of a student, they found that the school composition did have a significant effect on overall student learning in high school. Students entering low SES high schools were on average 4 years behind those in high SES schools and tended to remain behind. Their conclusions suggested that a number of factors found in low SES schools contributed indirectly to lower performances. Some of these factors included a poor academic climate, an absence of advanced and rigorous course offerings, low teacher expectations, a lack of a feeling of school safety, and little parental demand and political involvement.

The Category 1 section, data collection and use, identified basic and extended fields of information that if collected and interpreted might help districts identify student instructional needs. Teachers and administrators should receive professional development about how to use that information and as well as how to train and cultivate sensitivity towards cultural issues and educational backgrounds of students so that they will better understand differences between and within groups of ELLs and English speaking students (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Wainer, 2004). On site student data, combined with a thorough analysis of the school characteristics, should be routinely examined by the district to determine the appropriate strategies to use for instruction and professional development and should be the first step toward identifying the population's needs.

### Category 2: Curriculum and Programs

The curriculum for most ELLs is dual in nature. First, if ELLs are expected to meet the same credit, course, and state assessment requirements as regular students to qualify for a high school diploma, then they must receive instruction in the course

curricula of those content areas. If these students plan to continue their education to postsecondary institutions, then they must have access to college preparatory and advanced placement courses (Conley, 2005; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Tornatzky et al., 2003; Valenzuela, 1999; Venezia et al., 2003). Secondly, students who have not demonstrated proficiency in the English language must also receive a language curriculum encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Meeting the needs of these diverse students is a challenge for high schools.

Because state and national standards identify goals and objectives within various subject areas, what to teach is not as great a question as the type of program delivery to implement. A great deal of variance may exist in English Second Language programs and access to higher level courses offered to non-English proficient students. Typical programs that may be implemented by school districts based on needs of students are profiled below.

1. English as a Second Language – The primary objective of this program is to improve and strengthen the ELL's use of English. A secondary goal is to help support students as they progress into the mainstream. Generally, high school students are scheduled into this class for one 60 to 90 minute period each day. Students are mainstreamed into regular classes with accommodations for the remainder of the day. The class is taught by a licensed ESL teacher who works with other teachers to help them develop strategies for teaching the subject content to ESL student, perhaps through thematic units (Ariza et al. 2002; Echevarria et al., 2004).

2. Sheltered English Instruction–The program focuses on the development of students' language skills while they simultaneously learn academic content in regular

classes by cluster grouping the students in specific content courses (Ariza et al., 2002; Echevarria et al., 2004). English is used by the teacher for instructional purposes in the content areas; however, adaptations and modifications are made by the teacher according to the proficiency levels of the students. Sheltered instruction teachers prepare lessons linked to both content and ESL course objectives using scaffolded and differentiated instructional strategies to provide a classroom atmosphere filled with student to student and teacher to student interaction (Ariza et al.; Echevarria et al., 2004; Genesee, 1999). Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) supported this approach as a path to help regular subject teachers learn specialized instructional techniques and to help students achieve mastery in content areas, thereby gaining access to higher level classes.

3. Bilingual Programs – Hess (2000) stated that one purpose of bilingual programs is to retain the first language while teaching a second. As Celce-Murcia (2001) indicates, few true bilingual programs exist because it is difficult for school systems to find licensed bilingual instructors who share cultural backgrounds with students and who are able to teach in multiple languages at multiple levels. Genesee (1999) and Ariza et al. (2002) recommended a transitional bilingual program that provides instruction in the learner's primary language for the more difficult academic areas, but uses English to instruct courses such as art, music, and physical education. Ideally, as the student's proficiency increases, so does the amount of instruction in the English language.

4. Dual Language/Two Way – This approach is employed to teach two different languages to one group of students. Ideally this program places 50% of native English speakers with 50% native speakers in one other language (Ariza et al., 2002; Genesee, 1999; Montecel, Cortez, & Cortez, 2002). Academic instruction occurs in both languages

for an equal amount of time. Either a bilingual teacher is assigned to the class or a team of teachers, one English speaking and the other proficient in the second language, teach the classes on alternating days. Students are expected to acquire proficiency in both languages. This approach is most often used in elementary schools.

5. Spanish for Native Speakers - Spanish for Native Speakers may be used to increase the skills of Spanish speaking students within their native language which are then transferred to English, according to Genesee (1999). Valenzuela (1999) reported that immigrant students who possess essential skills in reading, writing, comprehension, and math in their own language may actually outperform their U.S. born counterparts.

6. Newcomer programs – Newcomer programs, as described by Genesee (1999) Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000), and Wainer (2004), may be implemented at either the school or district level and prepare students to enter traditional schools. Programs such as these support the adjustment of immigrant students to the American culture by providing orientation sessions during part of the students' instructional day. Students receive varying amounts of time daily for up to a year at a newcomer center, while gradually moving into their future schools. Supported by licensed ESL teachers, academic instruction may occur in the native language, English, or a combination of both.

While all these programs may appear to be different, Genesee (1999) asserted that certain common assumptions existed. These assumptions included high expectations and standards implemented by specially trained and licensed instructional personnel using appropriate supplemental materials and resources. He further stated the need for continual high quality professional development in conjunction with the development of new educational programs and processes for teachers so they might better support students.

Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) identified the districts' responsibility to design a literacy skills curriculum, create content standards and pacing guides for both language and literacy development within content areas, and set specific benchmarks to measure ELL achievement. Additionally, they recommended that districts provide new and special courses to accelerate content learning, teach ELLs basic student skills such as note taking, homework routines, and study techniques, and expose them to regional culture through field trips, cultural arts programs, and technology. Hess (2000) and Valenzuela (1999) indicated that districts may need to assist teachers by modifying existing curricula to include samples and examples of the ELLs' culture and background and sample lesson plans within content areas.

## Category 3: Instructional Practices

How to teach ELLs is a very different question than what to teach them. The second language learning instructional process shares similar processes and controversies as that of the English language instructional process. While English instructors may debate the merits of whole language versus phonemic or direct instruction versus inquiry based, second language teachers debate naturalistic approaches versus formal instructional techniques. The chart in Table 2 reflects the history of ELL instruction philosophies over the centuries dating back to pre-1600.

Table 2

*Historical Timeline through the Mid-1900s of Instructional Practices for Language Learning (Adapted from Celce-Murcia, 2001)*

| Timeframe | Beliefs and Practices |
|---|---|
| Pre-Renaissance | • The common language, known as *lingua francas*, was used in religion, politics, and business.<br>• *Lingua francas* was a mix of French, Spanish, Greek, and Arabic.<br>• The elites learned Classical Languages through formal educational instruction while common citizenry learned through aural-oral techniques. |
| Renaissance | • The invention of the printing press opened opportunity for formal instruction.<br>• The language of the common people was known as vulgate Latin. |

| Timeframe | Beliefs and Practices |
|---|---|
| | • Only scholars and philosophers formally studied Latin.<br>• New vernacular languages were appearing.<br>• Latin ceased as a spoken language. |
| 1600s | • The focus was on utility versus analysis and formal instruction.<br>• Czech Johann Amos Comenius developed an inductive approach that<br>1. used imitation instead of rules to teach language<br>2. encouraged students to repeat words and phrases used by the teacher<br>3. used limited vocabulary initially<br>4. helped students practice reading and speaking<br>5. taught language through pictures to increase understanding and meaning.<br>• This approach prevailed until the nineteenth century. |
| 1800s | • A systematic and analytical study of Greek and Latin began to permeate schools and universities in Europe.<br>• The approach was appropriately named the *Grammar-Translation Approach.*<br>• Scholars, such as German Karl Ploetz, developed a highly structured method for teaching both classical and modern languages. |
| Late 1800s | • German philosopher Alexander von Humboldt posed that language could not be taught but instead had to be experienced by students.<br>• The students learned by focusing on pronunciation and oral skills.<br>• Francois Gouin, influenced by von Humboldt, published the *Direct Method Approach* in 1880.<br>• Henry Sweet, Wilhem Vietor, and Paul Passy developed the International Phonetic Alphabet that became part of language reform in the 1890s. They also developed the following principles.<br>1. The spoken form of the language should be taught first because it is the primary function of language.<br>2. The phonetic principles should be applied.<br>3. All language teachers should be grounded in phonetics.<br>4. Learners must be taught the phonetic sounds and structures to establish good speech habits. |
| Early 1900s | • The *Direct Method Approach* spreads to the United States via Cleveland public schools.<br>• The approach was never fully implemented because of the lack of fluency and knowledge of the foreign language teachers.<br>• The *Reading Approach* developed in the United States because the Modern Language Association of America (MLAA) saw it as the most viable due in part to the limited skills of the teachers,<br>• The MLAA set as its goal that students would be able to read in a foreign language, so that they could experience works of literature and philosophy that originated in the language. |
| Mid-1900s | • World War II forced the United States to focus on learning to speak the foreign language instead of reading the language.<br>• The approach developed to teach use of language quickly was the *Audio-lingual Approach.*<br>• This approach was based on structural linguistics and behavioral psychology<br>• Linguists taught the languages and prepared the materials.<br>• The Oral or Situational Approach developed in Britain simultaneously for the same reasons but focused on teaching through posed situations allowing the student to practice the language orally. |

Much of the research on ESL instruction during the latter portion of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century was based on field work. This work used researchers' experiences as teachers of ELLs along with observation, interview, and survey techniques of other ELL teachers. Table 3 demonstrates some of the models that

resulted from this work and that are taught to teachers who major in ESL in colleges and universities.

Table 3

*Comparison of Models of Instructional Philosophies for English Language Learners*

| Name of Model | Description | Teacher Qualifications |
|---|---|---|
| Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)<br><br>(Celce-Murcia, 2001; Chamot and O'Malley, 1994; Echevarria and Graves, 2003) | • Assumes students have academic skills in their native language and social communication skills in the English but need assistance in transferring concepts to English.<br>• Assumes language learning is based first on gaining knowledge and understanding of language rules.<br>• Stresses the importance of information processing models, learning strategies, reading in the content area, and problem solving.<br>• Assumes the student is actively involved in the learning process, seeks out information for problem solving, and can reorganize prior to learning.<br>• Uses both deductive and inductive strategies to teach grammar through discovery<br>• De-emphasizes pronunciation and reading and writing are equal in importance to listening and speaking | • Must be proficient in English<br>• Must be able to analyze structure of English language<br>• Requires strong professional development program |
| Affective Humanistic Learning Model<br><br>(Celce-Murcia; Echevarria and Graves) | • Based on theories of Maslow.<br>• Focuses on the well-being of the student, respect for the individual, development of relationships, and meaningful communication.<br>• Provides opportunities for personality development, cooperative learning, peer support, and interaction within the classroom.<br>• Places importance on the development of the student's self-esteem and confidence over materials and resources. | • Facilitates leading students toward self-actualization<br>• Must be bilingual because assistance with the student's language and translations assist in development of the student's comfort level. |
| Comprehension Based or Developmental Model<br><br>(Celce-Murcia; Echevarria and Graves; Gibbons, 2002) | • Uses the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky.<br>• Emphasizes comprehension that allows speaking, reading, and writing to develop spontaneously over time.<br>• Requires an individualized approach that begins with listening and responding nonverbally and continues at the learner's pace to speaking and writing. | • Should be a native or near native speaker of the language.<br>• Must have audio-visual materials for support. |
| Behaviorist Model<br><br>(Echevarria and Graves) | • Rooted in the belief that language learning occurs through changes in the student's behavior<br>• Ask students to imitate skills modeled by the teacher and to follow sequential steps in the process.<br>• Clarifies concepts through examples.<br>• Provides clear and precise wording for results | • Must provide a structured classroom environment<br>• Should be trained in behaviorist strategies and approaches.<br>• Must be goal driven and monitor routinely |
| Communicative Language Model (ESL Model)<br><br>(Celce-Murcia; Echevarria and Graves; Gibbons) | • Posed by Sandra Savignon<br>• Requires an interactive relationship between the teacher and students leading to both cognitive and affective results.<br>• Views language as a student's first tool for socialization<br>• Intended to produce students who can communicate effectively in English and uses engagement to develop those skills<br>• Expects students to develop the abilities of understanding of differing viewpoints, defending their own viewpoint, and engaging with peers and teachers verbally with a goal of increasing verbal skills and development of the language.<br>• Uses pairs of students and small groups so that students interact with one another and assist one another in deciphering life-like situations.<br>• Provides broad course work that includes practical, social, and linguistic structures.<br>• Integrates skills sets so reading, speaking, listening, and writing are used to demonstrate comprehension<br>• Teaches syntax and rules of English | • Must be able to model to students the correct usage of the English language.<br>• Facilitates student learning<br>• Should be fluent in English but not necessarily the language of the student. |

This study assumed that teachers who held degrees and licenses in ESL or bilingual instruction were trained to evaluate student ability. Based on their knowledge and expertise, they should be able to deploy the best model(s) of instruction for the district's ELL population. The primary purpose of the remainder of this section was to identify research based instructional strategies that mainstream classroom teachers can use to improve ESL instruction.

ESL research indicated that it takes 5 to 7 years for a second language to emerge from preproduction stages of nodding and signaling to intermediate or advanced fluency allowing the learner to participate successfully in a teacher-centered classroom (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix, 2000). Because many high school ELLs must complete courses that are filled with advanced vocabulary terms and content, even ELLs who are on grade level may struggle. For those who have gaps in learning, the challenge can become impossible; therefore, teachers must receive training in working with these students and employ instructional techniques that have been shown to work.

With underpinnings of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, many of today's ESL recommendations promote student learning as a social and cognitive process that is the result of interactions within the environment as examined by Walqui (2006). Recommended strategies evolved from the practices and research of linguistic experts Krashen and Cummins. Table 4 presents a summary of Krashen and Terrell's, *The Natural Approach*, published in 1983, that posed all ELLs move through specific and predictable stages, as related by Hill & Flynn (2006).

Table 4

*Krashen's Theories for Second Language Instruction*

| Hypothesis | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis | Distinguishes between language that is naturally acquired through use and that which is formally learned. |
| Natural Order Hypothesis | Assumes that adults and children learn languages in a natural order and that this order is predictable, much like a child initially learns to speak. |
| Monitor Hypothesis | Extends the acquisition/learning hypothesis and assumes that the speaker is aware of the appropriateness (learned) of correct spoken language to the situations and poses that, if the speaker is given enough time, he actually monitors himself before speaking. |
| Input Hypothesis | Poses that language learning is developmental and growth in the language is gained when students receive messages from teachers with new levels or structures. Student learning requires a teacher to have a clear understanding of the individual student so that new vocabulary, sentence structures, and grammatical conventions are presented progressively and appropriately to stretch the student's abilities. |
| Affective Filter Hypothesis | Relates to the motivation, level of confidence, and stress of the learner. Krashen believes that language can only be learned if the level of anxiety of the learner is low and confidence is high. If this hypothesis is true, then teachers must create a nonthreatening classroom atmosphere to optimize student learning. |

Celce-Murcia (2001), Chamot and O'Malley (1994), and Echevarria and Graves (2003) reviewed Cummins' second language acquisition theories which focused on the relationship of development between the native language and the second language. They recognized that Cummin's theories posed that a linguistic interdependence exists between an individual's native language and the second language that links a person's cognitive-academic skills. Secondly, they recognized that a framework distinguished language used for social purposes (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills [BICS]) from language used for educational/ academic work (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills [CALPS]). These theories explained why teachers sometimes make false assumptions about a student's academic ability because the student appears to be fluent in the second language due to a proficiency in BICS but struggles in the classroom because they lack CALPS (see Table 4).

Co-researchers Echevarria and Short (2004) began a long-term research project in the 1996 for the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, a national research center funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The purposes of their research were to identify key instructional practices found in successful sheltered instruction classrooms and compare them to regular high quality non-sheltered instruction, as well as to develop a professional development model in order to train more classroom teachers in sheltered instruction techniques. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), a framework of best practices for ELL instruction, emerged in the early 21st century. Echevarria et al. (2004) required teachers of ELLs to plan lessons that included language as well as content objectives and pace lessons so that students were not overwhelmed. They asserted teachers must adapt the content to students' abilities, identify supplementary materials, and use presentation strategies that help students link new learning with prior knowledge by using scaffolding techniques and specific instructional strategies.

Echevarria et al. (2004) emphasized the importance of students having the ability to interact with the teacher, as well as with other students in pairs or small groups. This type of interaction provided what Baker in Echevarria and Graves (2003) described as integrative motivation. Echevarria and Graves contended that group work increased student access to English language development through heterogeneous interactions and socialization with native English speakers and that it provided the opportunity for students to practice and apply new information. They saw this type of interaction as setting the stage for students working with one another using concrete methods such as hands on activities or manipulatives. Group work also provided a safe environment for

more introverted students to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities with reduced risk of embarrassment and allowed them to become more confident in their speaking.

In 2006 Hill and Flynn published *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners* which combined their own experience and research as ESL teachers with that of Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001). In this book they provide detailed examples of classroom activities for content area teachers to use with ELLs in the mainstream. While their subheadings differed from those of Echevarria et al. (2004), the types of specific strategies were similar. These strategies included teaching students how to identify similarities and differences, to summarize and note take, to use nonlinguistic representations, to generate and test hypotheses, and to set personal goals aligned to the teacher's instructional goals. They also emphasized the importance of teachers reinforcing effort by providing authentic feedback and praise, designing relevant homework and practice assignments, providing opportunities for cooperative learning, using probing questioning techniques, and organizing information in advanced graphic organizers.

Using standardized and multiple choice paper and pencil assessments may not reflect the true knowledge of the ELLs because of their lack of reading ability. Montecel et al. (2002) found that schools that were successful with ELLs closely analyzed multiple types of student measurement that were culturally and contextually appropriate, established formal processes for student assessment, and used benchmark matching. Echevarria et al. (2004) emphasized the importance of teachers using both ongoing informal assessments such as dialogues with students, response boards, number wheels, and anecdotal reports with more traditional formative assessments. Rubrics, preferably

created with student input, were recommended for evaluating formal assessments such as writing, creative works, projects, journals and presentation to clarify the expected output (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Category 3 provided a history of techniques for teaching a new language, presented a summary of models that may be used by ESL teachers, and discussed types of strategies appropriate for use by mainstream teachers. Although a myriad of specific techniques may be employed by mainstream teachers to instruct students, the research recommends that teachers must plan thoroughly, including both language and content objectives, assure that all four communication types are present, and predetermine how to scaffold information to build on the culture and background of the student. When possible, the content area should be infused, linking the culture of the students to new knowledge. Classrooms of teachers of ELLs should be visually stimulating with realia, maps, posters, and student work. At the hub of instruction is the use of pairs, triads, or small groups to stimulate discussion and encourage structured talk. In order to successfully instruct ELLs high school teachers need ongoing professional development, encouragement, assistance with lesson planning, and coaching.

## Category 4: Leadership

> The school environment of a child consists of many elements, ranging from the desk he sits at to the child who sits next to him, and including the teacher who stands at the front of the class…
>
> One must picture the child whose school has every conceivable facility that is believed to enhance the educational process, whose teachers may be particularly gifted and well educated, and whose home and total neighborhood are themselves powerful contributors to his education and growth. And one must picture the child in a dismal tenement area who may come hungry to an ancient, dirty building that is badly ventilated, poorly lighted, overcrowded, understaffed, and without sufficient textbooks….
>
> One must also be aware of the relative importance of a certain

> kind of thing to a certain kind of person. Just as a loaf of bread means more to a starving man than to a stated one, so one very fine textbook or, better, one very able teacher, may mean far more to a deprived child than to one who already has several of both (Coleman et al., 1966, p. 8).

As presented in the student characteristic section, schools attended by Hispanic students are likely to differ from those attended by Whites and Blacks. Since Hispanics constitute the majority of ELLs, it follows that the same is true for ELLs in general. Fry (2005) argued that these differences matter because unlike student and family characteristics, school climate factors can be changed by district and school leaders to enhance student learning.

Decisions made by district leadership, including the School Board, Superintendent, and District Office Staff, impact the schools. Policies regarding school assignments, for example, are a function of the School Board and these policy decisions influence the socioeconomic and ethnic factors of schools. School Boards authorize the budget which consists of federal, state, and local monies. Generally, recommendations for the budget rise through the district office which may or may not receive input from schools. These budgets may treat all schools "equally" or be designed to provide "equity" to schools with larger numbers of high risk students and challenges. Additionally, district offices generate the pool of applicants from which principals hire faculty and staff.

For the purposes of this project, the researcher chose to use leadership indicators that demonstrate an awareness of ELL special needs and the processes and/or procedures that district and school leadership have established to meet those needs. These indicators may be displayed through concrete actions, such as policy development and implementation, fiscal and human resource allocations, the degree of participatory

management that is in place, and professional opportunities that are available. This section explores the recommendations of ELL researchers in these areas at both the district and school level that ultimately affects the climates of schools.

*Fiscal Allocations*

Assuring both equity and efficiency in instructional resource allocation for ESL students is a responsibility of school districts. Schwartz and Stiefel (2004) examined equity and efficiency factors in the distribution of resources for ESL students in New York City. When looking at total spending in terms of teacher-student ratios, Schwartz and Stiefel did not find unequal spending. However, they did find that resource allocation was generally unfavorable to immigrant and native born students attending schools with larger immigrant populations. Secondly, they found trade-offs or substitution of resources at the school level were present unless additional funding was provided.

Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) found that funding inequities existed between levels of students. They reported that while 40% of students in schools were LEP, a larger proportion was found in secondary settings (5.7%) versus elementary (3.5%). Resources, however, tended to be focused on elementary schools, and ELLs in secondary schools received less ESL or bilingual instruction.

Schools that ELLs attended may need additional resources. Resources may include instructional materials and supplies as well as human resources. Schools serving a high percentage of minority students and/or students from lower socioeconomic status may lack instructional resources such as textbooks, library books in native languages, labs for science and technology, and adequate computers and other technology (Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix, 2000: Tornatzky et al., 2003). While schools may have discretion in

decisions pertaining to instructional allocations within the school, they cannot be expected to assume full responsibility for the expenses required for supporting large ELL populations. Districts must recognize those needs and provide additional financial resources for those schools.

*Human Resources and Professional Development*

Cummins suggested that problems experienced by second language learners were often the results of the lack of pedagogical skills of the teachers (Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Padilla, 2003; Wainer, 2004). Nationally, less than 3% of teachers were specially trained to work with ELLs as reported by Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000). This was interesting to note because Tornatzky et al. (2003) and Fry (2005) indicated schools which ELLs attended often had larger than average class sizes taught by inexperienced and/or marginal teachers. ELLs require the best teachers possible who can individualize instruction, create both content and language objectives, are knowledgeable of subject matter, can make the curriculum relevant and purposeful to real world experiences, and have skills in modifying the curriculum as well as in assessment techniques (Castellano, Stringfield, & Stone, 2003; Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Ort, 2002; Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Lee & Burkam, 2003; Tornatzky et al., 2003; Wainer, 2004). Additionally, Tornatzky et al., Echevarria and Graves, as well as, Wainer, noted that teachers must be proficient in English and use various instructional techniques.

Principals of schools with large populations of ELLs faced unique challenges in staffing and often were dependent upon the district for support in finding the most qualified faculty and staff members. The national shortage of licensed ESL and bilingual teachers, as well as regular teachers trained in specific strategies appropriate for ELL

instruction, often resulted in a limited pool of applicants (Echevarria et al., 2004; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Tornatzky et al., 2003; Wainer, 2004). Successful districts had developed recruitment processes and procedures to find and locate the best teachers for the school's ELL population.

Increasing the capacity and knowledge of all staff members, so that they may work more effectively with ELLs, is a shared responsibility between the school district and schools. Wainer (2004) recommended that districts present professional development to inform faculty and staff members about federal, state, and local second language policies and procedures, and how to retrieve and interpret data about their students in addition to in-service on how to teach ELLs. Along with Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000), Wainer also supported giving members of the staff opportunities to attend professional conferences focused on the needs of ESL students and attend sessions focused on sensitivity and cultural issues.

*Site Administration Leadership*

During the latter half of the 20th century effective schools researchers identified practices and qualities that contributed to student success in schools. ELL researchers have found similar practices as imperative to the success of ELLs. Site administrators, principals and assistant principals, were identified as the instructional leaders of their schools and that role brought numerous and diverse responsibilities. Tornatzky et al. (2003) and Wainer (2004) specified that school leaders must model the school's vision and mission, create a climate of mutual respect, prohibit discrimination, racial slurs, and comments, and set high expectations for all students and teachers. Site administrators assure that all students are provided equal opportunity to participate in classes that are

challenging and of high quality and develop a school climate that fosters respect for diverse cultures (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Tornatzky et al.; Valenzuela, 1999; Wainer). Effective site administrators employed multiple strategies to accomplish this mission.

The first step for administrators was to develop a quality staff of teachers and paraprofessionals and then monitor to assure that they were using appropriate strategies and techniques within the classroom, individualizing to student needs, and using multiple assessment tools according to Tornatzky et al. (2003). In addition to hiring teachers with the pedagogical skills identified earlier, Montecel et al. (2002) suggested that principals select teachers who are enthusiastic, committed, and open to innovative ideas. Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) recommended that at least one staff member in the office be trained to work with ELLs, to welcome them, and to provide a point of contact. Since school administrators often hire these staff members they ultimately become responsible for seeking out bilingual office staff.

Effective principals provided opportunities for professionalism and collaboration among staff members. Montecel et al. (2002) charged principals with participating with teachers in on-going professional development, encouraging innovation and change, and giving teachers access to the best practices that current research supports. Those administrators assured ESL representation on the school leadership team, broke down departmental barriers, and encouraged teacher autonomy according to Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000).

Providing opportunities for the extension of student academic access was crucial. Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000), Wainer (2004) and Montecel et al. (2002) expected

administrators to design creative schedules, providing longer or flexible instructional periods during normal school hours. They also suggested providing opportunities for extended student instruction before and after the school day. Valenzuela (1999) reported that both the formal and informal organization of high schools created social, linguistic, and cultural divisions between student and student as well as student and staff. Principals who understand this phenomenon were proactive and used creative scheduling to extend time for ELLs to develop language skills while accumulating course credits. The opportunity to earn a maximum of credits was assured by providing ELLs with appropriate counseling, access to tutoring, and summer support activities (Montecel et al.; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix).

Site administrators who believed that all students deserved a high quality of instruction assured that instructional resources were equitably distributed to all classroom teachers. Tornatzky et al. (2003), Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000), and Wainer (2004) specifically defined equitable distribution to include the assurance of appropriate classroom space for ESL teachers, the dedication of funding for classroom and media resources, and frequent teacher and student access to technology. Additionally, site administrators assured that district policies were followed and processes were in place that signaled possible student failure or dropout probability, supported students through mentors or advocates, and helped connect home and the school (Conley, 2005; Epstein et al., 2002; Hess, 2000; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005a; Tornatzky et al.).

Students reported feeling safe as imperative if they were to attend school (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Epstein et al., 2002; Llagas & Snyder, 2003; Montecel et al.,

2002). The dropout study by Bridgeland et al. reflected the need for principals to build a climate that fostered learning and minimized negative student behaviors and that maintained classroom order by increasing supervision in schools. Ultimately successful ELLs were found in schools that were welcoming, safe, and supportive.

*Teachers and Counselors*

Although multiple definitions of social capital were posed by researchers, all agreed that teachers and counselors, due to their daily interactions with ELLs, were the key for building social capital. Valenzuela (1999) defined social capital as a social and emotional network of individuals functioning to promote academic achievement as a collective process. She found in her ethnographic study that Hispanic students' attitudes toward school were strongly related to their experiences and relationships with teachers, although many teachers were unaware of their impact. Teachers, who sought to understand their immigrant students, embraced their cultural attributes and infused those attributes in the classroom, advocated for them, and demonstrated authentic care by developing reciprocal relationships, influenced students' academic success and their increased motivation to remain in school (Castellano et al., 2003; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Hess, 2000; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Valenzuela; Wainer, 2004).

Croninger and Lee (2001) defined social capital as having two dimensions. They included the students' description of their social ties to teachers and the reports of teachers about their informal exchanges with students. They reported that when students had positive interactive relationships with their teachers, they were more motivated to remain in school. These relationships occurred both formally and informally, but inherent with either was trust.

In *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts,* Bridgeland et al. (2006) related that students emphasized the importance of a strong relationship with at least one adult in school. Focus groups in the study identified the effect of one-on-one attention from teachers as influencing their decision to remain in school. Bridgeland et al. consistently reported that the best teachers involved students in class and made the course material interesting.

Valenzuela (1999) stated that interaction and peer to peer relationships were equally important and Hess (2000), citing Valverde, reported peer group impact as the second strongest factor influencing students not to drop out. Ruiz-de-Velasco and Fix (2000) recommended quickly involving students in school by creating newcomer teams to discuss inter-group relations and assist with students transferring into school. They also suggested councils or clubs for ELLs that focused on helping new ELLs learn about such things as college preparation processes, career opportunities, resumes, and scholarship sources.

Counselors played a critical role in high schools because they were the holders of key information and gatekeepers to career paths (Conley, 2005; Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000; Tornatzky et al., 2003; Wainer, 2004). Wainer recommended that schools hire bilingual counselors to lead students and parents in planning for the future. Because jobs that once were readily available in mills and factories for workers without high school diplomas have disappeared, students who live in or on the edge of poverty, are members of a minority, and do not speak English place new demands upon our high schools to prepare them to be contributing members of the society.

ELLs and their parents often failed to understand the institution or systems of

high schools and had difficulty interpreting both aural and written language, causing them to make poor decisions regarding career tracks and advanced course selections which in turn kept them in low level, low paying jobs (Conley, 2005; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Tornatzky et al., 2003; Wainer, 2004). Tornatzky et al. reported that even when ELLs attended college, they were more likely to be found in colleges that offered only bachelor degrees reducing their chances of graduate study and were more likely to attend a community college seldom transitioning to a college or university. Ultimately counselors and administrators were responsible for providing parental and student information about college preparatory courses to better plot career paths.

In summary, districts and schools can increase the probability of student success by analyzing and understanding the student population characteristics of the school and allocating both fiscal and human resources equitably and fairly. They must assure that only the best faculty and staff members are hired and receive continuous high quality professional development to expand their knowledge base of the needs of immigrant students. Most importantly, the staff of schools must be committed to accomplishing their mission of providing a safe, inviting, engaging, and caring environment that promotes success for all students.

### Category 5: Parental and School Engagement

Keyes (2002) quoted Henry about parent, teacher, and student relationships as follows:

> It's a dance, a dance between teacher and student and parent and child and parent and teacher and so on. Knowing when to respond and when to let go and let them find out on their own is a dance, a subtle communication of letting each other know what our needs are and how we can help each other. (p.178)

According to Keyes, parents and teachers share a common interest, which is the effective education of the child, and the likelihood of a positive relationship rests on a shared understanding of different, but complimentary roles, shared expectations for student success, and mutual respect of values and cultures. Obviously, this relationship is more difficult to establish and maintain, if there is no common language and cultural similarities are absent.

Many educators accept the premise that parental involvement in schools increases the probability of student success, and research supports this premise. As early as 1966 Coleman and his team identified parental influence as the primary variable influencing student achievement. Lopez, Scribner, Mahitivanichcha (2001) cited the research of Williams and Chavkin during the late 1980s generally identifying the need for a strategic written plan, resources to activate the plan, ongoing training for staff and parents, and collaboration with multiple agencies as important to the success of parental involvement. The Association for Effective Schools (1996) further supported the involvement of parents in school based decision making as important to student success. More recently high school reform polices emphasized the need for small learning communities, a more personalized environment, and parent interaction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Lee & Burkam, 2003; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000).

Bolin (2003) stressed the importance of parents and their influence on ELLs to remain in school during the secondary years. She reported that families, especially those coming from poverty in Mexico, recognized the opportunity students have to attend high school in the United States, but lacked an understanding of the differences between high school and secondary schools in Mexico. She further indicated that Mexican parents

sometimes failed to understand the lack of emphasis on vocational training and did not perceive education as an opportunity for upward mobility or self-improvement. Therefore, if high schools intend to reduce the dropout rates of Mexican students, they must help parents understand the opportunities available for their children and provide relevant curricula for ELLs.

Family and community expectations may influence academic expectations and opportunity for a strong academic background. A study by Hao and Bonstead-Bruns (1998) examined the impact of between family and within family educational expectations as related to student achievement in Asian and Mexican families. Their first finding supported the importance of both parent and child setting high and mutual expectations for academic success. Also, they found that as learning related interactions between parents and children increased, so did a mutual understanding of educational expectations indicating the importance of these interactions.

Hao and Bonstead-Bruns (1998) found similar results within family interactions. Ethnic neighborhoods influenced the gain of social capital when a strong supportive cultural network was in place that valued educational opportunities. While certain cultures had a positive impact on student achievement, this was not true for the Mexican and Chinese students. Specifically, Hao and Bonstead-Bruns found that Mexican parents and children tend to lack mutual expectations in regard to educational attainment which may contribute to lower achievement of Mexican students.

The book, *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action,* identified four generalities regarding parental and school interaction (Epstein et al., 2002).

1. Parental partnerships declined as grade levels increase.

2. Family involvement was related to affluence and poverty, resulting in affluent schools having increased parental involvement.

3. Schools that had high poverty rates tended to contact parents more often for negative reasons, such as poor academic achievement and behavior problems.

4. Single parents, fathers, parents who lived increased distances from the school, and parents who had odd work schedules or work multiple jobs were less likely to be involved with the school.

Parental involvement may be difficult to define. As Hickman indicated, the idea of parental involvement may differ from person to person and school to school and be guided in part by school policies and needs. The study identified seven roles parents play in high schools. These roles involved parents as communicators, supporters of activities, learners, advocates, decision makers, volunteers and professionals, and home activities teacher.

A 20-year collaborative study conducted by a team from John Hopkins University, led by Epstein et al. (2002), extensively explored the connections between the school, parents, and the broader community. Two primary assumptions of the Epstein team were that schools consciously chose the method and extent of their engagement with parents and students and that schools that truly cared about their students and families were more likely to have successful students. The team also accepted the tenants that most families cared about their children and were eager to receive information from schools that helped them become better partners in educating their children. Additionally Epstein et al. believed most schools wanted to involve families, but often did not know

how to build positive and constructive programs, which may be especially true in working with ELLs whose backgrounds differ from the employees of the school. Finally, Epstein et al. accepted that most students wanted their families to be involved in their schools in a positive way and to be knowledgeable about their school, but the students did not have the information or ability to assist in building the connections.

The Epstein et al. (2002) framework presented a theory on how social organizations connect. The model posed by Epstein et al. places the student at the center of overlapping spheres of influence in three major areas affecting student learning – the family, school, and community. It demonstrated complex inter-personal relationships between these areas at both the institutional and individual level and allowed the investigation of the connections between educators, parents, and community groups, agencies, and various social structures. Six types of involvement were identified:

1. Parenting indicates an understanding of growth and social/emotional development of all ages (Epstein et al.. 2002). Offering continuing education to immigrant parents and expanding their skills are likely to increase their interaction with their child in school related functions (Bolin, 2003; Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1999; Hill & Flynn, 2006; Tornatzky et al., 2003; Valenzuela; 1999, Wainer, 2004);

2. Communicating requires the dual open flow of information with families about school programs and processes and general student opportunities as well as individual student progress, in a planned, respectful, and effective manner using multiple types of communication (Epstein et al., 2002);

3. Volunteering requires schools to provide opportunities for parents to learn how to become involved in school as either volunteers or participants in activities that support the student and/or programs at school (Epstein et al., 2002);

4. Learning at home denotes the activities schools use to encourage and reward parents who participate with students in activities such as homework and curriculum related activities, personal goal setting, and planning (Epstein et al., 2002);

5. Decision making represents the opportunities schools provide to include families in leadership opportunities, school governance, decision making, and advocacy through formal groups such as school councils, committees, PTA/PTO, etc. (Epstein et al., 2002);

6. Collaborating with community places the school in the position of identifying, integrating, and coordinating services for students and families with agencies, business, and other service groups. These connections provide a conduit for the community to contribute to the school, students, and families and vice versa (Epstein et al., 2002).

The research of Lopez et al. (2001) centered on schools and parental involvement of migrant families. While all migrants are not ELLs and neither are all ELLs migrants, the model shared many of the same assumptions and strategies as the one posed by Epstein et al. (2002). There are philosophical differences in the models. In the Lopez et al. model the center includes the whole family and not just the students. Lopez et al. expanded the identifications of needs to that of the family which is especially crucial for families that move frequently and do not have a home in the traditional sense expected by most school personnel. Not having a traditional life style means that schools must identify needs through both traditional and nontraditional methods, care about the entire

family, and provide basic physical and emotional needs to the family as well as to the student, and serve as a link to other supporting agencies.

Hill and Flynn (2006) related the accomplishments of a team from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) who joined with a leadership team in a small rural district in Wyoming that had large percentages of ELLs. Using a format similar to that posed by Epstein et al. (2002), the McREL team helped develop school staff capacity to work more effectively with students and parents. Hill and Flynn reported that the process consisted of an assessment using questionnaires, a funded plan for developing parents' understanding of NCLB policies and school programs, and encouraging parent involvement. According to Hill and Flynn the team communicated results using traditional and nontraditional methods and then collaborated with the community college and other local agencies to implement a program aimed at educating parents though purposeful and meaningful activities.

The need for schools and districts to engage parents in the educational process is evident. The strategies chosen must be purposeful and coordinated to maximize and assure parental involvement based upon assessments to determine student and family needs. The district should have a plan for all schools and monitor their implementation of it. As a first step, schools must engage with immigrant parents by making schools welcoming and inviting by removing the language barriers, and creating a caring atmosphere. They must provide ongoing training for faculty and staff that encourages frequent and ongoing dual communication and collaborate with other agencies within the district. By actively engaging and interacting with parents of ELLS districts and schools will increase the likelihood of student success.

# Conclusion

Providing a quality education for all students should be the primary goal of public education in the U. S. The public education system was founded on the theory that a literate and educated public would assure a strong democracy. Whether the outcome is an increase in human capital, economic capital, or social capital graduation from high school is the door to continuing education opportunities and higher paying jobs.

Much can be deduced from Valenzuela's (1999) work on subtractive schooling. Subtractive schooling is grounded in the theory that schools engage in practices, often unknowingly, that detract from the learning of immigrant students. She posed that refusing to acknowledge the positive attributes of the culture and backgrounds of their students and families, failing to recognize possible unintended consequences of assimilation policies they design, failing to provide opportunities for learning, and failing to reach out to students and parents with caring engaging relationships will also fail to maximize the social capital potential of these students.

As Valenzuela (1999) shared, the word *educación* in Spanish carries much broader implications than our English word education. Educación implies an instructional focus that is grounded in the culture of the student and how the student functions within it. Educación emphasizes respect, responsibility, and social duties that everyone should follow. In a broader sense it includes the family's role for teaching morals, social, and personal responsibility.

Those values, imbedded in the Spanish word educación, also are values central to our county. It becomes the responsibility of schools to support these values and provide opportunity for educational advancement of Hispanic students. By focusing on true high

school reform that implements research supported instructional strategies, the educational system can become the vehicle for improvement not only within the individual, but for the human resources of the greater society.

This literature review presented an overview of practices and procedures recommended by educational researchers to improve the academic achievement of the ELL in typical high schools across the United States. These specific recommendations were compiled in a holistic model containing five categories. Professional development recommendations were included in each category as indicated. Chapter 3 presents the methodology proposed to complete a case study in the school district using the framework as a benchmark model to determine the extent these strategies are employed in the district's high schools.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As the United States struggles with issues regarding the rapidly increasing immigrant population, so do public schools struggle with providing the youth of this non-English speaking population a quality education. High schools face the greatest challenge of educating these youth and, if they fail, will produce dropouts many of whom may experience lost economic potential and may enter the social welfare systems of the nation further draining economic resources. This study identified and grouped action strategies into a matrix, found in Appendix E. These strategies, if implemented in high schools, could increase the likelihood of these students remaining in school. Then the study assessed the extent to which these strategies were used within a suburban school district in North Carolina whose high school ELL population was identified as failing to meet AYP under the guidelines of the NCLB legislation. Lastly, the study explored the outcomes of the students in terms of academic achievement and graduation.

Chapter 2 identified research based strategies appropriate for schools to use with ELLs and presented a holistic framework placing these strategies into five major categories. Professional development needs were interwoven into each category as appropriate. The data matrix which specified the identified strategies and presented more detail than the framework was used in the final analysis processes of an embedded case study. This chapter identifies the purpose of this case study and includes the primary and secondary research questions. An overview of the research design follows which contains

a description of the setting, participants, the procedure, and processes that were used to gather and analyze the data. The concluding section describes the proposed data analysis and addresses the technical adequacy of the study.

## Research Purpose and Questions

The overarching purpose of this research was to explore the impact of the English Second Language program within the high schools of a school district in North Carolina. The researcher aimed to accomplish this by first identifying research based, nationally accepted standards and strategies that schools and districts might implement to increase the probability of ELL success. Secondly, she sought to develop a process that measured the extent these strategies were employed in the system at the district and site levels. By using this process the researcher undertook an investigation to answer the primary research questions below.

1. In what ways did the district's ESL programs and strategies currently in place adhere to identified national standards and best practices?

2. What outcomes were experienced by high school ELLs exposed to these ESL programs and strategies in the school district?

Secondary research questions were situated within five primary areas. Those areas included (a) data collection and use, (b) the curriculum and programs currently in place within the system, (c) the instructional practices which were routinely used, (d) the leadership awareness of system and site administrators, and (e) parental interactions with the schools. A sixth area, professional development opportunities available to staff, was embedded as appropriate within each category. The secondary questions for each category were

1. *Data Collection and Use:* How were the ELLs in the district similar and dissimilar to other ELLs at the national and state levels? How did the district utilize the data it disaggregates about the ELL student population?

2. *Curriculum and Programs:* To what extent were curriculum and program recommendations from state and national agencies, research organizations, and individual researchers implemented within the system and at the school level? Why were certain programs chosen, and to what extent was the district using information about the special and individual needs of ELLs in designing the overall ESL program? How were the programs implemented, delivered, and monitored?

3. *Instructional Practices:* How did teachers plan for the instruction of ELLs? To what extent were high school teachers in the district employing research based instructional strategies specific to English Language Learners?

4. *Leadership:* How did the district plan for and distribute fiscal and human resources based on ELL needs? How were decisions made at the district and school level as to allocations and disbursements? How were ESL teachers screened, hired, and placed at schools? What roles did principals, counselors, and teachers play in the success of ELLs?

5. *Parental Engagement:* What types of parent involvement strategies were utilized by the system and schools? What communications and interactions did the staff members have with students and parents outside traditional classroom settings? How were parents and students encouraged to participate in school functions?

When possible, the researcher identified professional development training necessary to implement strategies within categories. The researcher specifically

considered which professional development programs were provided to teachers and administrators regarding policies, curriculum requirements, instructional practices, and cultural issues. She sought to determine how the professional development was delivered, evaluated, and monitored. Finally, the researcher tried to determine how the district measured the effectiveness of the professional development. The professional development needs were embedded within each category.

## Compliance with Agencies

The researcher complied with all policies and regulations of the school district and the University of North Carolina-Charlotte while conducting this research. A letter was sent to the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent of Planning and Organizational Development, and the Director of Federal Programs seeking permission to conduct the study. Concurrently, approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the university.

The district's Internal Review Process required a letter to be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent with final approval resting with the Superintendent. The cooperation of the Federal Programs Director, hereafter referred to as director, was necessary for access to the schools. The researcher completed the process required by the system. After receiving permission to proceed with the study from both agencies, the researcher met with site principals and the directors to explain the purpose of the research, solicit their cooperation, and discuss the processes which were to occur.

## Setting

The suburban school district studied was located in North Carolina. At the close of the 2006 school year, the total student population of Grades K-12 was 23,886 with

7,050 students reported in high schools (NCPS, 2006c). Because the district was located near a large city, the system generally experienced annual growth of enrollment of approximately 1,000 students; however, at the end of the 2007 school year, the system reported an ending enrollment of 25,656 students and at the close of 2008 an enrollment of 27,132 (NCPS, 2007b, 2008c). This represents an increase of 1770 students at the end of the 2007 school year followed by an additional 1476 students at the end of the 2008 school year (NCPS, 2007b, 2008c).

The system traditionally was viewed as predominantly White middle class; however, the percentage of the White population had gradually decreased over the last 10 years as other ethnicities increased. Using data from the state's Statistical Profile for each respective year, Table 5 demonstrates this continued shift.

Table 5

*Profile of Ethnicity of Student Population for 2006, 2007, and 2007 for District K-12*

| | Native American | | Asian | | Hispanic | | Black | | White | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % |
| 2006 | 70 | 0.3 | 353 | 1.5 | 2217 | 9.3 | 4406 | 18.4 | 16864 | 70.5 |
| 2007 | 95 | 0.4 | 423 | 1.6 | 2644 | 10.3 | 5009 | 19.5 | 17485 | 68.2 |
| 2008 | 85 | 0.3 | 468 | 1.7 | 2970 | 10.9 | 5572 | 20.5 | 18037 | 66.5 |

An overwhelming majority of Hispanic students and many Asian students were identified by the Lead Teacher as LEP. LEPs of European descent also were distributed to a small degree in the other ethnicities. The director indicated over 40 languages and dialects were represented in the district.

Just as the diversity of the system changed over the last 10 years, so did the increase in poverty levels. Poverty level was indicated by the percentage of students classified as receiving free or reduced-price lunch and the number of Title 1 schools. Title 1 funding for high poverty schools in this system was reserved for elementary schools. Ten of 16 elementary schools within the district were designated as Title 1 in 2007-08. The system provided additional teachers for high poverty elementary and middle schools using an equity formula. However, high schools did not generally receive additional funding based on student population issues. The district was not considered to be a low wealth district.

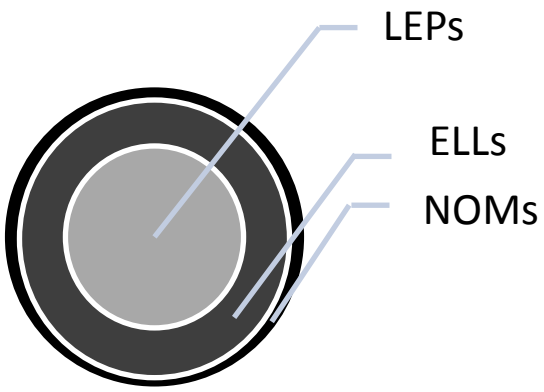
## Participants and Sample Selection

Three groups of participants were involved in this study. ELLs within the district made up the first group. The second group contained teachers who taught both ESL and content courses to ELLs. Selected site and central office administrators and support staff members made up the third group of participants. A detailed description of each of these groups follows.

The first group of participants in this study consisted of students identified as LEP and enrolled in the district's high schools for the 2007-2008 year. Federal law requires that all students who enroll in a public school complete a Home Language Survey upon enrollment (NCPS, 2006d). This survey establishes if the student's native language is something other than English (NCPS, 2006d). Students who answer yes to any one of the questions were registered at the campus of the system's Welcome Center as a National Origin Minority or a NOM. This relationship is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

*Relationship of NOMs, ELLs, and LEPs*




According to North Carolina Public School regulations (2006d), baseline testing is a federal requirement for all NOMs unless parents request a waiver and refuse services. The *IDEA® English Language Proficiency Test,* more commonly known as the IPT, served as a pretest and established a baseline of skills in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. There were six levels in each domain: Novice Low, Novice High, Intermediate Low, Intermediate High, Advanced, and Superior (NCPS, 2005a). Students who scored below Superior in any area were designated as LEP and were eligible to receive either direct ESL services or consultation services (NCPS, 2005b). The students' names and information were recorded in the district's database of LEP students maintained by the lead teacher.

A precise description of a system's ELL population was essential to the study. Subgroups within the population of ELLs varied academically and culturally. Initially the researcher conducted a stratified random sampling to increase the probability that a truly representative group of ELLs was drawn to participate in focus groups as recommended

by Patten (2002). Using the district's centralized data sources, not the database of the lead teacher, the researcher developed a list of all LEP students in each high school with identifying information. Then the list was sorted first by grade levels, then by gender, and lastly by ethnicity. Ten percent of each of the final groups of students was chosen randomly. Letters seeking permission for these students to participate in the focus groups were sent to parents, and only students who received permission were included in the focus groups. Limited response by the original students selected led the researcher to ask for ESL teacher assistance in identifying students who were willing to participate. ESL teachers assisted the researcher in identifying students who were representative of the ELL population of the school and were willing to participate. Therefore, the students who participated in the focus groups were a combination of both randomly selected ELLs and volunteers.

To receive a North Carolina diploma all students must demonstrate proficiency on End of Course tests in five subjects: English I, Algebra I, Biology, Civics and Economics, and U.S. History (North Carolina State Board of Education [NCSBE], 2007). The researcher requested and analyzed sanitized schedules of ELL students identified at the site by data managers for the school year 2007-2008. From these schedules the researcher developed a list of mainstream education teachers of the tested subjects who had ELLs enrolled in their classes for second semester of 2007-2008. Those teachers, along with ESL teachers, comprised the second group of participants. The researcher sent e-mail invitations via the district's e-mail service to 73 identified mainstream teachers and eight ESL teachers that explained the purpose of the research. The e-mail also presented an opportunity for the invitees to indicate their willingness to participate or ask clarifying

questions. The researcher then interviewed and/or observed the teachers who volunteered to participate in the study.

The third group of participants included site and district level personnel. These participants were selected by using purposeful and snowball sampling as described by Esterberg (2001), Patten (2002) and Yin (2003). The researcher identified possible participants by using school and district Web sites. Positions selected at the district level included the Director of Federal Programs, the Chief Finance Officer, the ESL lead teacher, the ESL program coordinator, and Accountability Services Director. At the site level each principal, assistant principal of instruction, ESL administrator, and at least one counselor chosen at random were interviewed. Additional persons interviewed included ESL counselors, drop-out prevention counselors, ESL assistants, and data managers.

## Procedures and Processes

The primary assumption of the researcher was that a holistic model should be implemented by the district to make significant long-term changes in the education of ELLs. Although the system and state provided a mass of empirical data sources, quantitative analysis uncovered only a small part of the story. Therefore, the researcher used a mixed method embedded case study design for this research.

This study was conducted during the 2007-2008 school year and was limited to the bounds of the school district at the high school level. Although the unit of analysis was the school district, subunit examinations of each of the high schools occurred. As Yin (2003) pointed out, using data from subunits as well as the system provided the opportunity for an extended analysis which enhanced insight into the case study.

By using qualitative methods as described by Hancock and Algozzine, (2006), Merriam, (1998), and Yin (2003) the researcher developed a deeper understanding of the complex educational phenomenon of educating high school ELLs. She conducted interviews and student focus group sessions during the 2007-2008 school year seeking answers to the specific secondary questions posed in the study. Using the information from the interviews as well as her observations she conducted an intensive analysis of the processes and procedures implemented at the site and evaluation of how well the sites aligned to the expectations of the district.

*Quantitative Methods*

The researcher used numerous empirical data sources to build a descriptive profile of the district's ELL population and the schools they attended so that the district's population could be compared to that across the nation. The North Carolina Windows of Information on Student Education (NCWISE) system, maintained by the district, included some of the characteristics identified in the first area of the framework and schools on an aggregate level. The district maintained a separate ESL data base managed by a staff member at the Welcome Center with information about ELLs that was not included in NCWISE. Additional data sources, including various state reports, such as the North Carolina Annual Crime and Violence Reports, the North Carolina Dropout Reports, the North Carolina Statistical Reports, and the North Carolina School Report Cards were used.

Two supplementary data resources were available to the researcher. The first was the school's annual safe school surveys, which was developed by the district and administered annually. Relevant questions from the survey were identified and used to

provide additional insight to areas such as school climate, atmosphere, student-faculty-staff relationships, learning expectations, and teacher training. The survey was administered using an electronic survey system, *K-12 Insight*. The district provided responses in an electronic format to the researcher.

The system electronically administered the survey, *Equity in Special Education Placement: A School Self-Assessment*, to all high school site administrators, counselors, and teachers. This assessment was developed in 2005 by a joint effort among three organizations: (1) the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Services, (2) IDEAs That Work: Office of Special Education Programs, and (3) the University of Colorado at Boulder. It gathered perception data concerning attitudes of teachers toward Latino students and special education students. It also measured the levels of training teachers have received in instructional techniques and cultural awareness. Means comparisons and frequency distributions were examined for selected and relevant questions from both surveys.

*Qualitative Methods*

Patton (2002) described the benefits of qualitative research by using the analogy of peeling away the outer skins of a rotted fruit to look inside and find the hidden seed. If the seed is planted, tended, and nurtured, a new fruit will occur. While the researcher does not intend to suggest that the current strategies for working with ELLs in the district are rotten fruit, this is a segment of the student population that is currently seeing only marginal success academically. By peeling back the empirical data and examining the reality of the school setting a more detailed and expanded picture of the realities of everyday school life for the ELL emerged. The researcher sought through field research

to uncover how schools supported ELLs, the roles of the various participants, their viewpoints as stakeholders, and the similarities and differences of the schools' approaches in working with ELLs. These methods better identified the strategies schools were using, determined the effects of system and site professional development regarding ELLs, and identified the gaps that might exist than quantitative methods. As recommended by Patton (2002) and Yin (2003) the researcher used qualitative tools including interviews, field observations, and reviews of artifacts, archival records and other documentation.

*Individual interviews.* Interviews offered an opportunity for the researcher to enter the perspective of the person being interviewed, probe for more in-depth understanding, and modify questions as the process unfolded. Esterberg (2001) saw interviews as the heart of social science research and Patton (2002) wrote that they were a chance for researchers to discover what could not be observed. More like guided dialogues or conversations, the goal of the interviews was to allow participants to express their own ideas and opinions and, in doing so, attain rich personal information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The researcher strove to keep the conversation flowing, be unbiased, listen attentively, and probe for more in-depth answers as the opportunities arise as was recommended by Merriam (1998) and Yin (2001).

The interviews were semi structured with open-ended questions. The researcher conducted the interviews in the field setting using two types of interviews, individual and focus group. The interview guides contained two of the four types of questions recommended by Merriam (1998), hypothetical and ideal position questions. Hypothetical questions began with "What if" or "Suppose" and provided the responder

with an opportunity to imagine what a particular situation could be. Ideal questions ask an interviewee to picture or describe an ideal situation.

The researcher also used four types of questions described by Patton (2002) and Esterberg (2001). Those types included background questions, opinion and value questions, knowledge questions, and sensory questions. Background questions were asked to give the interviewer insight about the participant and to assist in creating a relationship. Opinion and value questions aimed to gain an understanding of the cognitive and interpretive processes of people. Knowledge questions sought to inquire about the actual information the participant had. Sensory questions focus on what the responder knew or perceived through the senses. The interview guides for central office administrators and site administrators, counselors, and ESL teachers are included in Appendixes A and B respectively.

The questions were designed to seek information that might not be found in other sources. As the researcher developed the framework and detailed matrix from the literature in chapter 2, possible data sources were identified. Additionally, she maintained a list of possible questions to ask if only one data source was available for reference.

The researcher began the interviews by presenting the purposes of the research, reviewed the guidelines, and gave the interviewee an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. All legal and ethical requirements were followed and responses were confidential. All interviews were taped and handwritten notes were also taken. Hand written reflections of the interviews were recorded and included notes on verbal and nonverbal behaviors the researcher witnessed, as well as parenthetical comments about associated thoughts or connections made by the researcher. The recorded interviews were

transcribed by the researcher and copies were shared with the interviewees so that corrections could be made as needed.

*Focus group interviews.* The researcher believed that the voices and perspectives of the ELLs attending these schools and participating in the ESL program were important to record and analyze. Esterberg (2001) and Patton (2002) suggested that homogeneous focus groups that have shared experiences assist in creating a comfortable atmosphere for participants. This process also allowed the researcher to collect a large amount of information in a short period of time.

The process for choosing the student participants was described previously. Participant numbers in the groups ranged from 4-7 students. All ethical requirements were followed. Letters were sent to parents of these students requesting permission for them to participate. The researcher worked with school personnel to schedule the meetings at a time and place appropriate for the students so that they missed a minimum of classroom time. An interpreter from the school district was present when necessary.

An agenda for the focus groups was developed. Each session lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. Single sessions were held at 4 of the 6 high schools. The researcher facilitated the sessions and developed a set of ground rules that was proposed to the students for acceptance. She allowed time to add ground rules if the participants desired. Time was allocated to discuss confidentiality expectations and to cover ground rules. The researcher audio taped 3 of the 4 (the recorder failed at the fourth) sessions and transcribed the comments.

These initial questions, Appendix C, were identified by the researcher based on the literature review. Each open ended question was written in English and Spanish on a

single sheet of chart paper and posted around the room. During the first portion of the meeting an affinity diagram process was used. Students responded to the questions without talking. Students were given post-it notes and asked to respond with one idea per note to each question and place their responses beneath the questions on the appropriate chart. Students provided as many responses to the questions as they wanted. This process assured that every student was given equal opportunity to participate. At the completion of the exercise, the researcher scanned the student ideas looking for themes and patterns in the answers to each question. She then asked clarifying or extension questions of the students verbally attempting to gather more in-depth information about the initial responses.

*Observation.* Critics of observation as a tool for data collection find it too subjective because inexperienced observers may be selective in their perceptions of what they see and sense; however, Merriam (1998) and Patton (2002) reported a number of advantages. Merriam indicated that the outsider was more likely to see daily activities through a different lens gaining a better understanding of the context of information, observe situations that participants might be reluctant to discuss, look beyond the perspective of individuals, and use the information during the triangulation process to document analysis or substantiate findings.

When deliberately planned and executed, observation can be invaluable. As an observer-participant, this researcher observed the physical setting to better understand choices made by leaders such as the location of ESL classrooms, ELL access to technology, and resource allocation to ELLs. The interactions that occurred among faculty, staff, and students during their daily activities were also observed.

A key opportunity for the researcher was the observation of teachers' classrooms. It was within those classrooms that the implementation of programs and professional development was witnessed and learning occurred. Observations of teachers of ELLs generally lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. The researcher looked for the use of recognized instructional strategies and the engagement of the students. The observations were followed up with an interview using the open-ended questions found in Appendix D. These observations and interviews provided information about the processes teachers used to plan lessons for ELLs, their access to resources, their training, and most of all the relationships between the students and teachers.

Because the researcher was employed as a teacher and administrator by the system for over 15 years, she was able to gain access to the school sites without difficulty. She had built credibility and trust with teachers and administrators alike over time. While this offered many positive outcomes, she was cognizant of her ethical responsibilities and used care not to let her biases or preconceived ideas enter the field with her.

The researcher developed an observation guide aligned to the NC Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument that included the date, time, and location of the observation, names and positions of persons she observed, specific activities and events that were related to the research questions, and her initial interpretations of her observations (Esterberg, 2001; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). She attempted to record as much information as possible while in the field by using a small notebook, recorder, and digital camera. She scheduled her field visits so that adequate time was left to record her observations immediately and in order as recommended by Esterberg, Hancock and

Algozzine. The field notes included drawings and diagrams and the researcher's reflections.

The researcher exited the field when she was convinced that she was no longer gaining new information. She notified the principal that her visits were complete and sent letters of appreciation for the opportunity to observe the school. She will share information as appropriate with the superintendent and director at the conclusion of her study.

*Review of artifacts, documents, and other records*. The researcher requested copies of artifacts and organizational documents such as system and school improvement plans, mission statements, and student handbooks to review. Copies of newsletters and parent communications in Spanish as well as English versions were requested. She viewed the system and school Web sites for bilingual communication opportunities. The researcher verified the authenticity and origination of these documents and examined information from the artifacts to enhance her understanding of processes the school uses, leadership expectations, and communication to parents and the community at large.

*Qualitative analysis.* The researcher used the constant comparative analysis method to interpret the data. As discussed by Merriam (1998), this method was especially suitable to use in an embedded case study because the constant comparative analysis allowed the researcher to speculate or make guesses about what might happen in the future based on the past. The method provided a means for developing theories that was grounded in the data. As Merriam recommended, the researcher began the process by constantly sorting, grouping, and regrouping information and data which led to the identification and descriptions of categories. Merriam described the second element,

hypothesis, as “suggested links between the categories and its properties” (p. 190).

In essence the researcher used this process in the development of the strategies that emerged from the Literature Review. She first read and compiled multiple articles and books about ESL programs. By following links and ideas contained within these sources, she discovered other ideas and references. As she began to organize the sources, five categories emerged each of which contained recommended professional development activities. Within the multiple sources found in each category, elements which were the matched strategies and practices became evident. The researcher hypothesized that schools and systems that appropriately implement these strategies within each category would be more likely to experience improvement in the academic achievement of their ELLs.

The researcher set the data matrix aside when she entered the field. She collected information based on what she actually observed versus looking for specific actions. As the researcher collected the data, she searched for categories and themes to emerge from each site. Responses to interview questions were color coded by the position the interviewee held within the district or school. These questions were then resorted and placed on charts so that all responses to the questions could be compared and themes and patterns could be discovered.

As the emergent themes and patterns arose for each site, the researcher cross-referenced and analyzed the information which led to overall generalizations. At this point the qualitative and quantitative analyses joined and information was compiled. As a last step the researcher returned to the data matrix developed from the literature review. She then matched the responses of interviewees to the strategies found in the matrix in

order to determine the degree of implementation of the strategies within the district. The matrices contained the most meaningful information and allowed the researcher to find answers to the secondary questions which allowed for triangulation of the data. Because of this process answers to the secondary questions became evident and led to a determination of the extent to which these strategies were implemented in the district.

## Technical Adequacy

All research studies are confronted with reliability and validity issues. None of the survey data, which contributed to the quantitative methodology, had supporting reliability investigations. Most were new instruments developed by the school district or other agencies. Even though Spanish versions were available, the researcher could not confirm that students were given that option. If Spanish versions were used, the researcher was dependent upon the translator to assure accuracy in interpretation. Additionally, immigrants might have been unwilling to participate in any type of survey for fear of government oversight. Although ethnicity was a choice for the responder, LEP is not, which was true not only of the survey data but most of the quantitative data available to the researcher. Lack of clarity of definitions was present in the surveys. For example, the word caring may have different meaning to different people.

The primary validity issue was of volunteerism. Neither students nor teachers were required to complete system surveys. Administrators and teachers controlled which students had access to the system surveys and ethical considerations required participants to be given choice in working with the researcher. The researcher also was limited in the ability to conduct follow-up interviews with the students. To combat these issues, the researcher defined multiple data sources for each area found in the framework derived

from the literature review. Most areas used both quantitative and qualitative sources. Through the use of the constant comparison process and the use of multiple sources, the researcher attempted to reduce the amount of personal bias that might have been present and increased the validity of the study.

Reliability issues were addressed in two ways. Although this was a single case study, which automatically raises the issue of generalizibility, the researcher used the embedded case study method. The processes and procedures for each school site and the system were replicated six times. The presence of consistent results should have increased the generalizibility of the study.

The phenomenon of meeting the educational needs of large numbers of ELLs is not unique to the school district in North Carolina. The researcher believed that other school districts or even individual schools through North Carolina and possibly other locations in the United States would benefit from the processes that were developed in this study. The process was outlined and the questionnaires used for interviews and focus groups were included in the Appendices assisting other professionals wanting to duplicate the process.

## Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the research design. It included a description of the setting, identified the participants and the processes that were used to choose them. The chapter then identified the procedures and processes that were used to gather and analyze the data. The closing section addressed reliability and validity issues and how the research plans to deal with them. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study.

# CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

## Introduction

For this study the researcher initially identified research based strategies that could influence the success of ELLs in high school and lead to their graduation. Due to the large number of identified strategies, the researcher organized the strategies into a model (Figure 1) containing five categories. She used this model to frame the areas of the study, to pose secondary questions within each category, and ultimately to organize the collected data.

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first was to identify the strategies in place within the school district and discover in what ways the district's English Second Language (ESL) programs and strategies aligned to national standards and practices. Secondly, the researcher sought to identify the outcomes of the high school ELLs who were enrolled in the ESL program.

This chapter presents both empirical and qualitative data. It begins by providing a description of the sample groups, followed by information regarding the data sources which were available from the district. Next the chapter provides data about the characteristics of the population of ELLs within the district using the variables identified by ESL researchers. The remaining portion of the chapter provides data, predominantly qualitative in nature, related to the secondary questions in each category of the framework. In order to obtain this perspective, the researcher conducted 58 interviews

with site and central office faculty and staff members, observed 17 lessons taught by teachers of ELLs, and conducted 4 focus group sessions with students.

## Sample Description

Both students and adults participated in this study. Because there was no designation within the district that included all ELLs, the students who participated were identified as LEP according to state and federal criteria. The LEP designation was a subset within the ELL total population (see Figure 2). These LEP students were receiving ESL services and were chosen by a combination of random and purposeful sampling. The adult sample was purposefully selected administrators and faculty members from both high school sites and the central office.

Invitations asking the school to participate in a focus group were sent to the six high school principals. Although all schools indicated an interest, only four schools had enough students respond to meet the minimum requirement of four students. Eight (30.8%) of the 26 students that participated were in the original group of randomly selected students. The age of students ranged from 14-18. Almost 85% of the student participants were of Hispanic descent (11 females, 11 males). Three Asian students (1 female, 2 males) participated and the remaining participant was a White male. Just over 42% of the students (11 students) were in the ninth grade, 10th and 11th grades had equal representation at 23% (6 students each) and 12th-grade representation was at 11.5% (3 students).

The educational backgrounds of the students varied. Nineteen (73%) of the students began their education in their native country. Eight of the 26 students indicated they had attended school in the United States for more than five years. Interestingly, one

student indicated that she was brought to the United States when she was less than one year old and had lived her entire life in the United States, but she still required ESL support. Two others were born in the United States, but continued to receive ESL support.

Fifty-eight faculty and staff members from six high schools within the district were interviewed. Almost 40% of the participants were either ESL teachers or mainstream teachers of core courses. Five interviewees were members of the Central Office staff. The remainder of those interviewed consisted of site administrators, counselors, drop-out prevention specialists (DOPSs), and office staff members. Table 6 identifies the gender and ethnicity of the adult participants as well as the position they held.

Table 6

*Cross Tabulation of Interviewees by Position, Ethnicity, and Gender.*

| | Ethnicity and gender | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Position | FA | FB | FH | FW | MI | MW | |
| Assistant principal | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 7 |
| Central office | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Counselor | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| DOP specialist | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Media specialist | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Office staff | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Principal | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Teacher assistant | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Teacher | 0 | 0 | 2 | 16 | 1 | 4 | 23 |
| Total | 1 | 3 | 5 | 35 | 1 | 13 | 58 |

## Background Information on Data Sources

Data specific to the ELL population in the district was incomplete and maintained by multiple people in multiple databases. The district had recently converted to a centralized student information database provided by the state. Only basic demographic and testing data about LEPs contained in the previous system could be uploaded. Data managers at the sites were expected to input information from student files as time permitted, although there appeared to be lack of clarity as to exactly what data should be included as one data manager indicated, "You know this is one of the things they talked about.…Are we supposed to enter this information or not?" She also mentioned that time did not allow her to find files and "look for the data which may or may not be there" nor had she been trained to know if the data appeared to be accurate or not. The testing division of the Accountability Department of the district indicated 370 high school students were eligible to receive testing accommodation due to limited English proficiency. This sample included a non-identifiable student number, the high school attended, grade, ethnicity, and gender.

The lead teacher provided lists of 299 active ELLs, technically LEP students receiving services, and 415 fluent ELLs in high school totaling 714 high school ELLs for the month of November 2007. These numbers were not necessarily contradictory since the testing office identified 370 students within the 714 as eligible for testing modifications. The lead teacher indicated "students must be proficient on the End of Grade or End of Course test as well as rated Superior in each communication area" before losing access to testing accommodations; therefore, students may no longer be designated as LEP because they have attained a superior on the IPT, but remain ELLs and

continue to receive testing accommodations. No descriptive characteristics of students were provided in this sample.

Site data managers signed the monthly reports indicating that they had received the report. When the researcher requested schedules of ELLs at the site level, 199 schedules of LEP students across the district were provided. These generally represented students identified as currently receiving ESL instruction only, but not necessarily consultative LEPs or fluent students, indicating that data managers had not identified all active and fluent ELLs. The degree of identification of ELLs within the school varied from site to site. Schools with small numbers of ELLs tended to have more information entered into the system. Grade level, gender, school attended, teacher names, and course titles were included in this dataset.

## A Comparison of the District's ELL Population to That of the Nation

The first category of the researcher's framework was Data Collection and Use. Within that category the first question sought to determine similarities and differences between ELLs found within the district to that of the nation by specific variables. While general information about district and school membership by grade, gender, and ethnicity could be located at the state and district level, no released information was available for students identified either in the past or present as ELL or LEP; therefore, part of the information presented is based on ethnic and not necessarily ELL information. Additionally, the multiple databases created and maintained by various individuals throughout the district offered inconsistent and inaccessible information.

*Ethnic Distribution*

Based on the 2008 North Carolina Statistical profile, the district had a total of 5,472 high school students at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. Of those students, 601 were Hispanic and 122 were Asian comprising a total of 9.3% of the high school population. Across the district Asians and Hispanics combined to represent 12.6%, which demonstrated that fewer ELLs were found in high schools than in elementary and middle school levels. Table 7 demonstrates the specifics of the high school population as compared to that of the district.

Table 7

*Description of Ethnicities for the District and High Schools*

| | Native American | | Asian | | Hispanic | | Black | | White | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % |
| District | 85 | 0.3 | 468 | 1.7 | 2,970 | 10.9 | 5,572 | 20.5 | 18,037 | 66.5 |
| High schools | 31 | 0.4 | 122 | 1.6 | 601 | 7.7 | 1565 | 20.1 | 5,472 | 70.2 |

An examination of the combined ethnicities of Hispanic and Asian high school students in Table 7 indicated similarities to those found nationally. Students of Hispanic descent comprised the majority subset of Asians and Hispanics at 83.1%. This pattern also was found in the sample provided by the Accountability department. Within that sample the percentage of Hispanic students was 92.4%. When the ethnic distribution within the focus groups was considered, the greatest ethnicity represented for ELLs within the district was Hispanic at 83%. Nationally, the ethnicity within ELLs was represented between 66% and 75%. The ethnic distribution within the ELL sample

populations of the district appeared to be larger than the national average but generally followed national trends.

Across the nation students of Mexican descent represented the greatest subgroup within Hispanics followed by students from Central America, South America, and Puerto Rico, which is similar to the pattern found in the district. Within the focus groups, 55% (18:26) of the students self-identified their place of birth as Mexico. Other countries identified included the United States, Nicaragua, Columbia, and Korea. Both the director and lead teacher confirmed that the majority of ELLs were of Hispanic descent from Mexico and specified the provinces of Guerrero and Queretaro as their point of origin. Additionally, a counselor who maintained a separate database of ELLs at the school stated, “We know, as an example, that most of our ESL kids come from Guerrero province.” Both of these provinces are rural and the director indicated Guerrero had one of the highest illiteracy rates in the country with poor public schools leading to gaps in learning which also mirrored national ELL populations.

*Family Structure and Poverty*

Poverty levels in schools usually are determined by the number of students enrolled in the free and reduced-price lunch program. These numbers are then used to determine schools qualifying for Title I funds. In this district Title 1 funds were reserved for use in elementary schools, so there were no data available to the researcher regarding poverty levels or family structure for high schools.

However, some generalizations about Hispanic and Asian residents within the county were available from QuickFacts that provided adjusted census data for 2008. The report indicated Hispanics composed 8.8% of the county population while Asians

represented 1.6%. The poverty rate for the county reported in 2007 was 11.1%, but this was not reported by ethnicities. According to the 2008 Community Needs Assessment, 18% of Hispanics in the county lived in poverty in 2000, but the rate had increased to 27% by 2008. This data appeared to closely resemble state data reported by Kazarda and Johnson (2006) citing the poverty rate for Hispanics to be at 26.3%. Yet another index, the 2008 North Carolina Local Asset Poverty Index for the county presented by Action for Children, placed the income poverty level of Whites at 4%, Blacks at 13%, and Hispanics at 16% meaning these groups would be unlikely to remain above the federal poverty level after three months of no income.

*Language Spoken in the Home*

According to the QuickFacts (2008) census data, foreign born persons accounted for 4.7% of the population and 7.2% of all the county's residents spoke a language in the home other than English within the county. No quantitative data could be obtained that listed the primary language spoken in the home. However, 13 of 19 students in the focus groups indicated their native language was the primary language used at home. Languages reported were Spanish, Korean, and Hmong. All mainstream teachers reported difficulty communicating with parents on the telephone or in conferences because of the parents' lack of English skills. For example, one teacher said, "their parents may not speak much [English], so there is a problem there trying to communicate or talk to their parents." Another teacher spoke about the difficulty of communicating with parents who speak limited English.

> I would have to say there's less incentive to try to contact parents. There's a certain apprehension on my part that I'm going to call, and I have done this,…

> and they don't speak any English and you can't even start a conversation with them. Sometimes there'll be a child in the house and they'll translate, which isn't necessarily a good situation either.

Another contributed.

> Sometimes it's difficult…usually the student has more luck with English proficiency than home… I've made phone calls home before…and if you say school, or [the name of the school] they immediately understand where you're coming from and they will give the phone to the student.

Yet another mainstream teacher said, "It's almost impossible to reach them. When you do reach them it's very hard to get them to talk to you."

Two central office ESL staff members expressed similar findings. The lead teacher contributed, "… a lot of these parents that came from Mexico are illiterate and feel really inadequate." The director indicated that parents have requested access to computer programs used in elementary schools to help them learn English.

*Academic Backgrounds*

Information about academic backgrounds and testing of students was collected by the lead teacher upon entry. She recorded the data in her databases, but the data were not to accessible other staff members or the researcher unless a special report was created by her. Specified information about schools attended, testing results, and student abilities was transferred to purple hard cards maintained in the student's cumulative folders. Site administrators and counselors reported creating their own databases about student backgrounds some of which included this type of information. Because the majority of

ELLs were reported to have come from poor Mexican provinces, the academic background of a portion of ELLs in the county likely is minimal.

*Academic Performance*

ESL researchers supported tracking various academic performance indicators both for individuals and groups. Individual data can assist counselors and teachers in making year-to-year decisions about schedules, possible postsecondary education opportunities, and possible careers. The analysis of indicators such as performance on state tests, enrollment in advance or college preparation classes, graduation rates, and tracking high school intentions after graduation can serve a broader purpose and be used to develop intervention plans by the district.

The results of state administered tests were available from the North Carolina State Report Card website and are displayed in Table 8. State reported percentages of proficiency by ethnicity and special populations on state administered End of Course tests were calculated by using factors such as prior performance on state tests, gender, and ethnicity. The district generally followed national and state trends with Hispanic and Asian performance. In 2007 and 2008, Hispanic students fell between White and Black students in the percentage meeting proficiency, while Asian students outperformed all other subgroups.

Generally, the district outperformed the state average. When the percent proficient was compared from 2006 through 2008 for all students between the state and the district, the differences between years within all groups combined was just over 8 percentage points difference each year. Asian Pacific Islanders, Blacks, and Native Americans showed the greatest growths ranging between 12 percentage points and no less than 6.8.

Growth for the Hispanic population appeared to be stagnant for 2007 and 2008 at 3.9 percentage points and LEP students showed the greatest difference in 2007 at 7.6 percentage points. The difference between the state and the district in 2008 was three percentage points. Of note is the gradual growth made by LEP students. Although still below 50% the district percentage of students with passing scores increased from 42.1% to 48.4% and was higher than the state average.

All groups saw a decline between 2006 and 2007 with the exception of LEP students who actually gained 4.2 percentage points. The growth continued by 2.1 points in 2008. However, with the growth between 2007 and 2008 by LEP students was the smallest of all groups except Multiracial and remained the lowest percent proficient of all groups in the district at 48.4%.

Table 8

*Performance by Student Subgroups on State Tests*

| District/state | All | White | Black | Hisp. | Native Amer. | Asian Pacific Islander | Multi racial | L.E.P. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District 2006 | 80.4 | 84.6 | 64.9 | 62.2 | 74.1 | 92.2 | 80.9 | 42.1 |
| State 2006 | 71.8 | 81.2 | 52.9 | 60.1 | 62.7 | 80.2 | 75.4 | 42.5 |
| District 2007 | 74.6 | 79.8 | 56.4 | 58.9 | 66.7 | 86.0 | 77.0 | 46.3 |
| State 2007 | 66.4 | 77.0 | 45.7 | 55.0 | 55.2 | 78.1 | 69.6 | 38.7 |
| District 2008 | 76.6 | 81.7 | 59.5 | 63.0 | 72.2 | 87.4 | 77.9 | 48.4 |
| State 2008 | 68.4 | 78.5 | 48.6 | 59.1 | 58.6 | 80.6 | 71.0 | 45.4 |

* by percent.

Data were available for cohort graduation rates for the district also were found on the North Carolina Report Card website. The district average was 72.9% and higher than that of the state (70.3%). White, Black, Multiracial, and Native American students were above the state average for their group while Asians, Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, LEP, and Students with Disabilities were below state averages for each group. The Asian cohort rate was 75.8% compared to 81% for the state. The Hispanic student cohort rate of graduation was 48.2% as compared to the state at 56.4% and LEP students had the lowest in the district at 41.4% against a state rate of 49.6%.

The director had some data indicating that there was a difference in graduation rates of those students who entered as newcomers into the program versus those who entered prior to high school.

> When we went back, I could not find one newcomer in the history of having the newcomer program who had ever graduated from high school when they entered in middle or high school. So my first attempt was, "how do I get them to stay in school," and "how do I get them to graduate." So this year, one [School C] will graduate 17 ESL kids. Another, [School B], will have fewer, but they have a very large group on track to graduate a year from now which is good… to have them in the pipeline to graduate next year is showing huge improvement.

As seen nationally, fewer ELLs than either Black or White students in the district moved directly to a 4-year college upon graduation. The North Carolina Statistical Profile for 2008 presented the 2007 high school graduate intentions for Whites, Black, American Native, and Other. Eighty-seven students of 1,424 graduates were included in the category of Other which likely holds a number of ELLs. Within the 87 students 27 (31%)

planned to enter a 4-year college while an almost equal percentage of White (46.9%) and Black (45.7%) students intended to move directly to a 4-year college or university.

Within this group of students, the majority appeared destined to attend community college or pursue a vocational career. Twenty-six students indicated they would attend a community college, and one student planned to attend a trade school. Four students planned to enter the military, and 18 planned to enter the workforce. Eleven stated no intentions.

Another indicator of student performance was the number of students enrolled in specific courses. Nationally, few ELLs were enrolled in college preparatory classes, Advance Placement (AP), honors classes, and foreign language classes. ELLs were more often registered in remedial and vocational courses. A similar pattern was found in an examination of the 199 schedules provided by the site data managers. Six students were enrolled in at least one AP course and 23 were enrolled in an honors level class. Fifty-six percent of students were enrolled in at least one vocational course which indicated that they generally followed a vocational pathway. Twenty students were enrolled in French, 32 in Spanish, and 20 in Spanish for Native Speakers. No evidence of tracking of this indicator was present other than perhaps in personal databases.

*Student Behaviors*

The primary negative behavior researchers suggested for districts to monitor was that of dropping out. Several other indicators were viewed as possible predictors of students dropping out and researchers recommended they be monitored. Those predictors included grade retention, absenteeism, suspensions, expulsions, commission of acts of violence, drug and alcohol use, and teen pregnancy.

Recent North Carolina high school dropout reports supported national trends. Although the dropout rate decreased slightly overall in 2004-05 in North Carolina, there were numerically more dropouts than ever before and the dropout rate for Native Americans, Hispanics, and Blacks, respectively, was higher than the overall average for the state (NCPS, 2006a). In 2005-2006 the state rate for Hispanics continued to rise with male dropouts increasing over twice that of females (NCPS, 2007a). Males continued to comprise the majority of dropouts in 2006-0707 at 59.7% and minorities continued to be over-represented with American Indian (6.99%), Hispanics (6.92%), and Blacks (5.95%) surpassing the state rate of 4.97% (NCPS, 2008b).

Across the state and within the district dropout rates declined slightly in 2008, according to the North Carolina Dropout Report for 2007-2008. Statewide the majority of dropouts was in the ninth grade and decreased with each succeeding grade level. Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans were over represented within ethnicities across the state. When all ethnicities were combined, males tended to drop out more than females. The researcher was unable to determine differences in gender within ethnicities from the available data.

The 2008 Dropout Report in North Carolina indicated that more ninth-grade students dropped out (32.6%) than at any other grade. Since immigrant and first generation Hispanic high school students may have suffered delays in educational progress, promoting ELLs to grade level with intensive support systems was recommended by Hess. However, students cannot advance above ninth grade until they earn credit for English I which has a required End of Course test and/or additional remediation requirements. This may be difficult for ELLs struggling to learn English.

Using the state report the researcher found a similar trend for the district as that of the state. Forty-six Hispanic and four Asian youths dropped out of the district, representing 14.66% of the total number of dropouts; however, when compared to the enrollment numbers, the largest group of drop outs was Hispanic at 7.65%. This was followed by Native Americans at 6.45%, Whites at 4.20%, Blacks at 4.09%, and Asians at 3.28%. As one DOPS contributed, "You know the ESL [group] is our highest percent of numbers. Not overall numbers, but if you compared them [percentages] to their population it's really high."

Within the district for 2008, ninth grade reflected a larger size than any other grade level in high school. Asian student distributions among grade levels were similar for 9th and 10th-grade years. However, data showed that 41.39% of all high school Hispanic students were enrolled in the ninth grade, 25.66% in the 10th grade, and 17.22% in the eleventh 11th grade, with 15.73% in the 12th grade. A similar profile was demonstrated in the group list provided from the testing office, showing 45.9% of the students enrolled in ninth grade, 23% in 10th and both 11th and 12th grades representing 15% each. Such a profile may predict a higher drop out potential for Hispanic students than Asian students. The data provided by one DOPS supported this profile, with 17% of Hispanic students identified as potential dropouts. She shared,

> This is my [potential] dropout data right now… so out of 58 total, 10 of them are Hispanic. And that's, when you think about our actual number of Hispanic students, that's a lot…they're ninth grade…all these are over 16…

Her observation paralleled the state's finding that students likely to be suspended were over-represented in ninth grade and usually older, indicating that they had likely been

retained at least one grade level in their school careers. An ESL teacher said, “Then there are the ones that are ninth graders and 19 years old. [They] can’t pass classes.”

A report to the district’s board was made on March 10, 2008 about dropouts. Two central office staff members reported on the results of the 2008 North Carolina Dropout Report and the initiatives that were currently in place as intervention strategies. None of those initiatives targeted Hispanic students although the staff members specifically reported that the Hispanic rate was higher than the state average and listed a number of needs for Hispanic students that might reduce dropouts. Examples of the needs included parent training, more sheltered instruction classes, more Spanish for Native Speakers classes, additional ESL fund for counselors, and college visits. The researcher was unable to determine if this report resulted in additional funding.

Counselors and DOPSs cited several reasons in addition to grade placement or retention for ELLs dropping out. Frequently mentioned reasons were students returning to their native country, involvement in gang activity, and teen pregnancy. An ESL teacher contributed that sometimes the culture promoted dropping out:

> They [ELLs] are regular teenagers….There have been and there always will be so many drop outs among Latino students. They have brothers, cousins, sister, friends that’s drop out. They say, “Hey, he dropped out and he’s doing fine. What’s the point going on?

The reason most often cited for dropping out in the 2008 North Carolina Dropout Report was lack of attendance which can be a result of the other predictors.

Within the district no expulsions were reported in 2008 for any ethnicity, according to the North Carolina Crime and Violence report. Hispanic students

represented 415 (11.4%) of the 3,640 short term suspensions. Of the 257 long-term suspensions reported, Hispanic students accounted for 24 (9.34%). Asian students represented less than 0.5 % in both categories. Since the state department data indicated numbers of suspensions and not the number of times a student was suspended, the researcher was unable to identify the actual number of students receiving more than one suspension or duplicated with a long-term suspension. Neither could she determine the relationship to the distribution of students on the whole. A DOPS had analyzed data for suspensions of students at her school which indicated suspensions at that particular high school for Hispanics may be greater than recorded. According to counselors and DOPSs gang activity was a contributor to dropouts. One counselor indicated that some parents are "in denial" about gang activity. She related

> I had a mom that came to defend her son and she said, "Well you know the 13 jacket - that was mine cause somebody gave it to me at work." And it was just kind of like a weird story that kept changing from her side …to his side. So you don't believe anybody.

Yet another counselor indicated students in gangs are likely to drop out. She said,

> "that's another thing that I, we fight, is the gang stuff because they're really strong in this area."

And ESL teacher shared, "Fighting can also be a cultural thing sometimes.

Drug use was another indicator of dropping out. The 2007 North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported data by regions of the state. That data indicated drug use was generally higher within Hispanic students than either White or Black with the region that the district is located. A closer examination indicated that with the exception of

smoking one or more cigarettes within the past 30 days, the percentage of use of cigarettes, alcohol, and “hard” drugs were greater than for either White or Black students. Table 9 presents specifics according to the survey using unweighted data.

Table 9

*Percentages of Students Using Specific Illegal Drugs by Ethnicity*

| Percentage of students who | Hispanic | | White | | Black | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* |
| Smoked a whole cigarette for the first time before 13 | 20.6 | 102 | 16.1 | 809 | 14.2 | 225 |
| Smoked on one or more cigarettes of the past 30 days | 18.8 | 101 | 25.2 | 802 | 12.1 | 224 |
| Smoked cigarettes on 20 or more of the past 30 days | 10.9 | 101 | 10.3 | 802 | 3.1 | 224 |
| Had their first drink of alcohol other than a few sips before age 13 years | 31.7 | 101 | 16.8 | 811 | 19.9 | 226 |
| Had at least one drink of alcohol on school property on one or more of the past 30 days | 8.9 | 101 | 4.5 | 805 | 3.6 | 222 |
| Used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase one or more times during their life. | 13.7 | 102 | 7.4 | 812 | 1.3 | 225 |
| Sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high one or more times during their life | 17.8 | 101 | 14.1 | 810 | 10.7 | 224 |
| Used heroin one or more times during their life. | 6.0 | 100 | 2.5 | 812 | 0.9 | 225 |
| Used methamphetamines one or more times during their life. | 7.8 | 102 | 4.2 | 812 | 1.3 | 225 |
| Used ecstasy one or more times during their life. | 10.9 | 101 | 7.3 | 812 | 1.3 | 224 |
| Took steroid pills or shots w/o a doctor's prescriptions one or more times during their life. | 6 | 100 | 3.8 | 809 | 1.3 | 225 |
| Used a needle to inject any illegal drug into their body one or more times during their life. | 7 | 100 | 2.6 | 810 | 0.9 | 225 |

The 2008 Community Assessment identified teen pregnancy as the seventh most pressing health problem in the county. The report indicated that teen pregnancy for Hispanics in the county were more than double that of all other minorities and triple that for Whites. The report also indicated that Hispanic teens often faced pressures from their families to drop out of school to take care of their children. A second DOPS affirmed these reasons saying,

> Well there's a couple of different categories. Young girls being pregnant and not coming back after pregnancy - have had several students that has happened to. In some of cultures that's acceptable.

Another DOPS related this story, which the specialist indicated was similar to situations of other Hispanic girls in the school.

> [She] had given birth to the child. Huge attendance problem after the birth of the child and stated that it was due to day care. Mom was working two jobs. You know there were lots of children in the family and mom was unable to provide her the support she really needed. And so I did end up taking her to DSS. We did get the funding for day care… and worked out transportation… but then she did end up dropping out.

A counselor told of working with the social worker to get a Hispanic female student on homebound instruction. This student had the potential to attend college, but her boy friend expected her to stay home and "take care of the baby."

Another counselor said, "I've never seen that many girls pregnant in ninth grade."

Positive indicators were more difficult to locate. One indicator recommended for examination was the amount of time students spent seeking out information about news

events. Another suggested tracking participation of the students in community events or school activities. The last dealt with the students' knowledge of and use of computers. Of these indicators only computer access was tracked by the school district.

Teachers and administrators indicated that ELLs in the district had little access to computers at home. One AP indicated,

> …it [having computers] would come closer to leveling the playing field as anything I know of, but they're [ELLs] so limited with…their resources. So I would provide them with a laptop and Internet access. I think that would help them. A lot of our texts are on disk and in Spanish… They just don't have anything to play it on at home."

Another AP who had a Spanish translation of his profile on the school Web site said, "the majority of people that are Spanish speaking, don't have computers, don't have access, so it's … just show." The ESL teacher for one school assisted me by interpreting information provided by the students in a focus group. She witnessed hands raised to the question of number of computers in the home. She said afterward, "The percentage of computers for this group was not representative and pointed out that two of the five who had computers in the home were siblings." A counselor said, "They're (ELLs) the kids that don't have computers."

When students in focus groups were asked about their access and use of computers, they mentioned a number of uses. Twenty of the students (76.9%) in the focus groups indicated they had a computer in the home, and 17 (65.3%) had Internet access. Several members in one focus group indicated that they used home computers for social purposes more than to complete school work as in "check MySpace" and e-mail friends.

One shared that he wanted "to be a computer engineer. I love computers." Another indicated that the access schools supplied to computers in the library and the help the teachers gave helped him "stay in touch."

According to the 2007 district survey of a sampling of 1,554 high school students, 94.4% of high school students reported having a computer with Internet access in their home (*M* 1.90, *SD* .29). When the data were examined by ethnicity, 91.9% of Asian students (*N* 36, *M* 1.94, *SD 0*.23) and 72.6% (*N* 106, *M* 1.76, *SD* 0.43) of Hispanic students reported having a computer and Internet access in their home. While Asian student access was greater than that of the general population and Hispanic student access was lower, access of all Hispanic and Asian students was greater than the researcher anticipated and staff members assumed.

Participation in extracurricular activities was another identified positive indicator. Teachers and administrators shared that ELLs seldom participated in after school functions. One DOPS commented,

> You see the whole, the whole not being promoted affects their grades, they're not going to participate in any kinds (of) sports and we probably have some very talented ones that just don't participate for that reason. Now we do [have] our multicultural club, [the sponsor] is getting them to doing some after school stuff, but there again it's after school within that little group. … it's not involving, it's more …just them meeting after school.

Several teachers referred to the lack of participation by students in clubs and sports that they sponsored.

> I feel like…they don't join in as many clubs. So, there's no data but … we don't have any in our club.
>
> I am the cross country coach, but I don't have any ELLs who run cross country.
>
> I coach JV Boys Basketball. I think in the 3 years I've coached, I've had 1 ELL kid on my [team]…
>
> Sometimes kids are engaged [in sports]. More boys than girls [participate] - mostly in soccer.

Teachers proposed several reasons for the lack of participation of the ELLs, including lack of transportation, lack of parents' understanding and encouragement, and lack of interest in the activities. Lack of transportation was sited frequently as a hindrance to participation in any type of activity outside school hours. As one teacher said, "[In sports] I work mostly with freshman and most of them can't work out transportation very well." Another teacher asserted, "And that's difficult because you know a lot of parents- they're working two jobs or they don't have transportation." A third teacher indicated, "Some of them have brothers or sisters or cousins who could pick them up, but most don't have anyone."

Regarding lack of parent understanding of extra curricula activities, a teacher told this story.

> We had a Hispanic girl make the team for cheerleading. But her mother kept her off because of concern about her health. The consent form indicates there is a risk of death and the mother would not sign. She also worried about costs and transportation.

Another teacher believed there was a correlation between the length of time a student had been in the country and participation in school activities.

> For some reason – they were either here earlier as younger kids, or they've come in from another state, and they're fluent because most of their lives they've been doing things in English in the regular school system. Those are the kids that generally are more apt to take those higher level classes and succeed, and join clubs, and do all the other things. It's hard for the ELLs, …there's this guy who's got this club-engineering technology-in the school and they do those little airplanes, with fuel cylinders. Those guys [ELLs] would love to do this, but they don't stay. So it's impossible to get them into those things because they're not available to do it.

Teachers also posed that ELLs did not appear interested in the clubs or activities offered within the school.

> Some of the Hispanics did have an interest in chess. They weren't in the club, but a lot of their teachers had them playing chess and some of them got excited about that for a while.
>
> I sponsor a quiz bowl and things like that, so it's not really the things they're going to show up to. I try to talk with them as much as I can, you know, try to get involved with what they're interested in, talk about their music and things like that, but uh they just seem so shy around me and it's hard to get involved with them.

One exception was found at School C, which had a large multicultural club. The foreign language teacher who sponsored it was credited for the success by an ESL teacher. As

described by her, the club was a “mix of students of all ethnicities.” The club sponsored multiple activities representing different countries each month.

Students in focus groups indicated they did not take part in most school clubs and activities although they did go to the Boys and Girls Club and play on soccer teams sponsored by the city or county leagues as well as participate in church activities. They agreed with teachers that they were not interested in most of the clubs available to students or sports options and one student indicated that he didn’t “ understand the GPA requirements.”

Students listed a number of topics they would find interesting, but the clubs or activities were not offered by schools. The list included “traveling, popular music (one student had his own band), dance - especially Latin American dances like the flamenco or salsa, a cheer club, and a Combat Club.” Students indicated they were not as skilled in the sports that most high schools offered, with the exception of soccer and football, and wished schools offered boxing, gymnastics, and lacrosse as sports.

While teachers suggested that the Hispanic students wanted to stay within their groups, students had a slightly different perspective, indicating either they felt unwelcome or simply did not understand what the activities were about or how to access them. One student told of going to a Spanish Club meeting at one high school. She said, “They have a Spanish Club, but basically it’s very … what I heard about that club is that there’s not much Spanish in that club -mostly White people in it.” Another student continued, “ I heard that this year they had a Spanish class for Spanish Speakers, but I’m not sure. I’m new this year.” A student at another high school said, “Spanish Club is not

for Hispanics. None go there." One young man contributed, "If Hispanics try out for sports and are good, they get picked on and made fun of."

Some students in focus groups indicated that work took precedent over extra curricula activities. Hours before and after school may be spent working to earn money for personal or family use. One Hispanic girl indicated that she had sold Avon products for almost 2 years and another cleaned houses. One male student related that he worked an average of 36 hours per week at Bojangles. A counselor also indicated that ELLs had high work ethics and that it was not unusual for students to earn money to supplement the family income. She told this story as an example.

> I have a student right now… father had eye surgery. He was a truck driver and the child, being that they are Hispanic, the next oldest son takes the responsibility of supporting the family. He's working 40 plus hours [a week].

This concludes the presentation of data about student characteristics. Next the researcher presents data describing the schools ELLs attend in the district.

## General Description of the Schools the ELLs Attend

The majority of ELLs in the nation attended schools that were stereotypical of urban inner city schools. These schools had inadequate facilities, lacked technology access, and often lacked even basic instructional resources. Schools of ELLs likely reported high incidents of discipline problems, suspensions and expulsions, and violence. Teachers of their schools tended to be new to the profession, inexperienced, unlicensed, or oppositely were very experienced but had received marginal evaluations. The student populations were highly diverse ethnically with the majority of students being minorities and/or frequently living in poverty. The following data proposes that the high schools

within this district were a mirror opposite of the expected environment of schools ELLs might attend.

Using data from the 2008 State Statistical Profile and the 2008 State Report Card, the researcher found differing concentrations of ethnicities within the high schools. This primarily was the result of three factors. Student assignment policies adopted by the Board reflected its desire to assign students to the school closest to their residences. Just as the research of Van Hook (2002) and Chang (2000) indicated, newcomers tended to seek out neighborhoods where relatives and friends were established; therefore, the ethnic structure of the school reflected the ethnicities of neighborhoods around the schools. Additionally, the ESL department decided to dissolve the off-site high school Welcome Center program at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year and redistribute the students and resources to the two high schools where the majority of ELLs would normally be assigned. According to the ESL lead teacher, this decision was made to provide more opportunities for ELLs.

> Seeing how we could better meet the needs of the students. We felt like here [Welcome Center] they were being provided the language that they needed, but they were missing out on a lot of the core courses that they [the high schools] have. Some of them [the students] because there are such gaps in their education [were] really staying here longer than we were hoping for. And so, we felt like they were missing out on other courses that they should really be working on.

Interestingly, in a discussion during one of the focus group sessions, students debated the merits of attending the Welcome Center off campus before entering the traditional high school. Some students felt they learned more English in the Welcome

Center setting and had a chance to gradually make friends. Other students, however, felt they had more opportunity to take high school courses and interact with other students. Their statements reflected the social aspects of their lives, as well as the academic.

The ethnic distributions of the district and schools for 2008 are indicated in Table 10. The Welcome Center students were placed at Schools B and C. School B had the most diverse student population. When Asian and Hispanic students, most likely ELLs, were combined, they totaled 13.9% of the school, followed by 29.5% Black students, and 56.3% White students. School C followed with Asian and Hispanic students comprising 11.9% percent, Black students 20%, and White students 68%. The director placed the total ELL population K-12 at “about 15%” across the district and when using the number of 714 identified ELLs taken from the lead teacher the high school population was just over13%. Unlike ELLs nationally, ELLs in the district attended schools that are predominantly White with the percentage of ELLs in high schools between 13% and 15%.

The district prided itself on its continuous renovation and new construction of facilities. Information about current and recent past building projects was maintained on the district Web site. Three of the high schools were built in the mid 1960s, one in the early 1990s, and the last two since the turn of the 21st century. All high schools built in the sixties had been renovated, retrofitted, and expanded to assure equal access to media centers, computers in the classrooms, computer labs, and science laboratories. All high schools had some degree of use of Smartboards in the classrooms with the newest high school having them built into each classroom. Older high schools had plans for providing Smartboards to teachers who wanted them over a 3- to 5-year time frame using site

technology and instructional money to purchase them. The researcher observed clean and well-maintained facilities including restrooms and classrooms.

Table 10

*Comparison of Ethnicity of Students by State, District and High Schools Only.*

| Schools | Native American | | Asian | | Hispanic | | Black | | White | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % | Num | % |
| District | 85 | 0.3 | 468 | 1.7 | 2,970 | 10.9 | 5,572 | 20.5 | 18,037 | 66.5 |
| High Schools | 31 | 0.4 | 122 | 1.6 | 601 | 7.7 | 1565 | 20.1 | 5,472 | 70.2 |
| School A | 6 | 0.5 | 16 | 1.3 | 105 | 8.3 | 276 | 21.8 | 862 | 68.1 |
| School B | 4 | 0.3 | 9 | 0.8 | 157 | 13.1 | 354 | 29.5 | 676 | 56.3 |
| School C | 3 | 0.2 | 30 | 1.9 | 160 | 10.0 | 320 | 20.0 | 1,089 | 68.0 |
| School D | 10 | 1.0 | 4 | 0.4 | 26 | 2.6 | 39 | 3.9 | 924 | 92.1 |
| School E | 5 | 0.3 | 32 | 1.8 | 115 | 6.5 | 404 | 23.0 | 1,203 | 68.4 |
| School F | 3 | 0.3 | 31 | 3.2 | 38 | 4.0 | 172 | 17.9 | 718 | 74.6 |

Student and staff responses on the district's 2007 annual survey supported the researcher's observations as to the conditions of school facilities and overall school safety. On that survey 403 high school teachers indicated that the school was clean and well maintained ($M$ = 3.81, $SD$ = 1.22) and they generally felt safe at school ($M$ = 4.10, $SD$ = .85). Likewise students responded that classrooms were generally clean and neat ($N$ = 1540, $M$ = 3.66, SD = .91) and that the school was well maintained ($N$ = 1533, $M$ = 3.52, $SD$ = 1.01).

Students' perceptions about safety were reported by areas on the campus. Overall students appeared to feel safe at school with means ranging from 3.62 to 3.98 for specific areas of the school. The lowest mean scores were for the statement I worry about weapons at school (*M* = 2.53, *SD* 1.18) and my personal belongings are safe at this school (*M* = 2.60, *SD* = 1.22) suggested that concerns were less about safety in the building and more about weapons being brought onto campus or having their possessions stolen (see Table 11).

Table 11

*Perspectives of Students Concerning Safety in the School*

| Perspectives | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| I worry about weapons at school. | 1510 | 2.53 | 1.18 |
| I feel safe in the restroom. | 1525 | 3.73 | 1.07 |
| I feel safe in the hallway. | 1535 | 3.83 | 0.96 |
| I feel safe in the locker rooms. | 1481 | 3.68 | 1.06 |
| I feel safe outdoors on campus. | 1539 | 3.95 | 0.92 |
| I feel safe in classrooms. | 1541 | 3.98 | 0.92 |
| I feel safe while riding the bus. | 1154 | 3.62 | 1.09 |
| I feel safe at the bus stop. | 1118 | 3.80 | 1.06 |
| My personal belongings are safe at this school. | 1506 | 2.60 | 1.22 |

With the exception of School B, media centers at the high schools offered few reading opportunities for ELLs in their native languages or at entry levels in English outside the classroom. The researcher examined the appropriate sections of all high school libraries and generally found fewer than 40 books on the shelves in foreign languages. In one school the predominant language on the shelf was French which the media specialist shared was purchased at the request of the French teacher several years

before. Media specialists at the high schools quickly identified the need to have more books and periodicals available to ELLs in the centers, but indicated lack of reading materials was due to insufficient media funding and lack of teacher requests.

School B, which was the most diverse school ethnically and had worked with ELLs since the mid 1990s, identified the need for high level interest and lower reading level books for all students, but especially for the ELL population in the school. The media specialist and ESL teacher jointly sought and received a "Read to Succeed" grant from the North Carolina School Library Media Association. The idea for the grant was sparked by the media specialist attending a conference at which Dr. Karen Gavigan spoke about the need for increasing reading of at-risk and male students. Using graphic novels was one recommendation from the lecture.

Money from the grant was used to purchase several hundred "graphic novels" on topics and genres ranging from mythology to Shakespeare to current adolescent literature. Some of the books were purchased to align to titles students might read in mainstream classes. The media specialist and ESL teacher developed reading guides that employed higher order thinking skills and incorporated journaling and computer skills into the use of the books. The ESL teacher retained around 50 of the books in her classroom, but the remainder was housed in a special section of the media center for checkout by any student. In addition the media specialist estimated about of a third of new books purchased in 2007-2008 were lower-level reading but high-interest books to provide scaffolding for students and encourage reading. The library also maintained magazines and periodicals in Spanish.

The media specialist had presented a session at the state conference earlier in the year and other media specialists in the district indicated they were aware of the project. However, they said that it had not been designated as a "priority at their schools" or "English teachers would not buy in." An ESL teacher at one school indicated that she would like to have graphic novels available to ELLs, but she was new to the school and wasn't sure about the process to request the media specialist purchase them.

As the data indicated, ELLs in this district attended clean, modern, and generally safe schools. Technology was accessible to all students both in labs and the classrooms. One high school had purposefully invested in reading materials for the media center that encouraged non English speakers to read utilizing graphic novels and low reading level but high interest books. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the secondary questions asked in each category of the framework of strategies.

## Category 1: Data Collection and Use

The remaining question under the data collection and use category asked how the district utilized the information it collected. The staff at the ESL Welcome Center collected all of the basic data and much of the recommended expanded data as part of the intake and testing processes. The information was stored in two Microsoft Access databases that had been created and maintained by the ESL lead teacher for over 10 years. The director reported hiring an outside vendor in 2005 to merge the databases and create a single file accessible to all ESL staff. That effort failed partly because the databases were not originally set up to merge. As the lead teacher indicated "My database is still my database….created by me who is not a computer expert…." The accountability director referenced the databases maintained by the lead teacher by saying,

> She does an excellent job in keeping up with those kids, but… that information to the schools or to the system …would be very helpful. If she lost her Access file or database, it would be gone.

In these databases she had a wealth of information tracking variables such as educational levels of the parents and the language spoken in the home. She could trace the academic background of the student by country of origin, dates of entry and exit of the United States and names of all schools attended within and outside of the country. IPT and standardized testing and accommodation information was regularly checked and authenticated.

The lack of an electronic centralized information system seemed to have led a number of site staff members to build and maintain personal databases or notebooks based on their own interest or to address questions they had about the ELLs. Little of the information in personal files appeared to be shared within schools or on a district level. The researcher was unable to find evidence that data about ESLs was uniformly disaggregated and disseminated to the schools at large although ESL teachers and ESL department members appeared informed and knowledgeable about their students.

Two forms of hardcopy reports were produced routinely from these data bases. The lead teacher created monthly reports for ESL teachers and administrative liaisons updating the status of all active and fluent students. These reports indicated the level of service the students were to receive, date of entry to the United States, levels of achievement on the IPT, modifications, and additional services the student had qualified to receive. Paper reports were also prepared listing fluent students and their most current status, eligibility for testing modifications, and monitoring levels. The process for sharing

this information with others was the responsibility of the ESL teachers and ESL school administrators and varied from site to site. The ESL teachers and site staff were expected to cross check these reports for accuracy regarding student location and make corrections that were communicated back to her so that changes could be made to match her databases and those of NCWISE. She also indicated that she and a testing staff member worked closely together to assure accuracy in head counts to state and federal agencies.

The second report was a “card-stock purple report” developed by the director’s office, updated annually, and placed in the cumulative file of each ELL. According to the lead teacher, this report contained information such as, “the entire history of the student in US schools, their native language, IPT scores, and accommodations.” This report was intended for site staff to use for student placement and scheduling as well as by teachers in making instructional decisions.

While all ESL teachers reported using these cards along with other information in ESL folders to assist school level administration in the placement of students, to develop personal education plans, and to plan instruction, none of the mainstream teachers interviewed reported using the purple card information or consulting cumulative files to learn about the academic backgrounds of their ELLs. One teacher said, “Probably somewhere along the line someone has told me [about] that.” Another indicated the records were, “I’m sure up in the office, the cumulative folders…I just haven’t done that.” All teachers indicated they received information about active ELLs and testing modifications, but were more likely to talk with the ESL teacher for ideas about instruction or to gain assistance with modifications. Two teachers referred to the timeliness of receiving data and one of them related this story.

> To be honest some of the ELL data did not come in to me right away…like you can't guess by looking at somebody's grades or ethnicity whether they're ESL or not… I've had situations where I really didn't know what the student's level was or if they're even identified ESL…I had a student which I guess the old school lost his paperwork….so I kind of guessed some of those things [referring to modifications]…But at the end we had 3 weeks left at the end of the semester and they give me a sheet of paper saying this is what this child needs.

Another related information about an ELL who received no services because he was on consultation and overlooked.

All mainstream teachers indicated they were more likely to use data if it were embedded with NCWISE or accessible by other technology. Mainstream teachers also indicated they relied on ESL teachers to notify them of changes in the ELLs' status, differing modifications, or special needs. All teachers indicated they primarily depended upon there their own observations and formative assessments, information from the ESL teachers, and district benchmark tests to determine student abilities and needs.

The most common use of data from transcripts, cumulative folders, and testing seemed to be for placement of students and scheduling. Agreement was unanimous across all schools and positions that scheduling of students was a collaborative effort beginning with the district's program coordinator, lead teacher, and ESL teachers. These recommendations were then taken to the site where ESL teachers, counselors, and assistant principals developed schedules for students and teachers. As one counselor said, "it's a collaborative effort...no one person is an island here...we developed a pretty good relationship on what I call the ESL crowd...it's a team effort."

Meetings with parents and students often led by the ESL teacher occurred each year for the purpose of explaining schedules and course selections, but the amount of involvement of counselors and assistant principals in the meetings varied from site to site. One assistant principal shared this statement which was representative of the value all administrators placed on the part ESL teachers played in helping schedule students,

> In the meetings that we have with parents at the end of the year, we discuss what they'll be taking. The ESL teacher guides them along because …[she] can act as their advocate. Along with the guidance department,…she does a real good job helping them navigate the system and helping parents understand.

ESL teachers indicated that generally they were included in conferences about career planning with students at the site and that they, the counselor, and the student decided on course registration and pathways. While that likely occurs for most students, some students in one focus group felt they were not being allowed to pursue courses of study they wanted. One student shared, "I told the registrar I planned to go to college, but I'm not taking college courses." Other students in the group agreed and also indicated they would like more access to Spanish classes. Only two of the students in this particular focus group were in a college-bound program. Perhaps students were not yet ready or prepared to take college classes, but the students did not understand why they were not registered in college preparation courses.

Building a master schedule was a responsibility of assistant principals, and all indicated they followed a similar process. All assistant principals indicated that students completed registration forms and then those forms were scanned into the computer which allowed the computer to build the schedule. At this point the computer built the master

schedule. Since the ESL teachers were not initially built into the schedule their classes were placed for best fit and then ELL schedules were pulled out and changes were made if there were not good fits with teachers. One assistant principal expressed concern about specially placing the ELLs, “Parents, parents would not want to hear me say that… they think everybody’s going to be treated exactly the same.”

Another use of data at the district level focused on program services and program support. The program coordinator stated that student data determined the “continuum of services” and “helps high schools…hand schedule based on what they [ELLs] can and cannot handle at that point in their language.” The specific process described by the program coordinator indicated great care was used to try to meet student needs within the human resources available to the department.

> We start with the IPT scores and annual reviews that their content teachers have filled out. Then we sit down with the ESL teacher and the ESL teacher’s recommendations. The first decision we make is - Is this one who needs ESL service or do they need consultation? Once we make that decision we decide in addition to served or consultation is there another class where they need help… what class would they need as sheltered – math, social studies, science or English?

The program coordinator, lead teacher, and site ESL teachers used this information to plan for the district program and allocation of resources. By continuum of services the coordinator explained student needs determined teacher placement and the number and types of ESL classes offered at each site. Since all teachers were paid from the federal and state monies allocated for ELLs, the team had to balance student needs

against realistic human resources. The process was demonstrated by the program coordinator's comments:

> Then we look at numbers. How many students need English 1, 2, 3, and 4, civics, biology…? And then we start plugging in teacher names to those classes and decide whether it's a sheltered class or an inclusion class. We match the ESL teachers to those classes and then we try to choose the content teacher to match…

In addition to regular ESL classes, she further explained that looking at the distribution of data "helped us see numbers and then determine whether we can offer sheltered or inclusion classes in the content areas and help us look at what areas [of the curriculum] we are doing well." The program coordinator specifically identified using IPT and EOC data "to see how the sheltered classes are working as opposed to the kids who are in regular English with a non-ESL certified teacher." Additionally she indicated looking at student data assisted the department in determining additional needs of content support. For example, "They're (the students) passing the reading, English, and science, but math is an area where we're really struggling with the ESL students."

## Category 2: Curriculum and Programs

Category 2 focused on the identification and implementation of the programs and curriculum offered by the district. The researcher sought to determine the degree of alignment of these program offerings to recommendations from national and state agencies as well as independent researchers. She also wanted to understand why the programs were chosen and how they were delivered and monitored.

Through an examination of student and teacher schedules and interviews with site and district staff, the interviewer ascertained that the district offered four of the six

recommended programs to varying degrees. Those programs included a Welcome Center, traditional ESL classes, sheltered instruction, and Spanish for Native Speakers. As the director explained, these programs were chosen following state recommendations and trying "to create a continuum of services and look at kids as individuals." She continued by saying,

> Newcomers need … a double block of ESL and beginning in the fall (2008) one of those periods will have Success Maker for newcomers, and they will still have their ESL instruction. Once they reach intermediate level, I want them to have one period of ESL and then be taking other classes. They start taking two periods of the ESL and then two classes so they go ahead and get credits. Then we move to one period ESL and in the two high schools with the ESL teacher…I have teachers purposely placed there who are dual certified, and they're doing the sheltered English just for ESL kids so they will get that. And that helps them get through the English I through IV which is a problematic place. After we get to the point that they may not any longer need that one period of ESL, I want them out of that one period of ESL and into sheltered classes where we may have a teacher in there for inclusion, or a teacher assistant in there a couple of days a week checking on them.

A site counselor offered a similar explanation:

> Placement in the program is primarily dependent upon the score of IPT. A newcomer…would spend a minimum of two periods per semester with a licensed ESL teacher. Gradually move the student out - beginner, intermediate, advance with the same ESL teacher. Support varies on teacher observations and

assessment and the student is gradually introduced via electives to general mainstream through sheltered to inclusion to consultation to exit.

The program coordinator described the services for high school ESL students as "fluid because you have a continuum of services."

Examinations of schedules and interviews with ESL teachers confirmed that the entry level of the program was the Welcome Center program, which placed entering students scoring at the novice level on the IPT with the designated ESL teacher for two periods a day. ESL teachers explained that newcomer students attended two other classes, which were purposefully selected to gain credits for students toward a diploma. Typical courses for these students offered opportunities for conversation and were generally found in the arts, vocational, and physical education areas.

From the Welcome Center Program students moved to a traditional ESL program at their home school with one period of ESL instruction. Students also were registered in three additional courses, again leading to credits toward graduation. Sheltered instruction and inclusion classes were available to ESL students at three of the six high schools. This appeared to accomplish the goal stated by the lead teacher of "providing core classes or electives…and inclusion classes for them [ELLs]." Additionally, all ESL teachers and the program coordinator were working to develop pacing guides and benchmark tests to develop more consistency and standardization so that students moving from school to school would not have gaps in their ESL services. An additional benefit identified by the director was that teachers had information for re-teaching and had begun to request specific professional development for instructional methods.

Although all high school staff employed in the 2006-2007 school year had received training in sheltered instruction, and the director would have liked to have had these programs available to all high school ELLs, she shared that the district "may have been impatient in the inclusion and sheltered implementation. Teachers weren't ready." Sheltered classes required dual licensing for teachers. In the case of the high schools offering sheltered instruction, both ESL teachers held dual certification in English and they spent one period a day teaching a regular English 1 course to ESL students. The director reported that she "purposely placed dual certified ESL teachers at newcomer sites" so students could be offered all levels of English for credit by trained teachers.

The fourth program, Spanish for Native Speakers, was offered at only one high school during the data collection period, although the director indicated that three high schools would offer it during the year. The director indicated that this teacher "is right on board." The school was only able to offer that class for one period of one semester. A counselor explained that a

> …pro for the class is that you help the kid develop more depth in their own language so they can better learn English…. the other side of the coin is and our Spanish teachers who've taught this course will tell you, you run the Spanish for Native Speaker course and you're going to get every level you can imagine and it drives them [the teachers] nuts.

Principals and counselors spoke of "trade-offs" when offering the Spanish for Native Speakers class because "that takes a slot for college bound." According to principals, high schools did not receive additional allotments for foreign language teachers to teach Spanish for Native Speakers. Those allotments were determined outside

the office of federal programs, so principals had to make decisions about possibly denying Spanish course access to regular students in order to offer at least one special Spanish class for ELLs. All principals indicated they supported the program and would like to offer the class regularly, if additional foreign language teachers were allocated. One assistant principal shared, "….what I've been told is that it looks like we'll have an ESL teacher full time next …if that falls through, then we probably wouldn't be able to offer it."

In addition to the four recommended programs, the district offered inclusion classes. Inclusion classes required additional teachers or teacher assistants because team teaching is involved. The researcher observed six inclusion classes at three high schools and witnessed a full spectrum of implementation. In three of the classrooms (biology, civics and economics, and world history), the content area teacher had students arranged in heterogeneous groups, had planned activities which encouraged conversation among the students, and had students producing specific products such as posters, group budgets, or assignments. The teachers or a teacher assistant worked together and helped all students.

In a math inclusion class, just the opposite occurred. Desks were arranged in rows with a center isle open and students facing one another. All ELLs were sitting in one quadrant with the ESL teacher who did not participate in the instruction of the class. She served more as a tutor or assistant translating what the teacher said to the ELLs and assisting them in completing the assignments. The math teacher was observed giving handouts for the group to the ESL teacher, but no other interaction was observed by the researcher. The math teacher never spoke directly to the ELLs or the teacher.

The content teacher in an English I class who was new to the district and had not received SIOP training, said she taught an inclusion class. This class appeared to be a hybrid between sheltered and inclusion. As she described it: "… we [she and the ESL teacher] never had time to get together and talk about what is this model we have here? …I'm all the time encouraging co-teaching." She indicated that the ESL teacher only worked on vocabulary for about 20 minutes and then left. She worked on the English I curriculum for the remainder of the time and as she put it, "felt horribly inadequate." The class had 27 students enrolled, 5 of whom were specified as exceptional children, and the remainder was ELLs.

When asked about her vision for an inclusion class, the director described the following:

> …in my mind, inclusion…should never be more than third of the kids who are ELLs in the room… preferably a quarter. Good inclusion in my view is team teaching where both teachers are writing lessons together. Both teachers are teaching and the kids do not have a clue which teacher is for which kids. It's not an ESL teacher in there to pull those kids and have a separate small group. You might as well be having a separate class period. And it's not the ESL teacher who goes from desk to desk just to help the ELL kids because that demeans the knowledge and experience of the ESL teacher. It has to be team teaching…This is a system problem it's not an ESL problem…What is our definition of inclusion as a system?"

Site administrators and ESL district office staff all agreed that the challenges to having a successful inclusion class was finding the "right" teachers and providing enough

support for ESL teachers. One ESL teacher said, “We’re not necessarily prepared to just jump in there and do it all. All agreed that inclusion teachers had to “want” to teach an inclusion class and needed to be “passionate, caring, well trained, and hand selected.” The researcher noted that administrators tended to identify humanistic characteristics of inclusion teachers and not the types of instructional strategies used by the teachers. One site administrator indicated that she depended upon ESL teachers to help find those teachers who interacted well with students and seemed to have compatible teaching styles to possibly become inclusion teachers. None of the mainstream teachers interviewed who were assigned to inclusion classes had received focused or uniform training on team teaching, lesson planning, or appropriate instructional strategies beyond the initial SIOP training or their own experiences in college.

Site administrators appeared to confuse the terminology of sheltered, inclusion, and immersion programs. As one principal said, “…would like to use the inclusion model more… The ELL learner is immersed in the language when in an inclusion class.” The principal continued, “I keep coming back to is the inclusion model. I would love to see more EC/ESL assistants or ESL teachers... cause I think that the best thing is to get them [the students] fully immersed in those courses…”

An assistant principal at another high school said,

> We are exploring creating a sheltered instruction or an ESL immersion class next year…the [ESL program coordinator’s name] talked to us about possibly doing a…Spanish for Native Learners…instead of an immersion class…And basically what I mean by the immersion program is that they be able to go into the regular classrooms with the ESL teachers and that they be mainstreamed more with the

> regular students say a 15/15 mix or however you want to characterize it…a lot of people do feel that whole immersion seems to work a lot better.. and was more prevalent…back in the 70s and 80s… I've read a lot of stuff from people who were immigrants who went into the school systems and there were no ESL programs …, they claim that under full immersion…that within a month they were speaking the language.

ELLs had the same access to higher level classes as regular students, although as an ESL teacher said, "even in inclusion...the modifications are there in a sense, but because of what the course encompasses…the vocabulary needs are so huge and kids are not used to studying at that level..." Another indicated, "Kids I [teach], they are trying to master another language, I don't think they're feeling the need to be in those higher classes right now because they feel like they're challenged." Yet another contributed, "There are a few…they're fluent, these are the kids more apt to take those higher level classes and succeed."

The program coordinator related a discussion she had with an ESL teacher:

> At a high school one student scored superior in three areas, except for writing…I questioned why she didn't put the student on consultation, and she said, "well she could…but she [the student] spent 3 to 4 hours a night working. That's how she scored superior. She does well because she studies every night."

Counselors shared similar observations to the teachers. A counselor related a story about a white collar professional father appearing at her office and requesting that his daughter's schedule be changed. She was college bound and registered in multiple advanced courses. The father said she came home every day and studied until late at

night, translating all the content. He was concerned because she had no social life. Teachers had no idea that she worked so hard and needed to translate the material. Another counselor referred to a "handful of ELLs in AP classes, but many don't make it because the language is "very challenging." Another spoke of an ELL who had a 4.2 GPA and planned to attend Davidson. That counselor attributed her success to having been in U.S. schools for 8 years "versus when they come the second year of high school."

Other than the programs supported by the ESL department, no special support systems for ELLs attempting higher level courses were in place within the schools. Although tutoring, and remedial programs were open to students, many were offered after school and transportation arose again as an issue. Additionally, none of the support systems were designed specifically for ELLs nor are they bilingual. As a counselor said, "They get just what anybody else would get." Principals pointed out that they would like to offer additional support, but they "don't receive extra resources for this to make it work." ESL teachers attempted to provide ELLs with assistance in the ESL classroom with content.

When students in focus groups were asked to identify support systems in the schools, all groups mentioned their ESL teachers as well as access to libraries and computers. Computer access appeared to be especially appreciated by those students who did not have access at home. Some students knew that they had access to text books in their native language, while others did not. A spirited discussion erupted at one focus group session about this topic. Some students felt that they should read in English because they were expected to learn English and take tests in English. Another contributed, "…you could get a book in English and Spanish, so that if you didn't

understand something in English, you could read the other."

In response to a question about what types of instructional supports they might like to have, students gave helpful answers. Several students wished they had books in audio and a standardized reading program similar to one she had used in a different district that "helped her improve her reading." One student indicated he would "like credit for courses taken in his native country to count if they were the same."

The researcher found the last comment made by a student about credits interesting because this subject arose during interviews with administrators and counselors and an interpreter at two school sites. During the interviewee with the accountability director she asked for his perspective in awarding credits to students since ultimately his department was responsible for assuring accuracy of credits earned. He began as below:

> Like any student who comes to us, if we are able to look at a transcript and have a transcript interpreted, then we try to award credit that they have earned in the previous school…We're having to make those decisions now with exit standards…You [the student] have to have algebra I, … biology, … English, U.S. history and civics. If they come in from the other states and they've had a civics course, you're not going to make them take civics again… we're going to give them the code that says that we've accepted this as credit. Now if we're doing it for our [U.S.] students and we're matching up their transcripts, then we ought to do the same in the same fashion for students coming in different countries

He continued to describe the process used in most high schools to award credit earned outside the district.

> The interpretation and the awarding… by law is the principal and/or his designee [usually a counselor]… that awards credit… [It was] my impression … that the Welcome Center would take … the ESL student in, and they would look at the birth certificates, and make sure that the legal name was right, and do testing…In terms of awarding credit, I never knew that was their responsibility… I would have a great deal of reservation about somebody outside of my school determining the credit that the child should get for my school.…if I'm the person that is supposed to by law be looking at that…I signed off on all of this…I just think if as a principal, my neck is out and my school is going to reap benefits or receive the negativity that goes with not graduating. I need to be the person who makes that call.

All schools indicated that the majority of the time they agreed with the Welcome Center recommendations and welcomed their interpretation of the transcripts, which often were in native languages; however, they were not sure what process to use if administrators or teachers felt the recommendation needed to be changed or that the principal had the ultimate decision-making authority.

Little evidence was found that the district had implemented specific programs that embedded cultural connections or influences into the curriculum. The district surveyed teachers and administrators in the fall of 2007 using the *Equity in Special Education Placement: A School Self-Assessment* (2005) a tool recommended by the state ESL department. This survey was specifically designed to gather perception data from school staff regarding expectations, curriculum, and instructional practices in working with exceptional children and ELLs (see Table 12).

Program monitoring appeared to be a joint effort between district and site personnel. Members of the district office visited the school sites routinely, received feedback from ESL teachers, and appeared to have a realistic understanding of what was occurring in the schools. The program coordinator referred to specific schools and teachers, training and support she had provided, and was knowledgeable as to the level of implementation occurring in the program. Likewise the director was aware of the status of implementation of all programs at the sites. District leaders also depended upon the site administrators and ESL teachers to assist in monitoring the programs. At two sites, administrators used special checklist they had developed to look for specific practices in the classrooms such as posting language objectives. Other administrators indicated they routinely conducted classroom observations.

### Category 3: Instructional Practice

The focus of this category was to learn how teachers planned for the instruction of ELLs and to determine the extent they used differentiation and research based instructional strategies in the classroom. In order to examine the instructional practices of ESL and mainstream teachers, the researcher observed seventeen class periods and interviewed seventeen teachers within their own classrooms, allowing her to observe the learning environment of the students. Teachers had the option of participation in either an interview or observation or both the interview and observation.

Table 12

*Responses to Curriculum Questions by Staff*

| Responses | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| The curriculum reflects integration of ethnic and cultural content throughout programming, rather than assigning the study of diverse cultural groups to a single unit or 1 month. | 469 | 2.91 | 0.919 |
| The curriculum provides opportunities for students to investigate and understand how cultural assumptions and biases influence subject areas. | 475 | 2.84 | 0.95 |
| The curriculum fosters, respect and understanding for diverse cultures by providing materials that help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, cultural, language and ability groups. | 477 | 3.00 | 0.94 |
| The curriculum supports and values the experiences and information students have learned within their cultural groups. | 471 | 3.03 | 0.90 |
| The curriculum helps students make connections between what they are learning in schools and their personal environment. | 481 | 3.11 | 0.87 |
| The curriculum situates specific cultural and local knowledge in a global manner. | 464 | 3.00 | 0.91 |
| The curriculum is made interesting and challenging for all students (not focused on “rote” learning activities). | 481 | 3.07 | 0.87 |
| The curriculum explicitly teaches cultural capital (the norms, behaviors, and attitudes) that provides access to achievement. | 467 | 2.95 | 0.93 |
| The curriculum uses the local language, and cultural knowledge (funds of knowledge) as a foundation for rest of curriculum. | 462 | 2.94 | 0.93 |

All teachers were licensed within their respective content areas and had varying years of experience in the teaching field. The experience of ESL teachers ranged from 4 years to over 30 years. All ESL teachers were bilingual and seven of the eight spoke

Spanish. Six of the eight ESL teachers were interviewed and observed. Two were interviewed only. Likewise all mainstream teachers were licensed in their content areas; however, two held initial licensing since they had less than three years experience. The experience levels of the mainstream teachers ranged from two years to over twenty years averaging just over eight years of experience with the median at six years. None indicated they were fluent in a language other than English.

ESL teachers appeared to exemplify the recommended strategies for the instruction of ELLs. Six of the ESL teachers had permanent classrooms, and the walls of their classrooms were literally covered with posters, visuals, diagrams, models, realia, and student work. Desks were not maintained in fixed positions, but they instead were moved as needed to allow pairing of students, collaborative small group work, and seminar instruction which appeared to encourage conversation and communication between the students.

ESL teachers were found generally to be knowledgeable about the ELLs' academic backgrounds and planned for differentiated instruction by using multiple data sources excluding EOC data. All reported using the information from the "purple cards", the monthly reports from the central office, reported grades from other teachers, as well as their own formative assessment information to assist in both homogeneous and mixed grouping. As an example of what was reported by all ESL teachers, one ESL teacher said,

> Definitely grades are a factor and I look at those frequently to make sure we're reaching at least 80% of the kids….I do re-teaching immediately…if I can find transcripts I look at those…I also look at socio factors…[ELLs] plans for the future…I interview the kids.

All ESL teachers indicated that they used information about “IPT scores and modifications” and that they referred to cumulative folders when planning for students. In addition to supporting students in learning English and understanding content courses, ESL teachers also helped students learn study techniques, note taking skills, and the use of technology.

The instructional methods used by the ESL teachers and observed by the researcher aligned to those recommended for ELLs. Seven of the eight ESL teachers referred to the process that was occurring to develop pacing guides as helpful to them and students. They also referred to their use of IPT data in driving their instructional decisions for the class as a whole. All ESL classes were taught in English, but the researcher observed students helping each other in native languages, as well as English. The researcher observed a mixture of direct instruction, instruction utilizing technology including the use of computers, Smartboards, and Centios, and student centered instruction, which often involved some type of writing, working with manipulatives, or the creation of projects.

As observed by the researcher, the classrooms of the mainstream teachers spanned a spectrum of bare and minimalistic to almost cluttered with examples of student work and visuals. Five classrooms were set up for group work with four desks grouped together and the teachers indicated this was the normal setup for the room. Four teachers indicated they used flexible seating which changed according to the activities planned for the day. These teachers also indicated they were likely to plan for students to work in pairs or small groups at least once a week. The remaining six teachers had the classroom arranged in the more traditional rows.

The planning process used by mainstream teachers tended to begin on content. When asked what process teachers used for constructing lesson plans and differentiation, all classroom teachers reported consulting the state course of study and county pacing guides, developing individual lessons to fulfill those requirements either by content goals or units, and then conducting whole class instruction. Several teachers indicated they used the Madeline Hunter six-point lesson plan format and basically followed the same processes almost every day "for consistency." One indicated that lesson planning was not her "strong suit," and another said, "I don't put a lot of specialized planning into lessons." Only one teacher indicated she might "vary teaching…based on student needs" during the lesson planning process. None of the teachers referred specifically to planning for ESL objectives, nor were any of those objectives posted in the rooms on the day they were interviewed.

Of the 15 mainstream teachers involved in the research, 14 had received the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training the previous year. One teacher, who was new to the school and working with an inclusion class, reported no training in teaching ELLs. When asked about receiving training for differentiation, representative teacher comments were "just in student teaching," "…just in SIOP," "…various in-service session," "…I'm sure I got some training in college," "…methods classes in college," and "I just use a trial and error approach."

When asked about the effectiveness of the SIOP training, the responses from mainstream teachers were mixed. One teacher specifically stated, "I don't really think I grasped anything that was beneficial for me out of it. I thought it was mostly just stuff we'd already kind of been incorporating." However, an opposite viewpoint was that

"SIOP was really good for me in the respect that it did teach me to be cognizant of the works I say and how I say things."

The instructional practices reported by teachers in the regular classrooms were mixed. Most teachers who did use group work indicated it was occasional to weekly and usually random grouping. Those who did purposefully plan groups either considered content skill abilities of students or their language abilities to determine heterogeneous groups. One teacher commented, "Number one concern when you put them in groups. …a lot of students try to take advantage of being in groups and kind of tag along." Teachers indicated they tried to keep students engaged by asking questions, getting them out of their seats, sending them to the board, or asking students to explain what they were doing.

Teachers were receptive to and actually identified the need for additional training for instructing ELLs. While the teachers interviewed were generally receptive of the SIOP training, they repeatedly asked for model lessons and one-on-one assistance in planning lessons. Some suggested that having a coach or teacher in the room with them to model or team teach using appropriate strategies would be more effective than receiving instruction in theory.

In the annual school survey of staff, a section was devoted to asking teachers about their access to training on instructional strategies. Table 13 reports the mean and standard deviation for their responses in 2008. The highest mean score ($M$ = 4.11, $SD$ 0.87) was to the statement that teachers had received training in ESL strategies. This survey was administered at the conclusion of the year of training of all high school staff in SIOP, and responses could range from 1-5. The lowest mean score ($M$ = 2.82, $SD$ =

1.18) referred to thinking maps which are one form of graphic organizers and visual aid considered to be useful in assisting ELLs to grasp higher order thinking.

One ESL teacher shared that teachers had not received training in the use of data to drive instructional decision making. She indicated, "I have provided handouts that tell the IPT scores, what they mean…given teachers folders with modification…strategies for working with ELLs." Principals, assistant principals, and teachers indicated a need for training on poverty and cultural issues as well as additional training on instructional strategies.

Table 13

*Teacher Responses to Professional Development Training at the School Site*

| Responses | *N* | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| I received staff development this year on reading strategies. | 336 | 3.72 | 1.0 |
| I received professional development this year on differentiated instruction. | 357 | 3.86 | 0.96 |
| I received professional development this year on thinking maps. | 312 | 2.82 | 1.18 |
| I received professional development this year on writing strategies. | 337 | 3.34 | 1.15 |
| Teachers collaborate to share successful instructional strategies. | 379 | 3.84 | 0.90 |
| Subject or grade level teachers plan together. | 369 | 3.44 | 1.11 |
| I received professional development in ESL strategies. | 363 | 4.11 | 0.87 |

The director and program coordinator had modified the SIOP training for elementary teachers, but were unable to sustain secondary training at the same time. Additionally the director indicated that the state ESL curriculum was shifting to TESOL

standards which would result in all teachers incorporating ESL strategies into the content area, so additional professional development will be needed.

## Category 4: Leadership

> And I have to say in my short time with ESL, we've got some good people, some good support, from [indicating the program coordinator and lead teacher]…and just having [the federal director] here too,…she makes things happen when we have any kind or complaint or concern…now we have continuity.

Comments such as the one above were common from site administrators as well as ESL teachers when referring to the leadership provided from the district office for the ESL program. Likewise, administrators and classroom teachers made similar comments about ESL teachers. This section explores the process for distributing fiscal and human resources of the ESL program, the hiring process of ESL teachers, and the school learning environment as measured by expectations and interactions.

### *Fiscal Resources*

ESL programs were funded predominantly by federal and state money. After a discussion with the Chief Finance Officer and director and reviewing copies of budget documents for federal ESL allocations, the researcher determined that all state grant money was dedicated to salaries and benefits for ESL teachers. Federal money or Language Acquisition Funds were not funds guaranteed from year to year, but instead monies were based on headcounts. Those funds were used for various support positions including two dedicated counselors, a clerical position at the elementary Welcome Center, supplemental pay for summer employment of teachers as needed, and supplies. Included in this was $150 given to each ESL teacher for supplies and materials.

The budgeting process for the district's local money was one that built a 5-year on-going plan from requests submitted from schools and central office staff. These needs were prioritized through some type of voting or consensus building process that occurred at schools as well as within departments. As the Chief Finance Officer indicated, no schools placed ESL positions or resources on the list, as was confirmed by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. A review of the draft requests generated in the spring of 2008 supported the statements of the CFO.

When compared to another mandated federal program, the Exceptional Children's (EC) program, the total ESL budget was roughly one-third the amount; yet across the district the number of EC students was only 2% to 3% percent more than that of ELLs. While the EC department had over 25 full and part time support staff members and four full time data managers, the ESL centralized staff consisted of four people with no dedicated data manager. Requests for additional EC staff were listed and tentatively approved on both lists.

As the director indicated, " [budgeting] is problematic because ESL money is Title 2… and [I] may only use 2% for administrative costs." This limited her ability to add human resources to the district office. More and more recurring expenses had been added to the ESL budget. An example of recurring expenses was found in personnel, particularly the counselors dedicated to the Welcome Center programs.

The director stated that she was "constantly playing catch-up" because funding typically lagged a year behind. She also identified that impact funding from the federal government was being reduced each year. As she continued:

> We have one [teaching] position paid locally. When we were in a horrible crunch two years ago, the district gave a position out of the additional allocation, and we have been allowed to keep it. They pay for five fulltime house interpreters, and we plan to add two more next year and the local supplements for teachers. Although they [interpreters] are located at the school [as teacher assistants] they may be called at any time to interpret [anywhere]. Translation costs continue to rise and will be placed in the system recurring budget in the future… [We spend] between $15,000 and $20,000 each year just for translations. Catch 22 – the more you do, the more people want. Outside of that, everything comes out of the ESL [federal and state] budget. The plus to being Federal Program Director is that I can see the big picture from all the federal money and use money for different needs.

The statement referring to the Catch 22 summarized issues to be found in allocations for both human and fiscal resources of ELL support. While the ESL director understood the monies allocated to the program, no one else in the district appeared to understand. One principal who had experience with Title 1 funding said, "…I don't know what the overall ESL budget looks like. …I'm assuming that it's like Title 1…but I don't see that money unless it's tied into my positions which I'm very thankful for.

The director indicated that principals expected her to provide resources, especially in technology, for ESL teachers that the school provided to other teachers in the school. Principals confirmed that before spending money from the school's instructional dollars on the ESL program, they were likely to contact the ESL office to see if requests could be met with ESL monies. It appeared in part that because the director had been frugal

and creative in ways to provide for schools' needs principals made assumptions about the extent of the operational budget.

Although principals indicated that they were willing to provide any resources needed by ESL teachers if they were aware of them, few ESL teachers understood the process for requesting funds; their requests were lost in departmental requests; or they did not feel comfortable asking the principal for money. With the exception of School A, the school leadership teams determined annual department allotments. No consistency seemed to be in place to determine how ESL teachers were represented in the school wide budgeting process. Four schools placed ESL in the foreign language department, one in the English department, and one was a separate department for budgeting purposes. Only in School B were the ESL teachers automatically included on the leadership team that determined budgets. In School D the ESL teacher sat on the team as the chair of the foreign language department and until the interview had not thought about requesting ESL money from the school. All teachers referred to the $150 that the director had allotted them as their budget for the year.

When teachers were asked about the need for additional resources, they gave very specific feedback. The majority of both ESL and mainstream teachers felt that adequate instructional resources were in place. The mainstream teachers requested more supplies such as construction paper, scissors, markers, and chart paper. Reading materials were requested in the form of "real world stories and applications," "a better selection of literature," "high interest and low level books and short stories," and more "magazines and periodicals." Teachers also requested model lessons and activities, "that I don't have to make up." Additionally, teachers requested more access to technology in the

classroom, specifying Smartboards and Centios, and more visuals, models, and diagrams.

*Human Resources*

Principals placed a high regard upon the abilities of the director to hire quality teachers and support staff. The principals at the Welcome Center schools indicated they had no input on the hiring, but one principal said both teachers were "awesome," and the other stated, "trust the director completely, so it was not a negative that I was not involved." Two other principals, who would have received only part-time teachers due to low ELL numbers, indicated that they approached the director to use dual licensed foreign language teachers already on the faculty and she supported the requests pro-rating the salary between the district and ESL program. Other principals indicated that they were included in the search for an ESL teacher and actually relied upon the director to assist in locating quality teachers. An assistant principal anticipating the replacement of the Visiting International Faculty (VIF) teacher in 2009 indicated the school administrators hoped to "start working with the director as early as September (2008) … because she's really the one that has the networks that can help us to identify potential candidates."

The principals, director, and program coordinator identified similar desired characteristics for ESL teachers. Those attributes included licensed ESL teachers who were "fluent in English" both written and in conversation. All indicated that being bilingual was a plus but not a requirement. The director specifically described the ideal ESL teacher as,

…one who really likes children, who also really likes working with second

> language. I want someone who is understanding of the fact that cultural difference can get in the way of academic learning. And that you have to be able to accept the cultural difference not, not fight it."

Principals identified the ideal ESL teacher as being, "well versed with the ESL populations and culture," "… who's not afraid to jump in car and go with me to do a home visit," "…who is caring, compassionate, very patient, flexible, and versed in technology" and who uses an "inclusionary approach."

The district Human Resources Department worked closely with the director to assure a supply of ESL teacher candidates. They had an ongoing relationship with the VIF organization recruiting ESL teachers from out of the country. These teachers may work three years with appropriate work visas. The director indicated she was actively involved with the interview process.

> I ask a lot of questions about how do you deal with this, or how do you deal with that, with parents, and the cultural differences and all… when I ask them to describe a lesson for me I'm listening to how much the teacher talks because in ESL the teacher can't talk. Kids have got to talk. There's a place for the didactic, but if your model lesson you're going to tell me about is all about what you did then I have a problem because that's the one that jumps into your head, not one of the ones where the kids are doing something…I look for indications that this is a teacher that is holistic.

All levels identified the need for additional human resources for the program. When queried by the researcher, all site administrators requested additional ESL teachers and assistants so that more inclusion classes could be offered. Principals also indicated a

need for more interpreters and bilingual support staff, even though it did not look as if they specifically sought out bilingual staff when hiring office positions or place the requests in the budget. Counselors spoke of the need for bilingual social workers who could be in the field working with families as students progressed from K-12. The central office staff desired additional persons to assist with support to teachers at the school site as well as additional ESL teachers.

*Expectations*

While principals and teachers indicated they wanted ELL students to be achieve success and held high expectations for them, they sometimes inferred that expectations could be lower for ELLs, especially those entering with limited academic backgrounds. As one principal said,

> I have yet had a teacher come to me and say this kid's struggling in my class because he doesn't understand English or he has the language barrier. Is that an issue? I don't know, but I could see where it could be. We do the same thing with our EC kids. Oh this I just wonderful Johnny, but really and truly it's not wonderful…I don't know whether you could say as a whole our ELL kids could be doing better if we did this. Maybe this child could be doing better because they're…very very bright, but they're struggling because they don't understand.

A teacher described her expectations for an ELL in her class, "He's a very quiet child and…he's functioning, though…he's not off the charts with math, but he's passing…" An ESL teacher shared, "I think that number one, people don't see them as may be high achieving."

ESL students in the focus groups indicated they did know what teachers expected from them. Some of them identified very concrete signals they received from teachers, such as “telling,” giving notes,” “helping” them outside class, “talking to us,” by their “grades”, and because teachers “worked hard to teach us.” Others identified more subtle signals such as teachers starting to “realize that I am much capable by making good grades,” by “pushing you harder,” and by “giving us looks.”

Students in focus groups were clear about their desires for the future and had set their own high expectations. A question asked of them focused on the future they saw for themselves if money was not an obstacle. Replies included a myriad of career opportunities including becoming a “lawyer,” “go into the tourist business,” “open a dance club,” “help the poor,” “go to Chapel Hill,” “be an electronic technician,” “go into sales,” “architecture,” and “art teacher,” and “to go into the industrial business.” One young girl specified that she wanted to be a fashion designer and the researcher noted that she had a copy of *Vogue* magazine with her books.

Participants in the focus groups indicated that their parents also had high expectations for them. All students indicated their parents expected them to finish high school. Many indicated their parents wanted them to attend college and “be somebody in life.” The researcher found this interesting since counselors and site administrators had indicated that ELL parents did not have such expectations, but instead just wanted their children to “learn English” and get a job.

*Interactions*

Interactions among students and teachers and students with students were considered to be another measure of school climate. Student and ESL teacher interaction

was observed by the researcher as generally positive. Students were seen by the researcher coming in and out of the classrooms during lunch and teacher planning times for assistance in school work or just to stop by and chat. At the end of the semester students at one school were participating in senior exit exams and the researcher observed ESL teachers using planning time to help the students practice and prepare for their oral presentations.

Other faculty and staff members indicated their interactions with ELLs outside the classroom tended to be limited to simple interactions in the hallways and possibly some casual conversation. One principal stated that he purposely spoke to all students making sure he was consistent with all student groups.

> …You know, "please move along to class. Come on, you can get her phone number later [laughs] that kind of thing…but it's to everybody, it's not just, you know, one specific group…I say in a way that's respectful to them it's not demeaning…I'm consistent with discipline, I'm consistent with you know what I do in halls. At lunch, you know, I sometimes will sit down with the students and chat with them, it's not just one particular group. I bounce from table to table…I do it every day.

Focus group students agreed with the adults in terms of student interactions with adults. The primary type of interactions students identified was through tutoring or helping students with class work. A student indicated that teachers were "very lenient and they always help you whenever they can." However, outside class students indicated teachers spent little time with them and would say "hi" in the halls, but nothing else.

Teacher observations of student interaction were that that ELLs, especially those of Hispanic descent, tended to remain together and not "intermix" with other students. The researcher witnessed a similar phenomenon when observing students before and after school or during lunch. Comments for site staff members are characterized by these below.

> The county students, they, are in all sorts of clubs and extracurricular activities. But the Hispanic students are not and they tend to create a separate enclave of their own so they don't participate in school's activities.

Another said,

> In the fall I coached a step team and I had a number of girls…it did not have any Caucasians on it… our school is predominantly white… I feel like each of… the kids have their own like click, depending on race a lot. Here I see a lot of times minority students latch on to each other.

Another teacher said she saw "happy kids for the most part" and some "genuine friendships, but most of the kids will hang out with a core group." Yet another indicated she "didn't see any interactions" unless it involved discipline issues.

An ESL teacher wished that interactions between students "would happen more often." And she related a story an ELL told her about being treated like "newbees – the stupid group" within their own ethnicity. A focus group member identified the same issue "Even though we are in 2008, we still have problems with discrimination even with our own race." A student continued saying, "American kids don't let them sit on the bus." She indicated she had heard students discussing in class their desire to "be proud of their

native country" and how she tried to help them see that in many ways their experiences and ability to speak multiple languages would help them in the future.

Generally, focus group participants, especially at the two schools with large ELL populations, reported positive feelings about their schools. Descriptions of the school's climate included comments such as "good, friendly, helpful, cooperative, nice, everyone is kind, peaceful, and like one big family." Another student said, "Everybody is really cool with me and treats me with respect like I do to them, and some kids - I just ignore them."

At two schools with small ELL populations, although students indicated they liked the school and it was "better than my country's schools," students expressed some feelings of cultural insensitivity, bias, and a small degree of racism among students and teachers. As one participant related, "Sometime teachers think they are being funny but it's really offensive." This student was referring to a teacher who greeted him each day with a nick name. The ESL teacher at that school said mainstream teachers had called students "by their last names" for a majority of the semester because they didn't understand the order of Hispanic names. The students would not correct the teachers because in their culture that would have been considered disrespectful. One student indicated that teachers did not pronounce her name correctly by saying, " It would be nice if they could pronounce our names before we get to class the first time." Another student shared, "...nobody has being racist to me except this one time that I did feel a little uncomfortable."

At the second school a student shared,

> They really don't care about us. Maybe because you're not like them. People here is racist. Not all of them, but some teachers are so racist, but they can't show it in front of other teachers.

Interestingly, the principal of the same school had similar observations. During his interview he contributed,

> You know, I think there is a mindset that you're in America, you need to speak English and you know - do what we do…I'm not saying it's prevalent throughout the staff, but it's here in the building…some of the older staff.

### Category 5: Parental Engagement

The lack of ELL parental engagement was identified by every level of administration and faculty as a major issue the high schools faced. This section explores the types of parent involvement strategies utilized by the system and schools, the communications and interactions between the faculty and parents, and the ways in which parents and students were encouraged to participate in school functions.

The district's primary contacts with parents occurred when they registered their child and attended individual conferences. Enrollment forms and parental information were provided in English and Spanish and bilingual contact often was made because all enrollments K-12 still occurred at the centralized Welcome Center. Parents attended an annual conference to discuss their child's progress, sign paperwork, and to receive an explanation of the recommendations for the following year. These conferences were usually conducted at the site level with the child's ESL teacher.

Lopez et al. (2001), Epstein et al. (2004), and Hill and Flynn (2006) recognized the importance of districts and schools having formal plans in place for promoting ELL parentage involvement with schools. No formal written plan was developed at any school beyond the general strategies included in school improvement plans. While the district office had a parental involvement plan for elementary schools as required for Title I, there was not one specifically for secondary schools.

Even so, schools did demonstrate evidence of attempting to specifically engage with ELL parents. Strategies attempted at the site level appeared to have evolved through trial and error. One principal indicated that ELL parent involvement was minimal and continued by saying,

> I had maybe ten people show up for open house this past semester. I get a trickle in at the beginning of the year, a lot more than at mid-semester. I have found that the biggest way to get them in, is if they trust somebody. I honestly don't have enough people to reach out to all the ones that are struggling. I have had a significant number of kids to stay in school now, but we're not anywhere close to being where we need to be.

Another principal expressed similar frustrations:

> We do speak with these parents, we do conference with them because when I got here I did not get the impression that anyone ever cared to talk…the excuse was we don't know how to talk to them, they can't speak English.

This principal also indicated he had set expectations of the DOPS, counselors, and teachers that they were to schedule meetings that included an interpreter or the services

of one of the foreign language teachers. If they did not follow the protocol, the ESL teacher was to let him know.

Some commonly used techniques for communicating with English speaking parents were newsletters, Connect Ed calls, e-mail and school websites; however, while some newsletters had been translated and most Connect Ed calls were placed in Spanish, no artifacts of translations were available for review at the site level. No evidence of formal plans was found for communication with ESL parents concerning events, special functions or general information about students. Interviewees at all schools identified Connect Ed as a resource used frequently. Usually any recorded message sent to all parents was translated into Spanish and delivered to Spanish parents as well via the telephone.

Generally, the only translated documents at school sites were those prepared by the district office and consisted of frequently used forms, the high school curriculum guide, special notices or letters, and the annual parent notification booklet. One high school reported translating their student handbook during 2007, but had not updated it and had no copies available for the researcher to peruse. Although the district's Web site utilized an automatic translator called "Babel," there was nothing on the homepages of either the district or schools to notify non-English speakers that it was available nor were there directions for use.

Although the original Welcome Center campus had signage in multiple languages to welcome families, no directions were found outside the high schools to assist non-English speaking parents. One school had installed a security system at the entrance that included ringing a bell for entrance. No directions for use were found in any foreign

language. Even following the directions that were posted in English, the first time the researcher entered the building, she found the entry process confusing. Although the district had prepared posters explaining the registration process in Spanish, they were not always posted in the front office or in spots where they could be easily seen. None of the schools reported purposely hiring office staff that was bilingual. One school reported translating newsletters from the school and parent organizations and mailing them to parents, but none of the schools indicated they provided this service routinely or in a timely manner.

All schools executed the strategy of holding meetings for ELL parents with an interpreter for open houses, orientations, and to share information about registration and career planning; however, schools used different methods for these meetings. In one school, according to a counselor, the interpreter "took parents into a separate room during registration and translated for them." When parents entered "she would let us know immediately…so she was pulling them aside and making sure that they understood what their child needed…" Others had determined that separating parents denied ELL parents the opportunity of interacting with English speaking parents and of getting information other parents heard through question and answer sessions. One counselor shared that the school "had a translator here at our open houses, particularly for the incoming freshman. This worked better than separate meetings. We've seen an increase in the number of parents who come."

The Federal Programs Department had purchased translator device headsets and with advanced notice, the high schools could use these with an interpreter so that parents could be actively involved in the regular meeting session. The director indicated that

schools did not always remember to request the service and she needed at least 48 hours notice to schedule an interpreter. Schools that had used the translator sets were please with their performance and identified this as an effective method for interacting with parents.

Unlike the classroom teachers interviewed, the ESL teachers, counselors, and DOPS expressed no hesitation in contacting parents directly. They also reported visiting homes, hosting mini parent nights, and scheduling conferences at school with the assistance of interpreters if needed. One ESL teacher indicated that parents were “scared to death to come here” because they had a “fear that the police will be called.” She always met the parents at the office to reassure them. Another shared that it was her perception that parents often were intimidated by teachers and by the schools. All ESL teachers indicated that they used frequent phone calls to establish positive contacts initially, to help parents feel more comfortable, and so that they would have a specific person they could contact if needed. One shared, “sometimes, they just pop up you know or send me a letter.”

Student perspectives on the school’s attempts to communicate with their parents were mixed. The most common, when asked how the schools communicated with parents, was “by phone,” or by the “phone machine,” “by letter” and that the calls were generally either about academic problems or behavior issues. Other students volunteered that the school seldom contacted their parents. Students indicated that they might translate for their parents and that having more teachers who spoke Spanish would be helpful. Several students indicated that school staff could communicate with their parents by e-mail, but generally did not do so.

Interviewees presented a number of possible strategies to reach more parents and better communicate with them. Suggestions from across all levels generally centered on providing information sessions each quarter, offering parents classes in English, opening media centers to parents, getting them involved with volunteering and letting them share their talents, providing interpreters for conferences, making sure they were represented in the PTA, or setting up parent studies or book clubs or pairing them up with English speaking parents to help walk them through school processes. All of these suggestions were similar to strategies recommended by researchers, but none were consistently in place.

Teachers, counselors, and principals wanted parents to be more involved in the scheduling process and realized that ELL parents often did not understand how they school system worked or the opportunities for their children. The most common suggestion for dealing with this issue was to arrange parent education seminars after school hours or on weekends. One unique example from a counselor was to make a video in Spanish, and other languages if possible, of the registration process that parents could watch when they came to the school to enroll their child.

In this chapter the researcher summarized the data collected by framing the data through the secondary questions. The researcher used the data results to present her interpretation of the data as applied to underlying assumptions, answer the secondary questions, major findings, and make recommendations for further study presented in chapter 5.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Introduction

Meeting the needs of ELLs can be a challenge for the most experienced and resource laden educators and school districts. The spectrum of backgrounds for ELLs in high school may range from students who are first or even second generation immigrants with a non-interrupted education beginning in preschool to those who have attended school for only a few years but because of their age are placed in high school when they arrive in the United States speaking no English. Yet all these students are expected to complete the same goals which are to reach fluency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English and simultaneously to complete all the requirements needed to receive a state awarded high school diploma by the time they are 21.

The purpose of this study was to examine the practices of the ESL program of one North Carolina school district and the academic outcomes of the ESL students enrolled in the high schools within that district.

Specifically, the primary research questions were:

1. In what ways did the district's ESL programs and strategies currently in place adhere to identified national standards and best practices?

2. What outcomes were experienced by high school ELLs exposed to these ESL programs and strategies in the school district?

## Summary of the Study

The researcher began this study by identifying the recommendations and strategies of ESL researchers to promote student achievement. While much has been written about curriculum and programs for ELLs, instructional practices teachers should use, the importance of quality schools, and the need for parental involvement within their own niches, few studies had attempted to look at all these areas through a holistic model. Because the researcher believed that all the niches were interrelated, she developed a model (Figure 1) using the identified strategies that consisted of five categories: data collection and use, curriculum and programs, instructional practices, leadership, and parental involvement. Possible professional development topics were placed within each category. She used this model as the core of her research.

The researcher chose an embedded case study design for the investigation. This design allowed the researcher to collect qualitative data through interviews and observations from 58 adult participants from the high schools as well as from the district office. Twenty-six high school ELLs contributed information through four focus group sessions.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data which was organized within the categories and matched to the strategies identified by the researcher. Descriptive data was gleaned from various released state and local reports, but the majority of the data was qualitative in nature. The researcher used the constant comparative method as presented by Merriam (1998) to analyze the qualitative data.

The data presented in chapter 4 was organized through the structure of the secondary questions asked in each category. The researcher's conclusions regarding those

secondary questions are presented in this chapter in a similar manner and each category is addressed individually. Following conclusions on secondary questions is a section discussing the major themes that emerged from the data. A section identifying recommendations for further research leads to a conclusion of the study.

## Conclusions Regarding Research Secondary Questions

### *A Comparison of the District's ELL Population to That of the Nation*

The first secondary question asked how ELLs in the district were similar and dissimilar to other ELLs at the national and state levels. These comparisons were made by examining seven variables and characteristics of the schools they attended. Summaries of the findings are below.

#### *Ethnic Distribution*

Based on the three data samples provided to the researcher by the district and state reports as well as statements by the director, lead teacher, and counselor, the ethnic distribution of students appeared to be similar to that of the nation. Hispanic and Asian high school students represented just over 9% of students in the six high schools in the district which was actually lower than the overall distribution for the district. Within the subset of Asians and Hispanics, the majority, at least 83%, of students were of Hispanic descent and within the Hispanic population the majority were identified by staff members as originating from poor, rural areas in Mexico.

#### *Family Structures and Poverty*

Information regarding the poverty levels of the high schools students was not available from the district. In general, however, the county as a whole reported nearly 9% of its population to be Hispanic and 1.6% to be Asian, which is similar to the high school

ethnic distribution. Various reports indicated the poverty rate to be increasing annually within the county and that the poverty rate for Hispanics was somewhere between 18% and 22 % for 2008. One index placed the Hispanic poverty rate as higher than any other ethnicity. This information was similar to that found nationally.

*Language Spoken in the Home*

The district collected some data concerning the language spoken within the home, but that data was not available to the researcher. Collected on registration forms that were housed in student cumulative folders, the program's lead teacher compiled selected data in a personal electronic database. From the lens of site teachers and administrators who attempted to contact parents, communication between schools and parents was difficult largely due to the lack of English spoken in the home. While ESL teachers tended to be bilingual and indicated they were comfortable speaking to parents in Spanish, none of the interviewed mainstream teachers expressed being bilingual. Just over 68% of the students who participated in the focus groups indicated the primary language spoken in the home was the native language, leading the researcher to conclude that it was likely a large segment of the ELL population did not speak English routinely in the home.

*Academic Backgrounds*

The lead teacher did record data concerning academic backgrounds of students and transferred some of that data to the card stock reports maintained in the cumulative folders. She also tracked student performance on standardized testing. Some administrators, counselors, and DOPSs reported building their own databases about student backgrounds. However, none of that data was available to the researcher. General consensus seemed to be that student academic background was reflective of points of

origin and the amount of time they had been in the United States with gaps found in those students recently moving the U. S. who came from poor countries.

*Academic Performance*

Within a district that was generally regarded as high performing, proficiency rates by ethnicities appeared to be similar to those across the nation. Generally, Asians performed above Whites, and Hispanics fell between White and Black students over a 3-year period of time. LEP students did show gradual improvement even when other groups were stagnant, but fewer were deemed proficient than in any other group with less than 50% of students demonstrating proficiency on annual composite End of Course Tests.

While the district's overall cohort graduation rate (72.9%) was higher than that of the state, the rates of certain groups within the total were lower than similar groups across the state. Included in those representative groups were Asians, Hispanics, and LEP students. Similar to national statistics graduation rates for Hispanic and LEP students were the lowest in the district with Hispanic students holding a rate of 48.2% and LEPs at 41.4%. The director indicated that prior to 2008 no ELL who arrived as a newcomer to high school had remained in school and graduated, but 17 had met the requirements for 2008 and she anticipated this trend to continue at other highs schools.

As was true across the nation, ELLs were underrepresented in advanced, honors, and college preparation classes as well as foreign language classes and more likely found in remedial or vocational pathways. The vocational courses seemed generally to be limited to those offered on the site of the high school. High schools having the greatest percentages of ELLs generally placed students into area such as food services, childcare, and construction which were programs offered on the site. ELLs in the district appeared

more likely to attend community college or pursue a vocational career than transfer directly to a 4-year college. These indicators paralleled those found at the national level.

*Student Behaviors*

Both negative and positive student behaviors were examined. Negative behaviors were ultimately measured by the number of ELLs who dropped out of school although a number of variables were identified for tracking that could be considered predictors of ELLs dropping out. Positive behaviors examined included the use of and access to technology and use of time after regular school hours.

*Negative student behaviors.* When the researcher compared dropouts within their ethnicities to ethnicities within the general high school population of the district, a larger percentage of male Hispanic students dropped out than any other segment of the student population in 2008. Both state and national profiles for dropouts predicted that minority male students in the ninth grade who have been retained were more likely to dropout than other students. Within the district the majority of Hispanic students were in the ninth grade and older than expected. Grade placement and retention factors were present that offered an explanation of the large number of ninth-grade ELLs.

The district followed the recommendation of researchers like Hess and placed students in age appropriate grades. The primary reason stated for moving the newcomer ESL program to high school sites was so ELLs would be able to earn high school credits more quickly. Even so, students in high school, regardless of their age, may not progress to the 10th grade if they have not successfully completed English I. This can be the principle barrier even when students arrive with acceptable credits from another high school from out of the country but lack English I credit.

Evidence suggested that the district attempted to provide support for these students through the ESL program. Using dual certified sheltered instruction English teachers was an identified strategy to assist students in moving through English I. Purposeful scheduling of the ELLs into English classes focused on reading and writing before placing them in English I was yet another strategy to improve the possible success rate of students in English I.

The researcher was unable to find published documents from the district that indicated an in-depth analysis was conducted of the various predictor variables, although this may occur internally. All DOPSs had their own databases and/or maintained files about the site's dropouts and appeared to personally know students who were likely to dropout. DOPSs and counselors were likely to indicate they looked closely at some of the suggested predictors. For example, one DOPS pointed out that the true suspension rate of ELLs, especially Hispanic students, may be masked due to the manner in which suspensions were reported.

Across the district Hispanics and Asians account for 12.6% of the total population, yet they represented only 9.3% of the high school population. This difference lead the researcher to question if all dropouts were being captured prior to entry to high school which as Olatunji indicated might occur especially for females. At least two high school counselors suspected this might be the case due to teen pregnancy. Evidence supporting this theory came from the 2008 county assessment that placed teen pregnancy rates for Hispanics at double that of other minorities and three times that of White teens. Family pressures and cultural beliefs appeared to dictate that these teens drop out of school to take care of their babies. Like the suspension report, the official dropout rates

may not capture the true percentage of Hispanics who drop out according because of the manner in which they are reported.

School staff and faculty identified involvement with gang related activities and returning to their native country as additional contributing factors to students dropping out. Drug use may have been a contributing factor. According to the North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey for the region in which this district was located the use of alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes by Hispanic high school youth as greater than either Black or White students.

*Positive Student Behaviors.* Positive student behaviors were more difficult to identify because the district had information only on one of the factors, which was computer usage and Internet access. Although faculty and staff generally assumed that ELLs had little access to computers, there was evidence to suggest that computer usage outside school was greater than expected. According to students in focus groups and data from the district's annual survey, around 70% of Hispanic students had access to a computer with Internet access and more Asian students than White or Black students could access the Internet at home.

The second positive indicator on which the researcher collected anecdotal information was participation in extra-curricular activities. It was generally accepted that few ELLs participated in extracurricular activities offered at schools, and this was supported by students in the focus groups. Overall when ELLs and adult perspectives about the students' lack of participation in extracurricular activities were compared, they generally agreed upon three reasons: the lack of access to transportation, the lack of interest in the offerings, and the need to work. However, while adults perceived that

students desired to stay within their own ethnic groups, students in the focus groups indicated a sense of being unwelcomed as a reason for not joining in extra-curricular activities.

## General Description of the Schools the ELLs Attend

Unlike ELLs across the nation and those students who staged the walkout at Edcouch-Elsa (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2004), students in this district attended schools that were considered safe with lack of major discipline issues, were either new or recently renovated, and had technology labs as well as peripheral devices available to all students. Ethnic distributions across all schools reflected the ethnic makeup of neighborhood within the feeder area and placed Whites in the majority with Blacks following and Hispanics comprising the third largest group which was expected from the research of Chang (2000) and Van Hook (2002). Teachers and students reported the schools to be generally safe, clean and well maintained, and up to date. Hispanic survey responders did express concern about possible weapons on campus as well as concern for their personal belongings.

Two high schools housed the Welcome Center for newcomer high school students within the traditional school site. Additional human and instructional resources were placed at those schools by the ESL program. The primary area of difference among the schools was in the content of the media centers. Only one high school, one of the Welcome Center schools, had purposefully invested in books and periodicals that were both high-interest and low-level reading. The use of graphic novels at this site also allowed ELLs the opportunity to read books often required by content teachers with visual assistance.

Overall, the data suggested that the ELL population of this district was more similar than dissimilar to that of the nation in terms of ethnic distribution, language spoken in the home, academic backgrounds, academic performance, and student behaviors. The similarity of positive and negative behavior indicators was difficult to determine due to the way in which the data is collected and analyzed; however, anecdotal information did indicate drop-out rates, pregnancy rates, and gang activity was present and represented negative behaviors for Hispanic ELLs within the group. Although generally assumed that ELLs had little access to computers, there was evidence that computer usage outside school was greater than expected. The primary difference in the two populations was in the quality of schools they attended and the teachers who taught them.

## Category 1: Data Collection and Use

Secondary Question: How did the district utilize the data it disaggregates about the ELL student population?

The district collected much of the information suggested by researchers and had done so for over 10 years. Little of this data, however, was centralized for easy access by sites as well as members of the district offices. Instead the majority of the information was stored in two separate databases maintained by the lead teacher. Individuals at the sites had also set up databases that were specific to their job responsibilities.

Two hardcopy reports were routinely produced by the lead teacher from these databases. The first, produced and updated monthly, listed all active and fluent ELLs. It was used by ESL teachers to assist in locating students, identifying modifications and levels of service. This report also provided some basic historical information. The second

was intended to be of use to the site administrators and mainstream teachers. The researcher could not determine if administrators used this data, but none of the interviewed teachers reported using it. All interviewed mainstream teachers indicated they would be more likely to use the data if it was available electronically and primarily relied upon their own formative assessments, district benchmark tests, and End of Course Tests information to determine instruction and ELL abilities.

The data collected about ELLs was most likely used to determine student placement and schedules, to distribute human and fiscal resources, and to determine the level of services that would be available at each school. No evidence was found to indicate data concerning attributes of ELLs, positive or negative behaviors, or achievement were routinely analyzed and disaggregated to all levels from administration to classroom teacher.

The ESL teachers were the conduit for the information to site administrators and teachers. Not only did they confirm school data to the lead teacher, but the ESL teachers most often notified mainstream teachers of student needs and required modifications. Interviewed mainstream teachers indicated they were likely to consult ESL teachers if they had questions about student needs or required assistance in planning instruction or administrating tests. ELS teachers assisted in designing student schedules, determining career pathways, and holding conferences with parents based on the data retrieved from transcripts, testing, and the lead teacher's databases. The method of data sharing and persons who received the information varied from site to site.

## Category 2: Curriculum and Programs

Secondary Questions: To what extent were curriculum and program recommendations from state and national agencies, research organizations, and individual researchers implemented within the system and at the school level? Why were certain programs chosen, and to what extent was the district using information about the special and individual needs of ELLs in designing the overall ESL program? How were the programs implemented, delivered, and monitored?

Overall, the data suggested the ESL department was committed to offering relevant, appropriate, and research based programs for ELLs. Four of the six recommended programs were in place to varying degrees: a Welcome Center located at two high school sites, daily ESL classes, sheltered instruction, and Spanish for Native Speakers. The director and staff spoke of identifying needs of students through data collected from testing and input of the ESL teachers, deciding which programs would be most appropriate, and then determining how to best distribute available resources based on those needs. They also sought "to create a continuum of services and look at kids as individuals." This continuum provided various ranges of support from daily support of multiple class periods for newcomers to sheltered classes to consultation as students became more fluent.

The programs across the schools at large, however, were more limited. Site administrators were aware of the intent of programs within their own schools, and principals indicated they wanted to offer classes such as Spanish for Native Speakers and inclusion, but were limited by staff allotments which were determined by the district. Offering programs such as these would result in "trade-offs" as identified by Valenzuela

so principals faced a dilemma of denying the majority of students in the school an opportunity in order to provide an opportunity for a minority of students. Site administrators appeared supportive of the programs and students that were supported by the ESL department. All principals indicated they would like to have more teachers so they could increase program offerings.

All ESL and sheltered classes were taught by licensed and experienced ESL teachers who modeled recommended instructional strategies and were identified by ELLs as their strongest supporters. On the other hand, the inclusion classes were undeveloped and inconsistent in terms of expected implementation. Site administrators did not appear to have a clear understanding of the models and interchanged the words sheltered, inclusion, and immersion. Interviewed inclusion teachers had not received district training beyond the SIOP to prepare them for working with the ESL teacher or assistant to deliver the content in an appropriate manner for ELLs.

ELLs had the same access to advanced courses and after school tutoring as regular students, but no differentiated support was available for them after they had received a “fluent” status. Until these students reached fluency at all levels, ESL teachers attempted to support them on a consultation basis and provided monitoring for 2 years. However, no specific process appeared to be in place to assure that mainstream teachers were able to identify students on consultation or who had been LEP. No routine bilingual tutoring was found to be available, nor was bilingual materials routinely provided for them. ELLs in the focus groups most often identified their support system as the ESL teacher.

Little evidence was present to suggest that the curriculum had been modified to help these students make connections to their prior cultures. Pacing guides for ESL teachers were being developed during the data collection phase. Mainstream teachers identified the need for sample lessons, model teaching, and/or a team teacher or coach to assist them in instruction.

In addition to visits to the schools by district office staff and the receipt of feedback from ESL teachers, the district leaders depended upon the site administrators and ESL teachers to assist in monitoring the programs. At two sites, administrators used special checklist they had developed to look for specific practices in the classrooms such as posting language objectives. Other administrators indicated they routinely conducted classroom observations to monitor the programs in place.

### Category 3: Instructional Practices

Secondary Questions: How did teachers plan for the instruction of ELLs? To what extent were high school teachers in the district employing research based instructional strategies specific to ELLs?

Planning for the instruction of ELLs seemed to differ for ESL teachers and mainstream teachers. ESL teachers were focused on teaching students English and communication skills as well as skills needed by students in general, such as how to organize information, take notes, study, etc. The mainstream teachers interviewed were focused on content, perhaps not surprising since gateway tests were associated with each class.

The quality and training of the ESL teachers was evident. All held master's degrees in ESL, had teaching experience ranging from 4 years to over 30 years and were

bilingual. Although they taught the class in English, students were observed helping one another in native languages as they worked in small groups or pairs. ESL teachers indicated they used data about their students to differentiate as well as to design whole group instruction which seemed student centered and structured to provide listening, speaking, reading, and writing opportunities. All ESL teachers who were assigned permanent classrooms had displays of student work, charts, diagrams, three dimensional objects and models. The researcher witnessed ELLs using technology in three schools during the class either writing in labs or through peripheral devices like Smart Boards. In general, ESL teachers were highly regarded by faculty members and students as experts and observations supported that they routinely followed recommended practices of instruction.

Methodologies of interviewed mainstream teachers, however, ranged from teacher-centered didactic instruction to student-centered instruction which appeared more likely a reflection of their preferred teaching style rather than the incorporation of specialized training. While many used group work, activity based instruction, and graphic organizers somewhat, the amount of usage varied from daily to occasionally. All interviewed mainstream teachers stated they began their planning by aligning their lessons to content objectives required by the state and pacing guides. While 14 of the 15 mainstream teachers involved in the research had receive training in SIOP, none indicated that it had led them to greatly modify their teacher behaviors. Instead, the teachers indicated they did help them become more aware of the needs of ELL students, to be more conscious of their word usage, and some differences in cultural issues. Most of the mainstream teachers did indicate a desire to know more about how to teach ELLs

and requested additional training that was less about theory and instead that supplied concrete examples, sample lessons, team teaching, and coaching.

## Category 4: Leadership

Secondary Questions: How did the district plan for and distribute fiscal and human resources based on these needs? How were decisions made at the district and school level as to allocation and disbursements? How were ESL teachers screened, hired, and placed at schools? What role did principals, counselor, and teachers play in the success of ELLs?

Fiscal resources that supported the ESL program came from three sources: local, state, and federal money. The local money designated to the ESL program paid for paraprofessional staff, translation needs, and one teacher position. The director depended upon federal and state monies that generally lagged a year behind because these monies were based on head counts. Because the director was in charge of all federal programs, she was able to take a holistic view toward funding ELL programs and tap multiple areas for appropriate services. However, federal guidelines limited flexibility in spending, especially in terms of administrative and support staff. All federal funds and state funds were linked to teaching personnel, instructional resources, and materials and supplies.

Although LEP and Hispanic students were identified through the No Child Left Behind legislation as failing to meet AYP, no major changes had been made to the district's budgeting process to assure additional funding for the program. Apparently, because the budget was built predominantly from school requests that did not specify the need for ESL funding, ESL needs were not listed as a priority for funding. Neither was ESL funding listed as a priority from the Curriculum and Instruction Department.

No site administrators appeared to understand the budget for the ESL program or how money was received and allocated, leading principals to seek financial assistance from the director for purchases from technology to dictionaries before looking at their schools funding streams. While all principals indicated a willingness to provide resources for ESL teachers, only one assured the ESL teacher was represented on the school leadership team as a unique department. Other schools placed the ESL teacher within a department and since that teacher was a representative of one among other teachers, the requests seldom were fulfilled. All principals indicated they would work with teachers to meet needs unfulfilled through the budget process, but ESL teachers either did not know they could go directly to the principal or felt uncomfortable in doing so.

The processes for hiring teachers were firmly established and displayed a cooperative effort between the sites and district office. Principals placed a high level of trust in the director to locate quality ESL teachers and assistants and they worked in tandem to assure appropriate placement. The use of Visiting International Faculty (VIF) increased the applicant pool, but was in itself problematic since VIF teachers may remain in the U.S. for only 3 years under the visa program.

ELLs in the district had the opportunity to attend modern, clean, and safe schools with adequate instructional supplies. They had quality teachers and administrators who appeared to care about them and attempted to provide appropriate opportunities to increase their learning. However, the expectations of at least a portion of mainstreamed teachers seemed to be lower for ELLs than regular students and it was generally accepted by site personnel that parents of ELLs, especially Hispanic, simply wanted students to learn English and get a job. Students in focus groups, however, painted a different

picture. They indicated parents had high expectations for them most hoping to attend college and find professional careers.

Student interactions with their ESL teachers and within their own ethnic groups were generally positive. Students indicated gratitude for opportunities all teachers gave for tutoring and assistance; however, they identified that they had little other contact with teachers outside class. At two school sites focus group members felt some teachers resented them being on campus or held biases against them. Interactions with peers outside their ethnicities or ESL classrooms were limited as well and as indicated earlier few participated in extracurricular activities.

### Category 5: Parental Engagement

Researchers like Coleman in the 1960s and more recently Epstein et al. (2002) and Lopez et al. (2001), identified the necessity of having parents involved in the school as volunteers as well as partners in the decisions made about their youth. Faculty and staff at every school in the district expressed the lack of ELL parent involvement as a major issue they faced. Even so, neither the district nor the schools had a written parent involvement plan targeted at high school ELL parents.

There was unanimous agreement that involvement of ELL parents was limited at best. Parent interaction most likely occurred with the ESL teachers and counselors at annual meetings with administrators due to disciplinary issues. Various attempts had been made to involve them in general parent meetings with mixed results. Few translations of materials were available to parents with the exception of district level documents and forms. Nonetheless, faculty members indicated a desire to build more opportunities for interactions and offered a number of ideas as to how to complete this task.

## Professional Development Summary

Throughout the data analysis, the researcher specified various types of professional development that were necessary for teachers of ELLs. National recommendations for professional development of educators who work with ELLs include educating administrators and teachers of federal state and local policies regarding ELLs, how to retrieve and use data to make decisions about their instruction, as well as specific training on curriculum requirements, instructional practices, and cultural issues. Although ESL teachers appeared well versed in the policy requirements and processes, ELL curriculum and instruction, and cultural differences, the awareness and training of site personnel was minimal. All funding for training of both the ESL department members and broader training across the district was allocated from ESL funds.

Mainstream teachers who were interviewed consistently reported having received training in SIOP, but none of the teachers indicated the training had caused them to significantly change their methodology of planning or instructing ELLs. Teachers did report gaining a greater insight to the backgrounds of students and attentiveness to their use of colloquialisms while speaking to ELLs. While all administrators spoke of monitoring for the use of both content and ESL communication strategies, none of the teachers indicated routine use of strategies that assured all ELLs had opportunities to speak, read, and write during the period nor did the researcher observe the objectives displayed in the rooms. No teachers reported specifically differentiating the instruction, but they did indicate that modifications occurred in assessments. At best, SIOP training appeared to increase awareness and make teachers more cognizant of practices.

Several areas for possible future professional development were identified by the researcher. Administrators appeared to have a general idea about SIOP and preferred strategies, but needed more in-depth training about ELLs in general, understanding the demographic characteristics of the ELLs in the county, and how the population of their school compares to that of the district. Administrators should receive training to identify the preferred characteristics of teachers who work with the ELLs in the mainstream and how to monitor and support these teachers as they implement the strategies.

Mainstream teachers who worked with ELLs indicated a desire for more specific and in-depth training in how to teach ELLS. Several teachers specifically requested a coach or team teacher to model appropriate strategies, work with them on lesson planning, or to have lesson plan models they could follow in their content areas. Overall they indicated they enjoyed working with the ELLs and wanted to improve their abilities.

## Major Themes

Initially, the researcher identified one common thread, professional development, which ran through each category. Upon analysis of the qualitative data, three additional threads or themes also emerged from the interviews with faculty and staff members. These themes were identified by faculty and staff members as factors that may impede decision making in terms of strategies within each category.

Two of the themes were directly related to the specific categories of data use and collection and parental involvement. The themes should not be confused with the categories. While those categories listed specific strategies to improve the effectiveness within the category, the common thread demonstrated that the lack of implemented strategies in each area affected to varying degrees the effectiveness of strategies that were

in place within other categories. For example, the lack of centralized data appeared to influence decision making in terms of program structure, instructional strategies, fiscal allocations, and parental involvement. Likewise, the lack of parental involvement was identified in each category as impacting student success. A third theme, the value placed upon ESL teachers and central office staff, was repeatedly mentioned in every category from data sharing to parental contact. A discussion of these themes as related to the categories follows.

*Data Limitations to All Levels of the District*

Despite the fact that the lead teacher collected and maintained basic and expanded data on all ELLs, the limited availability of data to all levels of the district was apparent. The central office staff members, including the director, lead teacher, and program coordinator, spoke with authority and knowledge about the ELLs in the district and at the sites. They accurately quoted and recalled numbers of LEPs and fluent students, student characteristics, and student needs without referencing reports. All were cognizant of appropriate programs, stages of implementation of those programs within the school sites, and changes that were imminent from the state ESL program.

ESL teachers, ESL counselors, and DOPSs at the site were equally knowledgeable. All administrators who worked directly with ELLs maintained notebooks or personal electronic databases which they referenced while talking with the researcher. Their records were compilations of the monthly reports, their own research using cumulative files, transcripts, discipline reports, and student reported data. Little of their information appeared to be shared within the school or between sites.

The monthly paper reports ESL teachers received could not be simply copied and

shared with mainstream teachers due to the confidentiality of the information. Teachers were likely to be dependent upon conversations with the ESL teachers to gain information about the students. Countless hours were spent setting up, maintaining the individual data sources, and reorganizing data for reports which contained data that could have been placed once into the NCWISE system and then downloaded and manipulated into simple database programs.

The lack of shared data and the inability to access it electronically sliced through each of the categories housed in the framework, seemed to hamper disaggregation of many of the recommended indicators, and sometimes led to assumptions that may or may not be true. As an example, only one positive behavior could be tracked, and it presented an example of the assumptions sometimes made of ELLs due in part to lack of shared data. Site staff generally assumed that ELLs had little access to computers yet over 70% of students participating in the focus groups and responding to annual survey data indicated that they did. Another example of an assumption of the site staff was that parents had little desire for the ELLs to complete high school or further their education. The focus group data did not support this assumption.

Site administrators and staff tended to under-estimate that actual number of ELLs in their respective schools, counting only those who were receiving direct services. Although all schools reported scheduling active LEP students into specific classes or with teachers who used appropriate instructional methods for ELLs, the same was not as likely to happen to ELLs who had reached fluent status and generally were not readily identified. While ESL teachers attempted to maintain contact with these students, the case loads they carried made detailed and weekly contact difficult.

Site staff appeared to have little factual understanding of the program design or of the budget available to the ESL program. Indicators of the lack of understanding was indicated by the inappropriate use of terminology, inconsistency in implementation of sheltered and inclusion classes, the choice of teachers to instruct those classes, and the variance in instructional techniques appropriate for ELLs. Although some site administrators were involved in the initial SIOP training, more in-depth communication with them appeared necessary for them to fully understand the scope and vision of the ESL program. A better understanding of the restraints under which the director worked and the need for their support in requesting local funds for additional resources might bring budget requests to the forefront and lead to an expansion of the program.

*Limited Parental Involvement*

The first contact with ELL parents occurred when they arrived to enroll their children. Since this occurred at the actual Welcome Center campus, located in the heart of an area heavily populated by non-English speaking ethnicities, the first contact was likely a positive one. Parents were greeted with welcome signs in multiple languages and multilingual staff was present to assist them.

According to one of the veteran ESL teachers, when the ELL population was smaller, the district sponsored sessions at the Hispanic Learning Center, churches, or libraries on Saturdays for ELL parents. The purpose was to educate parents about the schools, provide parenting resources, and just be a place where parents could “feel like they belonged.” According to the director, the sessions grew so large housing over “300 families” that the district shifted the responsibility of meetings like this to schools. She indicated that “almost every school then started by hosting nights for (ESL) parents…”

She indicated that the goal was for schools to take on the parent contact responsibility by setting up times for meetings which would serve an additional purpose of helping parents feel comfortable in their child's school.

Although high school administrators expressed a desire to have parents involved, no specific strategies or plans were in place to assure ELL parental involvement or outreach. All high schools reported holding sessions with ELL parents one or two times a year at which interpreters were used or the Translator systems were in place. ELL parents were not likely to be involved in site base management committees, parent organizations, or parent committees. Few ELL parents served as volunteers in any capacity.

ESL teachers, some counselors, one bilingual assistant principal, and dropout prevention specialists, who had made a special effort to reach out to parents, were the most likely people ELL parents contacted at schools. As one ESL teacher indicated, ELL parents were not comfortable coming to the schools where lack of English abilities hampered the conversation, making both teachers and parents uncomfortable. Teachers reported that they called parents infrequently because of the difficulty in communicating.

*ESL Teachers, Administrators, and Staff*

Central office staff, site administrators, and principals extolled the value of ESL teachers at the site. The myriad of duties and responsibilities of the ESL teachers created opportunities for them to interact with administrators, parents, teachers, and most importantly the students. They not only prepared lesson and taught ESL classes during the day, but often gave up their planning times and worked late in the afternoon to serve in other capacities.

ESL teachers were invaluable to the school sites and recognized as the experts

about the students. They worked with administrators and counselors by assisting with scheduling, both the individual schedules of students and the master schedule as it related to program offerings, and helped select possible inclusion teachers and helping to conference. They became the link between the district office and the site providing necessary data and identifying program needs. ESL teachers were the right hand for mainstream teachers assisting them by helping with strategies for modifications and instruction, reading students' tests, and tutoring and supporting students who were in mainstream classes.

Most importantly, ESL teachers were the most likely person for parents to contact at the site. They were the ones building a rapport and creating a safe atmosphere for parents. They helped parents to understand the processes and recommendations the school made for the students.

Likewise the admiration for central office staff, the director, program coordinator and lead teacher was reciprocated. ESL teachers identified the strides the department had made for students and attributed that success to the central office leadership. Specifically the ESL teachers pointed out the movement toward benchmark testing appropriate for ELLs, the growth in program offerings, and the pacing guides to accompany the ESL program.

## Major Findings as Related to the Primary Questions

The research study asked two primary questions. The first question posed in what ways the district's English Second Language (ESL) programs and strategies currently in place adhered to identified national standards and best practices.

Using the strategy framework as a foundation, the researcher determined that two distinct ESL programs existed within the district. One program offered through the ESL department, although still in development, was aligned to state and national standards in terms of program development and use of instructional methods. The department utilized data collected, stored, and analyzed from within to decide types and placement of programs, placement of students, and placement of teachers. ESL teachers used data to plan for differentiation of student instruction. Strengths were found in the leadership of the district office staff who supported the ESL teachers as they implemented the programs chosen to meet the needs of students within the funding available primarily from state and federal sources. The ESL teachers and counselors became the channel of communication between the school and parents and the students' advocates.

Across the district as a whole, the collection and use of data, instruction of mainstream teachers, allocation of resources by district and site administrators, engagement with parents, and professional development opportunities were minimally executed. This division was most evident in the schools where few interactions between mainstream faculty and students with the ELLs occurred outside the classroom and few ELLs participated in school activities, events, or functions. Evidence suggested that teachers were chosen to teach ELLs in the mainstream more for their empathy toward the students than for their instructional planning, differentiation, and knowledge of best practices. While the ESL program coordinator had trained ESL teachers to instruct sheltered classes, no training beyond the broad SIOP training had prepared site teachers to teach inclusion. The success of those programs varied and appeared based more on the

preferred teaching styles of the mainstream teacher than on specific awareness and implementation of strategies appropriate to use with ELLs.

Within the department, the implemented programs met the recommendations of both state and national standards and were chosen as a best fit for the majority of students. Student needs were identified before planning the subsequent year's programs. Because of limited funding, the director and program coordinator were forced to made decisions for placement of teachers more on headcounts than student needs. Only after making those decisions could they determine if sheltered and or inclusion classes could be offered. Limited support was given to students who were consultative or fluent and in the mainstream by ESL teachers at the site. No bilingual tutoring was provided, nor was tutoring offered during the school day which meant that students who wanted to pursue higher level classes had limited support from the school.

As has been indicated throughout this study, the abilities and knowledge of the ESL central office staff and teachers were evident at all levels. ELLs depended upon their teachers to navigate the system and understand processes. The ESL teachers were advocates of students, the pillar for parents, the repository of information about the students, and the support system for administrators and teachers. Principals depended upon the insight and leadership of the director, program coordinator, and lead teacher in finding the best ESL teachers and attempting to implement programs such as Spanish for Native Speakers and inclusion in the school. No district support outside the ESL department was evident to provide additional foreign language teachers so that Spanish for Native Speakers could be offered or to assist in training inclusion teachers.

A division was evident in terms of data collection and use. The accountability department which housed the primary student data information bases relied upon the Microsoft Access databases of the lead teacher to confirm LEP status of students instead of assuring that data had been entered into the NCWISE system. The lead teacher confirmed information from NCWISE with site data from ESL teachers. Little demographic and historical information was recorded in the centralized system, which limited access by personnel across all levels and sites. The system in place for tracking information about ELLs was inefficient and of little use to site administrators or mainstream teachers. Even if sites had the information ESL research indicated should be used in decision making, the researcher was unable to determine if administrators and teachers knew how to best use the information without additional training.

No equity funding was allocated to high schools for ELLs from the local budget, which left the director with few avenues for ongoing planning. She was dependent upon federal and state funding laden with recurring expenses but which varied from year to year and was based solely on headcounts. This lack of assurance of funding made it difficult for her to develop a strategic plan for addressing the education of ELLs and the addition of human resources which was the most requested need from the sites.

Because the district seemed to expect the director to provide professional development within the funding allowed from federal programs, professional development opportunities were limited. The primary focus had been on training all staff in SIOP strategies; however, it became evident through this research that a more targeted approach, perhaps specific to administrators and identified inclusion teachers, might yield greater success. This approach while more limited in terms of personnel exposure might

require more in house development of materials and more sessions to provide the in-depth training needed. Additional support from the district would provide evidence of the district's commitment to the ELLs as a whole.

Most evident was the lack of parental engagement in the district. Although site personnel offered a plethora of strategies for reaching parents to the researcher, no process for collecting these ideas and developing them into a strategic plan was evident. Many of the ideas proposed required the addition of human resources. Schools appeared to need outside support in developing their ideas.

The second question asked what outcomes were experienced by high school ELLs exposed to these ESL programs and strategies in the school district. Outcomes of students may be measured in a number of ways, and all indicators lead toward graduation. A review of students scoring proficient on state required EOCs, five of which were required for graduation, revealed that Hispanic students consistently scored below the district average although they were slightly above the state. The rates for LEP students were the lowest in the district, ranging from 42.1% to 48.4% from 2006-2008 which demonstrated improvement, but at very slight increments.

Findings from the analysis of 199 schedules of ELLs for the 2006 school year indicated that only six students were enrolled in at least one AP course, and 23 we enrolled in an honors level class. Twenty students were enrolled in French, 32 in Spanish, and 20 in Spanish for Native Speakers. Over half of the students were enrolled in at least one vocational course which indicated that they generally followed a vocational pathway. Of note is that few of the vocational pathways and courses led to higher paying jobs with future opportunities without additional education at a higher level. Few ELLs were

adequately prepared to enter a 4-year college, even though the majority of students in the focus groups indicated that was their personal goal.

Indeed, district and state reported data did not track Hispanics or ELLs specifically for intentions after graduation. Through the process of elimination, the category most likely to hold ELLs was that of Other. Within that stratum, only 31% indicated they hoped to enter a 4-year college, which was almost a 16% difference from either White or Black graduates. This would indicate that the majority of ELLs would most likely attend a community college, pursue a vocational career, join the military, or move directly into the workforce.

Graduation rates for 2008 reflected the performance of Hispanic and LEP students across the district. Even though the overall district average indicated 72.9% of high school students who began in the district in 2004 graduated, the percentage of both Hispanic and LEP students was less than 50%, the lowest in the district. In addition to those students tracked through the cohort group, the director did indicate that for the first time 17 students who had entered as newcomers to the country would graduate and the district anticipated more in years to come. Although every school presented examples of successful students who had overcome great obstacles to graduate and pursue meaningful careers, those students remain in the minority.

## Implications for Practice

While a number of positive attributes were found within each category, areas for improvement also were evident. The researcher encourages the district to write an ESL strategic plan that contains specific actions to be undertaken at all levels of the district.

Table 14

*Actions for Considerations for Improvement*

| Category | Area for Improvement | Possible Action |
|---|---|---|
| 1: Data Collection and Use | Lack of expanded data placement within centralized electronic database. | Develop a process for inputting the data being collected into NCWISE. |
| 2: Programs | Lack of access of ELLs to Spanish for Native Speakers programs. | Increase teacher allotments so that additional foreign language teachers are assigned to prevent trade off situations. |
| | Lack of support for ELLs who have exited the program. | Develop bilingual or dual language tutoring opportunities. Consider using Spanish club members or outside mentors. |
| | Lack of awareness of content teachers about native language resources available for students. | Provide bilingual materials and print resources for ELLs in all subjects.<br><br>Assure all students and teachers are aware of availability. |
| | Lack of sample lesson plans or curriculum modifications for content teachers. | Develop and provide samples for teachers. |
| | Lack of instructional personnel to assist teachers in learning appropriate instructional strategies. | Provide additional coaches or team teachers to schools to work with teachers. |
| 3: Instructional Practices | Lack of consistent use of instructional techniques by content area teachers.<br>Mainstream teachers:<br>• Reported mixed use of student centered and didactic instruction<br>• Limited evidence of specific ESL objectives posted or used in planning<br>• Reported planning based on content objectives | Provide additional training specifically for mainstream teachers who instruct ELLs. |

| Category | Area for Improvement | Possible Action |
|---|---|---|
| | • Use of SIOP strategies varied by teacher. | |
| 4: Leadership | Lack of additional fiscal resources to the program above federal and state allocations. | Provide possible additional funds from local or grant resources. |
| | Lack of understanding by site administrators relating to the overall ESL budget. | Educate site administrators of the funding available to the ESL program. |
| | Lack of assurance at the site level for adequate resources from the instructional budget. | Develop processes that are clear to all ESL teachers to request funds. |
| | Lack of high expectations in academics by site staff and faculty. | Share data of student/parent goals with administrators and teachers. |
| | Lack of activities that include ELLs. | Develop additional clubs or activities of interest to ELLs. |
| 5: Parental and School Engagement | Lack of a written plan to encourage the involvement of parents with the school. | Develop and write a specific plan to encourage and promote involvement of ELL parents with schools. |

## Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the broad spectrum of the ESL program within a district in order to first identify the strategies that the district had instituted and then evaluate how well they aligned to research based strategies. The researcher also was curious about the outcomes the ELLs were experiencing. The researcher did not have access to information maintained by individuals in the district. While individuals had attempted to analyze and evaluate data about specific areas (i.e. dropouts, suspensions, etc.), no evidence was found to indicate information was routinely disaggregated, analyzed and shared between the ESL office and schools as in published annual reports.

In order to better comprehend the needs of the ELLs in the district, the following recommendations are made:

1. Replicate the process of this case study with similar districts to determine if similar conditions exist in other school districts.

2. Complete a follow up study in 3-5 years to determine changes over time to the population and the programs and practices of the district.

3. Conduct an analysis of data explicit to ELLs from Grades 7-12 to better determine grade retention, dropouts, and suspensions effects.

4. Compare the academic success of ELLs by groups dependent upon length of time in U.S. public schools.

5. Examine and compare ELLs who have graduated to discover what strategies helped them graduate.

## Conclusion

A school district is more than just a collection of departments and schools. The parts must act in concert to accomplish a common goal. Working as one to assure that ELLs are graduating with abilities and skills to continue their education or enter the workforce attaining jobs with a future is imperative and aligned to the district's goal for all students. This district appears ready to move as one to expand ESL support systems.

The ESL Department demonstrated knowledge and awareness of the needs of ELLs and how to meet those needs. The department collects, manages and utilizes data to determine appropriate programmatic offerings. It hires qualified and energetic teachers and staff members. The department leads within the school and at the district level to maximize fiscal resources and initiates and maintains parental contacts. However, with

graduation rates for Hispanic at 48.2% and LEP students at 41.4%, slow and incremental growth has not proven to be sufficient. Moving by a few percentage points each year means that hundreds of students may be unable to graduate from high school and maximize their potential as adults. In order to increase the success rate of ELLs it appears a larger effort by the district as a whole should be made.

Three underlying assumptions were made in this study. The first was that the majority of administrators, teachers, and staff members desired to fulfill the responsibility of educating all ELLs. Secondly, it was assumed that the research-based recommendations were appropriate for the ELL population in the district. Data supported the first two assumptions. Lastly, the researcher believed that multiple strategies embedded within a holistic model were necessary for consistent and long-term improvement in student academic success. While this study has not proven that this assumption is valid, this assumption may be a starting point for the district as a whole as they begin to specify and implement strategies in all categories.

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# APPENDIX A: DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Student Related

1. ELLs have two types of accountability. One is linked to the IPT test and the other to the traditional End of Course Tests required for graduation. What type(s) of data do you receive? How do you use that information? With whom do you share it?

2. If you could paint a picture of successful ELL students, what would they look like?

3. The system has a process of registering all ELLs at one site. How do you decide placement of that student?

4. What types of information is provided to schools when ELLs enroll for the first time?

5. Describe the opportunities ELLs have to attempt higher level classes. How does the central office support schools in moving ELLs into these classes?

6. When you visit schools, what types of interactions do you witness involving your ELLs?

7. What types of counseling do ELLs receive?

8. How does the district support high schools so that they may offer accelerated learning courses at the site level? (SAT prep, homework/study skills, Homework routines, note taking, HOTS, summarization, etc)

9. Explain the classes that are offered for ELLs at the central and site levels (ESL, SIOP, newcomer, dual language, dual enrollment, honors/AP)

Curriculum, Programmatic, and HR Related

10. What types of professional development opportunities are offered to the staff in terms of cultural awareness of your ELLs? Appropriate instructional strategies? Academic background opportunities?

11. Describe the hiring process for ESL teachers. How do you involve the principal?

12. What types of administrator and teacher supporting materials are available from the central office (benchmark testing, curriculum guides, models of teaching practices and lesson plans, etc.)?

13. Suppose you had all the resources you needed to meet the needs of ELL students, how would you use those resources programmatically?

Leadership Related

14. How are schools involved in the budgeting process?

15. What types of assurances are in place for resources for ELLs?

16. How do you model expectations to leadership at the district and school levels?

Parental Involvement

17. Does the system have a written action plan in place for encouraging parent involvement?

18. If you had “the model parent involvement parent program” for parents of ELLs, what would it look like?

19. How do you communicate with parents of ELLs?

# APPENDIX B: SITE ADMINISTRATOR/ESL TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Tell me a little about your professional background? Years in education (teacher, administrator), college(s) attended, number of schools you have practiced in, etc).

Student Related

1. ELLs have two types of accountability. One is linked to the IPT test and the other to the traditional End of Course Tests required for graduation. What type of data is provided to you as principal? How do you use that information? With whom do you share it?

2. If you could paint a picture of successful ELL students, what would they look like?

3. Who is responsible for scheduling ELLS? How are decisions made about ELL course schedules? Academic or career pathways?

4. Describe the opportunities ELLs have to attempt higher level classes. What strategies do you or members of your staff use to provide them with the access?

5. When you are completing "walk-abouts" in your building what types of interactions do you witness involving your ELLs?

6. What types of counseling do ELLs receive?

7. What types are support systems or courses are offered to ELLs at the site level that support accelerated learning (SAT prep, homework/study skills, Homework routines, note taking, HOTS, summarization, etc).

8. Explain the classes that are offered for ELLs at the central and site levels (ESL, SIOP, newcomer, dual language, dual enrollment, honors/AP).

9. Suppose you had all the resources you needed to meet the needs of ELL students, how would you use those resources programmatically?

Curriculum/Program/Instructional Staff Related

10. What types of professional development opportunities are offered to the staff in terms of cultural awareness of your ELLs? Appropriate instructional strategies? Academic background opportunities?

11. Describe the monitoring system you have to assure teachers are using research based instructional strategies with students.

12. What input do you have when hiring the ESL teacher? What attributes do you look for when hiring teachers of mainstreamed ELLs?

13. What types of administrator and teacher supporting materials are available (benchmark testing, curriculum guides, models of teaching practices and lesson plans, etc.).

14. If you had access to additional resources for your teachers to use with ELLs, what would those resources be?

Leadership Related

15. How do you involve staff and faculty in decision making? How are teachers of ELLs represented?

16. How do you encourage autonomy?

17. Describe the budgeting process on the site?

18. What types of assurances are in place for resources for ELLs?

19. How do you model expectations to faculty, staff, and ELLs?

Parental Involvement

20. How do you involve parents of ELLs in the school?

21. Do you have a written action plan for encouraging parental involvement in place?

22. If you had “the model parent involvement parent program” for parents of ELLs, what would it look like?

23. How do you communicate with parents of ELLs?

# APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

List the expectations of your family for you.
¿Enlista las expectaciones que tiene tu familia hacia ti (qué espera tu familia de ti)?

If money was no object, what type of future would you see for yourself?
¿Si el dinero no fuera un factor, qué tipo de futuro verías para ti mismo?

What types of extra-curricula activities are you involved in at school? Outside school?
¿En qué tipo de actividades extra-currículares dentro de la escuela estás involucrado? y, ¿fuera de la escuela?

How do staff members (teachers, secretaries, administrators) interact with you outside the classroom and/or school?
¿Cómo interactúa el personal de la escuela (maestros, secretarias, administradores) contigo fuera del salón de clases y/o de la misma escuela?

How do you know what teachers expect of you?
¿Cómo sabes qué es lo que los maestros esperan de ti?

What types of academic support does the school give you?
¿Qué tipo de apoyo académico te ofrece la escuela?

What types of academic support does the school give you?
¿Cómo se comunica la escuela con tus padres?

Describe the climate of your school
Describe el ambiente en tu escuela.

# APPENDIX D: TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please tell me a little about your teaching experiences and background.

2. What types of training have you received regarding differentiation? Grouping? ESL techniques?

3. How do you assure that all students are actively engaged during the class period?

4. What process do you use to plan your lessons?

5. How do you use the data outside your classroom to assess students' strength?

6. If money was no object, what resources would you like to add to your classroom? The school in general?

7. How do you interact with ELLs outside the classroom (sponsor clubs, activities, attend events, etc.) How do you interact with parents of ELLs?

# APPENDIX E: MATRIX OF RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES BY CATEGORY

## Category 1: Data Collection and Use

| Strategy | Actions or Areas Applicable to Strategy | Possible Data Source(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Disaggregates demographic and at-risk information about the ELL population to use in decision making. | Specific variables include but are not limited to the following.<br>• Ethnic distribution<br>• Family structure and poverty level<br>• Language spoken in the home<br>• Academic backgrounds of ELLs<br>• Parental expectations<br>• Academic performance including proficiency in English<br>• Academic performance by subgroups on standardized tests<br>• Number and type of credits earned, academic courses attempted, career pathway chosen, etc.<br>• Enrollment in advanced, AP, and honors classes<br>• Enrollment in dual enrollment classes with community colleges<br>• Types of electives undertaken<br>• Enrollment in foreign language courses<br>• Dropout rates<br>• Suspension rates<br>• Attendance rates<br>• Discipline referrals<br>• Pregnancy rates<br>• Grades retained<br>• Civic awareness activities<br>• Participation in extra-curricula activities<br>• Access and use of technology in school and at home | administrative interviews; ESL databases; state and district reports; |

Category 2: Curriculum and Programs

| Strategy | Actions or Areas Specific to Strategy, if Applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| Provides content based curriculum for all ELLs | • Curriculum guides in use by teachers of ELLs<br>• Lesson plans developed by teachers for ELLs<br>• Content and language objectives stated or written on boards | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews; classroom observations |
| Provides appropriate level of language curriculum in listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing as needed. | • Classroom activities involving listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing | site administrator and teacher interviews; classroom observations |
| Provides access to higher level, honors, and AP classes for ELLs | • Numbers of ELLs registered in advanced courses | site administrator interviews; master schedules; ELL schedules |
| Assures teachers are following courses of study in content area for ELLs | | site administrator interviews; teacher observations |
| Assures standard course of study for ESL is followed (TESOL standards) | | central office, site administrator, and teacher interviews; classroom observations |
| Provides licensed ESL teachers to school sites | • Licensed ESL teachers as instructors | central office and site interviews; comparisons of student assignments to teachers |
| Assures ELLs are assigned to licensed content teachers trained in ESL strategies. | • Student assignments in master schedule | central office and site interviews; Comparisons of student assignments to teachers |
| Offers ESL classes | • Classes indicated on master schedule | central office and site interviews; master schedule |
| Offers Sheltered English Instruction Classes | • Classes indicated on master schedule | central office and site interviews; master schedule |

| Strategy | Actions or Areas Specific to Strategy, if Applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| Offers Bilingual Classes | • Classes indicated on master schedule | central office and site interviews; master schedule |
| Offers Two Way/Dual Language classes | • Classes indicated on master schedule | central office and site interviews; master schedule |
| Offers Spanish for Native Speaker classes | • Classes indicated on master schedule | central office and site interviews; master schedule |
| Provides a newcomer program for entering students | • On and off site program availability | central office interviews |
| Has a basic literacy skills curriculum for ELLs | • Curriculum guides, notebooks, artifacts, documents. | central office and teachers interviews |
| Has content standards for both language and literacy developed within content areas. | • Curriculum guides, notebooks, artifacts, documents. | central office interviews |
| Have curriculum benchmarks that specify what students should know or be able to do at specific points. | • Curriculum guides, notebooks, artifacts, documents. | central office interviews |
| Has samples and/or examples of modification of existing curricula reflecting ELLs' culture and practices | • Curriculum guides, notebooks, artifacts, documents. | central office interviews |
| Develops elective courses specifically for ELLs that address college preparatory issues and information | • Courses on master schedule | central office interviews; curriculum guides; master schedule |
| Provides courses for ELLs on topics that may accelerate learning | Classes offered on following:<br>• Homework routines<br>• Note taking<br>• Higher order thinking<br>• Summarization skills,<br>• Study skills<br>• SAT prep | central office, site administrator, and teacher interviews; classroom observations |

Category 3: Instructional Practices

| Strategy | Actions or areas specific to strategy, if applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| Plans lessons with clearly defined objectives. | • Content objective(s)<br>• Concept objective(s)<br>• Language objective(s) (listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing)<br>• Teacher communicating objectives to students by writing on board and/or orally.<br>• Teacher identifying key details students are expected to know | lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Plans specific opportunities for interaction and discussion. | | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Plans how to group students in various types of groups to support both language and content objectives. | | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Plans specifically how to teach subject specific vocabulary and phrases (language objective). | • Teacher using key subject or content vocabulary at least 6 times<br>• Teacher presenting students with explanations<br>• Teacher associating visual aids or images with vocabulary and terms<br>• Teacher and students using handouts, flash cards, word walls<br>• Teacher providing direct instruction on 10-12 new words or terms per week<br>• Teacher presenting the key details in at least 3 ways.<br>• Teacher using dramatic representations acting out details.<br>• Students generating their own descriptions, explanations, or definitions of vocabulary or terms.<br>• Teacher using inference and context clues to help students discover meaning of words<br>• Teacher checking for correctness | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Assures time for lesson review and evaluation. | • Review of key vocabulary and content concepts<br>• Feedback to students on their output<br>• Informal assessments of students' comprehension and understanding (spot check, group responses, etc.) | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |

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|---|---|---|
| Identifies supplementary materials that make the lesson clear. | • Teacher using of hands-on manipulatives, "realia", multi-media, audio-visual aids, pictures, models, interactive CD-ROMS, DVDs, computer programs, related literature,<br>• Using demonstrations | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Adapts content to various levels of student ability. | • Teacher modifying text by highlighting, taping, summarizing, etc.<br>• Teacher prepare notes, handouts, graphic organizers, outlines, leveled study guides,<br>• Teacher use multiple modified assignments | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Uses short, simple sentences without idiomatic expressions | | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Uses descriptive language. | Examples include, but are not limited to:<br>• Synonyms<br>• Vocabulary repetition<br>• Personalized nouns not pronouns | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Uses meaningful activities that integrate lesson objectives and concepts with language practice. | • Teacher including practice activities such as surveys, letter writing, simulations, constructing models, etc. in lesson plans | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Teach processes and process thinking. | • Flow charts, check lists, sequence charts posted in classroom | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Develops and sets expectations regarding homework policies and expectations. | | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Develops school language and expectations. | • Students follow processes when asking for directions, asking for assistance, etc.<br>• Academic tasks and expectations are clearly modeled or charted | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Links students' background and personal experiences with new vocabulary, knowledge, and information. | • Key content vocabulary presented in context<br>• Students reading in small groups with teacher. Teacher explaining words not familiar to students as they read.<br>• Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) – Students self-selecting key vocabulary words individually, in pairs, small groups, and whole class to build a class list of vocabulary terms<br>• Students using personal dictionaries, Word Walls, mnemonic strategies, Cloze sentences (fill in the blank), concept maps, and semantic maps (What is it? What is it like? | classroom observation; teacher interviews |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Where are examples)<br>• Students know suffixes, prefixes, and root words and look for meaning of the words using that knowledge<br>• K-W-L charts<br>• Teacher placing new learning in context and on what is familiar to student<br>• Students previewing ideas and exploring new words<br>• Students using words in complete sentences | |
| Uses appropriate instructional language. | • Teacher speaking appropriately for the students' level<br>• Teacher enunciating clearly<br>• Teacher using simple sentence structure<br>• Teacher not using idioms | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Uses techniques to identify similarities and differences. | • Venn Diagrams or Comparison Matrices<br>• Metaphors to connect abstract or non-literal relationships<br>• Classification or grouping visuals such as Tree Diagrams<br>• Analogies in either teacher-directed or student directed activities using visuals or graphic organizers<br>• Students creating their own analogies using graphic organizers | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Teaches students to use summarizing techniques. | • Students skimming text and eliminating redundant and/or trivial information<br>• Students finding the main idea(s) or thesis sentence<br>• Students using summary frames (Narrative, TRI, Definition, Argumentation, Problem Solution, Conversation)<br>• Teacher focusing on big picture and most important information<br>• Students using GIST | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Uses non-linguistic or combinations of linguistic and non-linguistic tools for presentations through paraphrasing or restating. | • Teacher and/or students using graphic organizers (mapping, timelines, flow charts, lists, fishbone diagrams, etc.) to describe people, places and things, to organize events or processes, to visualize cause and effect, to help students understand relationships between the whole and parts or to collect prior knowledge<br>• Brainstorm lists to collect students' prior knowledge ("scaffolding strategy")<br>• Use episode patterns to organize information about particular events including the specific (1) setting(s) (2) people, (3) duration, (4)sequence(s) of events or (5) a particular cause and effect.<br>• Students or teacher using generalization/principal pattern organizers to generalize and summarize<br>• Teacher using physical models, | classroom observation; teacher interviews |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | demonstration, photos pictures, videos, audios, films drawings, or "realia" to demonstrate points of the presentation.<br>• Students generating mental pictures and describing them through writing or a visual image.<br>• Kinesthetic activities | |
| Poses situation that require students to generate hypotheses. | • Students demonstrating both inductive and deductive hypothesis generating<br>• Students using problem solving and decision making strategies such as simulations, experimentation, teacher and student built models, puzzles, etc.<br>• Students using inquiry based learning techniques of observation, application, and testing.<br>• Students using concrete methods to present their hypothesis tests.<br>• Students engaging in historical investigation by describing, researching, role playing, posing hypothetical situations, etc.<br>• Students using tools such as SQP2RS and predicting | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Provides opportunities for students to participate in heterogeneous cooperative learning | • Students in dyads, triads, small groups<br>• Students in base groups, formal groups, and informal groups | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Uses scaffolding techniques. | • Teacher assisting and supporting student understanding by having students "think aloud," paraphrase, summarize. | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Provides multiple opportunities for students to practice and apply learning. | • Hands on activities<br>• Manipulatives<br>• Diary entries<br>• Students creating maps or graphic organizers<br>• Reports<br>• Discussion circles<br>• Cooperative learning activities in pairs and small groups | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Integrates language skills into activities. | | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Assigns relevant homework. | • Students participating in establishment of homework policy<br>• Students understanding the purpose of homework.<br>• Students receiving feedback on homework<br>• Students tracking their own homework achievements. | classroom observation; teacher interviews |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Clarifies key concept in the first language as needed via aide, peer dialogue, or text. | | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Increases homework as appropriate for students. | | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Adapts homework to the stages of language acquisitions and abilities of students. | | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Provides immediate feedback to verbal mistakes. | • Teacher restates phrase correctly<br>• Teacher pinpoints the error so student can self-correct | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Provides immediate feedback to written assessments within 48 hours if possible. | | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Provides wait time for student responses. | | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Develops rubrics with students for use with declarative knowledge or procedural knowledge. | | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Teaches correction symbols used in editing and then uses them instead of comments. | | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |
| Provides specific corrective feedback. | | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Allows students to give feedback to one another. | | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Allows students to self-evaluate. | • Student led conferencing, data notebooks, reflection journals, etc. | classroom observation; teacher interviews |
| Provide opportunities for students to evaluate activities in the classroom. | | classroom observation; lesson plans; teacher interviews |

Category 4: Leadership

| Strategy | Actions or areas specific to strategy, if applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| Disaggregates school population characteristics | • Size of school<br>• Ethnic disbursement<br>• SES via free and reduced lunch numbers<br>• Board policies | policy manual, student information systems |
| Assures equity and efficiency in instructional resource allocation | • Involves sites in development of budget<br>• Compares ES, MS, and HS allocations<br>• Provides additional instructional materials and supplies for ELL population<br>• Provides additional teachers and other human resources for ELLs<br>• Provides additional reading materials (classroom sets, library, textbooks, etc.) in multiple languages<br>• Provides clean, safe, well located, and adequate classrooms for ELL programs<br>• Provides appropriate access to technology<br>• HSs received Title 1 funds<br>• | administrator interviews; annual budgets; school observations; teacher allocations |
| Provides licensed, qualified pool of applicants | • Recruits most qualified applicants<br>• Has processes in place to find and locate best ELL teachers<br>• Assists site administrators with selection of ELL teachers | administrator interviews; human resource data |
| Provides on-going professional development for administration, faculty, and staff | • Topics may include:<br>♦ Federal, state and local policies<br>♦ Retrieving and interpreting data about students<br>♦ Integration of subject matter<br>♦ Alternative assessments,<br>♦ Collaboration<br>♦ Instructional techniques for ELLs | administrator and teacher interviews, |
| Models school's vision and mission | • Concrete visible evidence of mission<br>• Refers to system and school missions | school artifacts; teacher interviews |
| Models respect of all persons regarding of ethnicity | • Prohibits discrimination, use of racial slurs and comments, | administrator and teacher interviews; student focus groups |
| Sets high expectations for all students | • Meets with ELLs to discuss opportunities and expectations<br>• Shares expectations with ELLs and parents<br>• Assures all students equal access to advanced courses | student focus Group; |
| Hires qualified ESL and/or bilingual teachers for ESL | • Licensed and experienced teachers in ESL strategies | administrative interviews; staff rosters |

| Strategy | Actions or areas specific to strategy, if applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| classes and consultative support | | |
| Hires high quality staff | • Assures all new staff are licensed with strong content backgrounds, fluent in English, are enthusiastic, committed, and opened to innovation<br>• Assures new staff are trained in ESL techniques and strategies and use of differentiation<br>• Assures all new staff have high expectations for students | administrative interviews; staff rosters |
| Develops and improves quality of current staff | • Provides on-going professional development in use of SIOP, differentiation, assessment, best practices, culture differences, innovations, etc.<br>• Participates with staff in training<br>• Encourages innovation and change<br>• Monitors application of new and preferred techniques | administrative interviews; professional development schedules |
| Designs schedules that allows for flexibility of teachers and students instructional time. | • Schedule permits longer instructional periods during school hours as needed.<br>• Extends school day before and/or after school hours<br>• Provides tutorial time during school day<br>• Provides access to continued instruction during breaks and summer<br>• Uses creative ways to extend time for ELLs to develop language skills while accumulating course credits | administrator interviews, master schedule |
| Designs schedules that encourages collaboration among faculty | • Allocates time for inter-departmental planning (breaking down barriers)<br>• Sets aside time for teachers to plan modified relevant curriculum at multiple levels<br>• Sets aside time for ELL classroom teachers to design alternate assessments<br>• Provides time for teachers of ELLs to meet and plan with ESL teacher | administrator interviews, master schedule |
| Encourages teacher autonomy | • Ensures ESL representation on the school leadership team<br>• Includes staff in budgeting and decision making processes<br>• Opens channels for teacher input | administrator and teacher interviews; teacher surveys |
| Monitors implementation of programs | • Has knowledge of system program recommendations for ELLs<br>• Provides transition programs for entering freshman<br>• Assures district policies, procedures, and processes are followed | administrator interviews; field observation |

| Strategy | Actions or areas specific to strategy, if applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| Demonstrates focus on student | • Makes decisions based on what is best for students.<br>• Assures processes are in place to identify students at-risk of failure or dropping out<br>• Provides access to mentors, advocates, and/or tutors<br>• Develops processes that connect home and school<br>• Assigns ELLs to teachers trained in SIOP techniques<br>• Monitors class sizes containing mainstreamed ELLs | student surveys |
| Creates a safe and welcoming climate | • Places at least one bilingual staff member in the office to assist with student and parent needs<br>• Maintains classroom and school discipline and order<br>• Builds climate focused on learning<br>• Sets high expectations of students and teachers<br>• Develops councils or clubs to orient students to the school<br>• Encourages peer interaction | student surveys, focus groups |
| Promotes the development of social capital | • Encourages teachers to:<br>o Interact with students both within and outside the classroom<br>o encourages teachers to embrace and infuse cultural attributes of students in the classroom<br>o advocate for ELLs<br>o demonstrate authentic care<br>o tutor students<br>o provide academic counseling, career and college information, etc.<br>o sponsor clubs and activities of interest to ELLs | teacher interviews; classroom observations; student focus groups |
| Monitors counseling is available to ELLs | • Assures counselors meet regularly with ELLs<br>• Assures information about careers and colleges are available in multiple languages and disseminated to parents and students<br>• Seeks bilingual counselors<br>• Assures counselors are advising students about access to advanced courses | administrative interviews |

Category 5: Parental and School Engagement

| Strategy | Actions or areas specific to strategy, if applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| Implements a written parent involvement plan. | | school artifacts; copy of parent plan; administrative interviews |
| Conducts ongoing assessment of ELL parents and offers information or training in areas of need. | • Determines parents' understanding of the following:<br>  • School policies<br>  • Curriculum<br>  • School reform acts<br>  • Parent and student rights and responsibilities<br>  • School expectations of parents and students<br>  • Volunteer opportunities<br>• Uses periodic small surveys | school artifacts; administrative interviews |
| Provides assistance to parents to improve parenting skills and in learning about the social and emotional development of their children. | • Assists in helping parents connect with continuing educational opportunities (GED literacy, college training, etc.)<br>• Educate about importance of goal setting with youth.<br>• Educate parents as to importance of importance of interacting with youth about school.<br>• Use multiple strategies to reach parents including workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages, website pages, etc<br>• Distributes information about health, nutrition, parenting skills in multiple media<br>• Provides a family room or resource center for ELL parents<br>• Hire parent liaisons to facilitate relations between the schools, students, and families | school artifacts; administrative interviews |
| Communicates with families about school programs in general. | • Translates all documents to parents in native language<br>• Uses multiple media modes to communicate with parents (print, mail, video, web, etc.)<br>• Reviews all communication for clarity, readability, correctness of language idioms, etc.<br>• Provides opportunities for dual communication (questions and interaction in native language.<br>• Has signage in multiple languages<br>• Has bilingual personnel in office area to | school website; newsletters, other school artifacts; administrative interviews |

| Strategy | Actions or areas specific to strategy, if applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| | greet parents<br>• Offers bilingual "office hours" and flexible meeting times<br>• Holds bi-lingual orientations, curriculum nights and PTA meetings<br>• | |
| Communicates with families about the progress of the individual student. | • Contacts ELL parents for positive as well as negative behaviors<br>• Provides translators for parent teacher conferences<br>• Provides flexible meeting times<br>• Sets expectations and policies encouraging teachers to communicate with family | school artifacts; administrative interviews |
| Creates opportunities for ELL parents to volunteer in the school | • Provides training sessions for ELL parents<br>• Recognizes ELL volunteers for time and effort<br>• | administrative and teacher interviews; student focus groups; school artifacts |
| Provides workshops or seminars to ELL parents about home activities that assist with learning. | • Provides training in parents' role regarding homework and curriculum related areas such as personal goal setting, homework assistance, home study models, etc.<br>• | school artifacts; administrative interviews |
| Involves ELL parents in decision making and leadership opportunities | • Recruits parents of ELLs to be on school related committees<br>• Trains parents how to be members of school teams and committees<br>• Assures involvement with PTA/PTO<br>• Assures ELL representation on site and system advisory councils | parent club/organization rosters, committee rosters, school artifacts |
| Collaborates with outside agencies to provide services to ELL families | • Works with non-profit and service organizations<br>• Works with governmental agencies such as DSS, Mental Health, etc.<br>• Partners with higher education agencies to provide parent education opportunities. | school artifacts; administrative interviews |
| Collaborates with community | • Sponsors home or neighborhood meetings<br>• Develops resource directory for parents and students on community services, programs, and agencies<br>• Partners with community and businesses to offer summer and after school hours programs<br>• Provide opportunities for families to participate in community service work<br>• Partner with Hispanic organizations<br>• Examine community characteristics in comparison to school characteristics | school artifacts; administrative interviews |
| Collaborates with middle schools to | • Prepare parents for high school expectations<br>• Creates awareness in parents about high | school artifacts; administrative |

| Strategy | Actions or areas specific to strategy, if applicable | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| prepare parents for high school expectations and opportunities | school opportunities, choices, higher ed opportunities, pathways, curriculum, achievement levels, transitions, assessments, importance of remaining in school, etc<br>• Educate parents to differences in high schools from native land. | interviews |

Professional Development

| Strategy | Actions or areas specific to strategy, if applicable Indicators | Possible Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| Teach all administrators to analyze and interpret data about ELL population | | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |
| Provide take home data for site administrators to use with staff to teach them about the population of the school. | • Effect on academic knowledge background<br>• Willingness of students to participate in class | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |
| Train administrators about the similarities and differences in the U. S. and Mexican education systems. | | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |
| Educate administrators and staff on legal issues and ELLs | | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |
| Offer training to all teachers of ELL students in appropriate instructional strategies | | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |
| Offer training to all teachers of ELLs in alternative assessments for ELLs | | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |

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| Train teachers and administrators about cultural differences and expectations regarding education of ethnicities. | | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |
| Offers sessions in Spanish to staff | | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |
| Trains staff on value and utility of family involvement and ways to build positive ties between school and home | | central office, site administrators, and teacher interviews |