LEADERSHIP PARADIGMS INFORMING THE WAYS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
WORK WITH SOMALI IMMIGRANT STUDENTS: CASE STUDIES OF TWO HIGH
SCHOOLS IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Organization and Leadership
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012

Urbana, Illinois

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Abstract

The educational system in the United States continues to face the mounting challenge of providing adequate education that meets the needs of students from ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds. As school communities continue to be transformed into multiethnic communities, this demands educational leaders or administrators that are not only culturally proficient and able to understand the needs of students from diverse cultural contexts, but also able to promote equitable educational outcomes for all students regardless of their home background. In an effort to understand how school administrators might best respond to the needs of recently arrived Somali immigrant students, case studies were conducted in two high schools in a metropolitan city in a Midwestern state. This study explored leadership constructs that inform the ways in which school administrators work with groups of Somali immigrant students in high schools in the Midwest, with specific emphasis on whether their work is informed by transformative leadership. Data gathering involved semistructured interviews and document analysis. Participants in the study included school administrators (principals and assistant principals), teachers, Somali students, Somali teachers' aides, and Somali parents.

Transformative leadership research suggests that to educate students from diverse backgrounds adequately, school administrators must foster equitable outcomes for all students (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman & Starratt, 2002; Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Riehl, 2000). The conceptual framework of this study was based on a transformative cross-cultural leadership model outlined by Shields (2003). Transformative cross-cultural leaders understand the diverse cultural contexts in which they operate and promote the creation of a culture that takes into account the *material realities* of the changing populations of the school or district (Shields, 2003).

Key findings of the study showed that in school one, the administrators engaged in transformative leadership by creating an equitable and inclusive learning environment that promoted the adjustment and integration of Somali students. In school two, the findings indicate a pessimistic picture in which Somali students experienced marginalization and inequities. It is imperative that the administrators establish quality programs that promote the adjustment of Somali students, especially programs that include mentoring and academic support services. It is also vital to make school programs inclusive.

Acknowledgments

Allah, the Almighty, has made it possible for me to do this study. I owe gratitude to my adviser and chair, Dr. Carolyn Shields. This dissertation study would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and patience of Carolyn. My conversations with Carolyn about school leadership, community, and social justice inspired me to explore whether transformative leadership theory informs school administrators' work with immigrant students. Carolyn, I was privileged to be in your classes! I truly appreciate your expertise in school leadership; your good advice, mentorship, and patience; and your dedication to your students. I look forward to collaborating with you on research regarding schools in a community context and social justice. I also extend sincere thanks to my dissertation committee members. Dr. Richard Hunter, Dr. Donald Hackmann, and Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Parsons, I am enormously grateful for your availability, feedback, critique, and recommendations. In addition, I genuinely thank all the participants in this study.

I am indebted to my parents, who have provided me with endless love, encouragement, unwavering support, and opportunities. My father has only a seventh-grade education, and my mother never had any formal education. Nevertheless, both of my parents valued education and made it possible for me to have a good education. Before the civil war broke out in Somalia, my family moved to Nairobi, Kenya, because my father wanted my siblings and me to have a good education. I extend my deepest gratitude to my parents. I will always remember the tremendous care and encouragement they have shown me while studying in graduate school. I am grateful to my husband, Abdikarim, for his endless support and lifting my spirits. I was referred to Abdikarim to help me gain accesses to Somali teachers and the schools. Abdikarim also made it possible for me to gain access to the participants in the study in different capacities. I would also

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Recently arrived Somali immigrant high school students face the challenge of adjusting to schools in the United States (Perkins, 2000). Schools in the United States have not been prepared for the large influx of Somali students. From 1991 until the present, hundreds of newly arrived students have enrolled in public schools in various cities, including Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, Columbus, Ohio, and small towns in Wisconsin. Apart from classes for English language learners, schools lack programs that are appropriate for refugee students, whose language and culture differ from those of the mainstream American culture (Zehr, 2001).

To understand the experiences of recently arrived Somali refugee and immigrant students within American public schools, first it is important to comprehend the socioeconomic, cultural, and political context in which the Somali community is situated. Somalis in the United States have settled in urban cities, where the families encounter cultural challenges, language barriers, racism, and social and economic inequalities (Darboe 2003; Farid & McMahan, 2004). For instance, housing is one challenge that newly arrived Somalis often encounter. Because of their low levels of education and income, Somali families are marginalized and segregated into low-income housing, which is not safe from social problems unique to urban cities, such as gang violence (Darboe, 2003; Farid & McMahan, 2004). In addition to the housing problem, most recently arrived Somalis face English language barriers, which hinders the possibility of obtaining meaningful jobs.

With respect to the experiences of Somali students and parents with the school systems, parents and their children continue to face challenges caused by cultural and communication barriers. For instance, the most difficult issue for school leaders and educators in terms of working with Somali refugees and immigrants is their disrupted education caused by the civil

war (Forman, 2001; Schultz & Hertz, 2006). Some children have grown up in refugee camps in Kenya and had never attended school in the 18-year duration of the civil war. Another challenge the schools face is the language barrier between Somali students and the teachers and administrators (Schultz & Hertz, 2006). Somali students experience lower academic achievement and encounter challenges in adapting academically to regular programs. Because of these academic challenges, many students tend to drop out of school, whereas others experience suspension and expulsion (Zehr, 2001).

Forman (2001) examined the experiences of Somali high school students as well as the cultural identity of Somali students within the context of a Canadian and an American high school, and showed that Somali youth are characterized as a distinct group. He found that Somali students were categorized based on their past experiences, such as migration and refugee experiences. That is, school administrators and teachers characterized students by using their stories, which "serve as a means of positioning the students, locking them into their 'refugee' or 'immigrant' roles and relegating them to an identity position that is oddly dependent on their histories" (p. 44). As such, the categorization of Somali students often led to the influence of deficit thinking about Somali students because they are expected to internalize the organizational codes and culture of the American high school; they have not yet done so very successfully.

Further, responses from the schools to challenges that Somali students encounter have been minimal. For instance, some schools offer newcomer programs, which are transitional, self-contained programs that focus on both English language and academic content. Some districts in Minneapolis, Minnesota have created newcomer programs in which refugee students with no prior schooling have been placed for a period of up to one year. Within the newcomer program, students are taught subjects that include science, math, social science, and English language

classes. However, the schools lack appropriate programs for refugee students whose language and culture are different from the mainstream American culture (Zehr, 2001). A challenge that American-born students do not usually experience to the same degree with Somali students is the language barrier. Unfortunately, research indicates that most teachers are not adequately prepared to work with immigrant students who have language barriers (Nieto, 2000).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore which leadership constructs inform the ways in which school administrators work with groups of Somali immigrant students in high schools in the Midwest, with specific emphasis on whether their work is informed by transformative leadership. This study explored the approach of school administrators (principals and assistant principals) working with Somali immigrant students and their parents in an effort to understand how school principals might best respond to the needs of recently arrived Somali immigrant students. The literature consistently points out that American public schools face the challenge of effectively educating students who come from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. It appears that diversity is an ever-persistent challenge for school leaders and teachers, not only in terms of educating and dealing with diverse American born students, but also in educating immigrant students whose values and cultures differ from those of the American mainstream culture.

Research Questions

The central question that guided this study was, "What leadership constructs inform the ways in which school administrators (principals and assistant principals) work with groups of Somali immigrant students in high schools in the Midwest?" In addition to this central question, the following questions furthered our understanding:

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1. What beliefs guide the ways in which educational leaders work with Somali immigrant students and their families?

2. How do school leaders work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes?

3. What kinds of accommodations (supports, programs, and environments) do school leaders promote?

4. Does transformative leadership inform school administrators' approaches to educating Somali immigrant students?

Overview of the Literature

The literature review for this study was drawn from a variety of literature, including the immigrant and refugee literature as well as transformative and transformational leadership theories, which examine schools from different angles. More specifically, the conceptual framework for the study is drawn from transformative leadership (Shields, 2003). Transformational leadership focuses on enhancing the capacity of an organization. Bass (1985) and Burns (1978), who were the first to discuss transformational leadership, found that the purpose of transformational leadership theory was to encourage leaders to raise the commitment of organizational members to the organization, and thereby to achieve the objectives and goals of the organization (Burns, 1978). Leithwood and Janzi (1999) developed a model of transformational leadership for schools that involved creating a collective vision, creating organizational structures that would permit stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process, and providing intellectual stimulation. This emphasis on transformational school leadership calls for school leaders to create a collaborative approach that seeks to promote school change. However, the theory did not explicitly acknowledge the barriers that exist to creating equitable democratic and socially just schools for all students.

Transformative leadership theory raises the question of the extent to which schools are democratic and equitable. It focuses on issues of diversity, social justice, and equity (Astin & Astin, 2000; Shields, 2009). The theory transcends improving organizations and focuses on ways to change schools so that they are equitable and inclusive. In other words, transformative leadership appears to be "holding the promise and potential to meet the needs of complex, diverse, and beleaguered education systems" (Shields, 2009, pp. 1-2). Hence, the theory seeks to promote schools that focus on representing the collective interests of diverse members of the community. In other words, transformative school leadership promotes school values and decisions that are reflective of a "community of difference." Shields (2003) describes "a group of people from diverse backgrounds, with differing beliefs, values, goals, and assumptions, coming together to achieve cohesion through new understandings, positive relationships, and the negotiation of shared purposes and norms of behavior" (p. 275). Therefore, transformative leadership places emphasis on the importance of creating schools that are based on the values of democracy.

Background Information

In this section, I discuss the civil war in Somalia and how Somali communities came to settle in various states in the Midwest of the United States. Also, I explore the postmigration experiences of Somali families, including their challenges associated with adapting to a new environment.

Somalis began to arrive in the United States in 199 (Remington, 2008), and it is estimated that approximately 150,000 to 200,000 Somalis currently reside in the U.S. The Somalis who have settled in the Midwest arrived from refugee camps in Kenya and other countries neighboring Somalia. Recently arrived Somalis in the Midwest have settled in the twin cities of

Minneapolis/St. Paul, which has the largest population of Somalis consisting of approximately 50,000 (Schaid & Grossman, 2003). Columbus, Ohio, has the second largest Somali population, and it is estimated that 38,000 Somalis have settled. The factors that have attracted Somalis to Columbus, Ohio, and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, are the availability of social programs and training opportunities. In addition, an attractive job market and social service programs for refugees have encouraged Somalis to settle in the Midwest (Remington, 2008). Another factor that has encouraged Somalis to settle in Columbus include the availability of affordable housing.

Somalia's Civil War

In this section, I provide a brief history of the causes of the armed conflict in Somalia, as well as how the war contributed to the disintegration of the Somali state and how this affected the lives of millions of Somalis. To understand the experiences of recently arrived Somali immigrant students, it is important to revisit the history of Somalia's civil war during the 1990s. The history of the civil war in Somalia provides a context that explains how the armed conflict shaped the migration and postmigration of the Somali population.

Somalia was one of several developing countries in which the superpowers of the United States and the former Soviet Union contested their ideologies during the Cold War era. Because of its strategic location in the Horn of Africa, during the Cold War, Somalia was an ally of Russia and later switched to become an ally of the United States. In support of the dictatorial regime of Mohammed Barre, both of the superpowers flooded an enormous number of military weapons into the country (Duyvesteyn, 2005). Both Russia and the United States supported Barre, who governed the country with an iron fist and who continued to violate human rights by arresting and killing intellectuals, politicians, and Islamic scholars (Farid & McMahan, 2004). In response to Barre's ruthless regime, different clans formed armed rebel groups whose aim was to

end Barre's regime. For instance, the Isaaq clan from the northern part of the country (a former protectorate of the United Kingdom) suffered from the repressive regime of Barre. This contributed to the formation of the Somali National Movement (SNM), which is the rebel group of the Isaaq clan. The SNM rebels began to wage guerrilla-type war against the government. In response to the conflict, Barre's regime carried out a brutal, repressive campaign against the Isaaq clan in the North, which included torture and killings. By May 1988, the SNM began to wage full-scale war against Barre's government. The government lost the war in the North and the Isaaq clan rebels seized the northern territories. The conflict in the North forced a large emigration of Isaaq clan members, who migrated to Canada, the United Kingdom, and other countries in Western Europe (Duyvesteyn, 2002).

Other clans, such as the Majeerteen and Hawiye, were not exempt from Barre's oppressive regime. The Hawiye clan from the southern part of Somalia formed the rebellious United Somali Congress, which began fighting against the government in 1988. By 1990, as the Cold War ended, support for Barre's government from the United States and the Western block also ended (Ayoob, 1995). The rebels from the South overthrew the Barre government. After the fall of Siad Barre's government in 1991, instead of forming a government, the Hawiye clan in the South engaged in inter-clan conflict over who would run the country. The competition for power contributed to political polarization and violence among the Hawiya clan, which in turn exacerbated the prolonged civil war in the South, contributing to the collapse of the Somali state. The civil war destabilized the country, causing millions of Somalis to flee to the neighboring countries of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Yemen (Duyvesteyn, 2002).

Often, the casualties of civil wars are civilians, who become refugees and experience the traumas of armed conflict, such as exposure to violence and rape. For instance, while escaping

from the war, Somali children sometimes witnessed the killing of their parents or other family members (Farid & McMahan, 2004; Zehr, 2001). Others were exposed to dead bodies on the roads of Mogadishu or endured horrific experiences during the journey from Somalia to a neighboring country (Farid & McMahan, 2004).

Individuals who ended up in the refugee camps did not find the camps a hospitable place. For instance, the conditions in refugee camps such as the Kakuma and Dadaab in Kenya were described as horrendous (Abdi, 2002). Children already exposed to war also encountered lack of security within the camps, including robbery, a lack of culturally appropriate food, starvation, and malnutrition. Some women in the refugee camps were exposed to violence, such as rape (Abdi, 2002). Furthermore, some of the refugees compared the conditions in the refugee camp to the situation in Somalia. For instance, they described the conditions in the Dadaab refugee camp with the Somali proverb, "Laba kala daran mid dooro," (p. 12), which means choosing one of two bad situations. Those refugees who were fortunate received sponsorship through United Nations agencies and immigrated to various countries, including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other Western European states.

Postmigration Experiences and Challenges Associated with Adapting to a New Country

Settling in and adapting to North America and Europe has not been an easy task for many refugees and immigrants. These new immigrants often encounter numerous challenges, including economic, social, and acculturation ones (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997), as well as psychological stressors (Machel, 2001). Portes and Zhou (1993) indicated that immigrants often experience poor socioeconomic conditions in the host country. Because of the language barrier, an inadequate education, and a lack of appropriate skills required for the job market, immigrants often are trapped in the lowest paying jobs, ones that continue to exploit them, further

marginalize them, and place them at the bottom of the economic ladder. Many Somali immigrants and refugees fit into Portes and Zhou's (1993) description of immigrants in the United States. For instance, some recently arrived Somali parents with children not only face the challenge of the English language barrier but also illiteracy in the Somali language. Being impoverished and with low levels of education, Somali immigrants work in low-paying jobs in major cities such as Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota and Seattle, Washington. In search of jobs and a lower cost of living, Somalis also have settled in smaller cities such as Rochester and St, Cloud, Minnesota, and Barron, Wisconsin; most of these immigrants in small towns work in poultry and meat-packing factories (Schnaid & Grossman, 2003).

Moreover, the harsh socioeconomic conditions in which immigrants live are not limited to low-skilled jobs, but also include high unemployment compared with the American population. Prior to the economic downturn of 2009, Somali immigrant and refugees in the United States experienced an unemployment rate of approximately twice the national average (Bender & Murphy, 2009). Indeed, the lack of resources and jobs limits the prospect of families advancing up the economic ladder and integrating into society easily. High unemployment traps families in a cycle of poverty, which in turn makes the upward mobility of the family difficult by restricting their choices, such as the ability to live in safe neighborhoods and enroll their children in good schools.

Various studies have reported (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997), immigrants often are concentrated in inner cities or low-income neighborhoods. Cedar-Riverside, one of the neighborhoods in Minneapolis where Somalis are concentrated, is known as a high-crime area, where Somali boys, having limited choices, turn to gangs and violence. In Cedar-Riverside thousands of Somalis are concentrated into low-income high-rise towers, and the neighborhood

is known for its crime and gang violence by Somali boys. It is reported that Somali gang members make up 1% of the gangs in Minnesota (Yuen, 2009). Most of these young men involved in gangs are dropouts from school, who adapt to hip-hop culture and resort to gang life and criminal activities.

While adapting to the norms and ways of life of the host country, immigrant families also experience various cultural stressors imposed on them by their new country. Almost every immigrant family experiences "acculturation stress," which involves adapting to the cultural norms of the new country into which they have settled. Other challenges they face include gender role conflicts within the family (parents), language barriers in the new country, and economic hardships (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2002). For instance, in Somali culture, the father is the breadwinner; however, because of the lack of skills required for jobs in the United States, the high unemployment experienced by Somali men places stressors on the family when men are not able to secure employment and the father feels inadequate for not being able to provide for the family. This causes disintegration of the family structure and often divorce. As a result, the cohesion of the family unit is affected by these stressors from the new environment.

Somali families are prime examples of immigrants who are experiencing acculturation stress, which has contributed to the disintegration of some immigrant families. Zhou (1997) showed that the success of the immigrant family in the new country depends on the "social capital" of the family, which is family cohesion (p. 993). In other words, without a solid family that is socially grounded in its spirituality and values, it is overwhelmingly difficult for parents to adequately support and educate their children. Even in the case of solid families with social and spiritual grounding, the potency of the family is greatly diminished by the onslaught of acculturation stress.

Many Somali families, both in the United States and in Europe, continue to experience not only acculturation stress but also psychological traumas and postwar traumatic stress disorders. However, Alioppa-Niitamo (2002) found that education might be a mitigating factor in the ability of some Somali parents to deal with the many stressors they encounter in the new country in which they settle. Coping may depend on parents' cultural capital, including whether they are from a rural or urban background. As such, educated parents with no language barriers are more able to be active and successful in the education of their children.

Because of the displacement of the Somali population, Somali families in North America and Europe who were exposed to the war and endured a prolonged stay in the refugee camps are raising children whose cultural and social capital was largely obliterated by the civil war. For instance, Somali students come from a country where the social capital, social networks, and civil society that had previously sustained the social networks have been destroyed. As a result, many Somali high school students lost years of education as well as the cultural capital that would have provided them with knowledge about the world and their connection with the world. The prolonged armed conflict between the clans in the South has had a devastating impact not only on institutions but also on the civil society and the social networks that were the bases for the cultural and social capital.

Educating Somali Children in North America

Despite the hardships many Somali immigrant families may face in the receiving countries, Somali parents generally continue to emphasize formal education for their children. For instance, according to Alitolppa-Niitamo (2002), Somali parents may believe formal education is a way to "re-establish a sense of control over one's life and, also, to offset the turmoil of the refugee experience" (p. 279). The parents believe that education provides children

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with the skills and competency to be economically successful and to access nationwide and international labor markets. Somali parents value formal education. In fact, this goes back to Somali nomads' emphasis on formal education. Historically, the Somali nomad father would send his son or daughter from the village to a city to live with relatives or other family members to acquire a formal education. Given that Somali immigrant parents have the expectation that their children will be educated and retain their Islamic identity, it is important to understand the experiences of Somali parents and children with American public schools.

Schooling for Refugee Students

To address the needs of refugee and immigrant students in high school, the literature indicates that first, it is important to understand the various backgrounds of these students. Immigrant and refugee students have certain characteristics that must be recognized and understood if school leaders are to educate this population effectively. Research that focuses on refugee and immigrant students reveals that educating immigrant and refugee students first requires attention to their psychological and social needs (McBrien, 2005; Rutter, 2006). For instance, many immigrant children who are attending American schools are from war-torn developing countries. According to Machel (2001), "war undermines the very foundation of children's lives, destroying their homes, splintering their communities and shattering their trust in adults" (p. 80). In addition, refugee children often have been exposed to the traumas of war, witnessed violence or killings, and experienced prolonged stays in refugee camps. Similarly, many Somali immigrant students have experienced psychological traumas related to wars and torment (Rutter, 2006). In addition, children suffering from the traumas of war experience psychological effects on "emotion, behavior, thoughts, memory, learning ability, perceptions and understanding" (Machel, 2001, p. 80). In general, however, schools appear to underestimate the

impact on Somali children of the civil war and of the children's prolonged stays in refugee camps. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize that if Somali children are to be educated adequately, school leaders must be aware of the possible impact of psychological effects of war on children, and how they adapt to school behavior and learning.

Further, because of the recent arrival and interruption of formal education of immigrant and refugee students, they may have additional needs compared to American-born children. Ellis, Lincoln, McDonald and Cabral (2008) examined the relationship between trauma exposure, postresettlement stressors, perceived discrimination, and mental health in Somali adolescent refugees between the ages of 12 and 19 who had been living in the United States for one year. The findings of the study showed that trauma was associated with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The researchers also found that post resettlement stressors, acculturative stressors, and perceived discrimination significantly contributed to PTSD. Certainly, this study suggests that schools must take into account the unique needs of adolescents exposed to trauma. This necessitates having school leaders who create successful learning experiences, which involves recognizing the linguistic, psychological, socioeconomic, and cultural needs of recently arrived immigrant children.

Somali refugee and immigrant students face certain challenges that they share with other immigrant children who have been exposed to armed conflict, yet it is apparent that an understanding of the needs of these students is lacking (McBrien, 2005; Rutter, 2006). Additionally, Somali and other immigrant students experience prejudice and marginalization in schools. As McBrien contends, "This stigmatized part of their identity is conspicuous and likely to bring rejection and discrimination from many members of the host culture. Rejection corresponds to a greater likelihood of school dropout" (p. 336). Indeed, Somali students do

experience marginalization in the schools, and this has contributed to a disconnect between Somali youth and the schools in the Midwest. Hence, not only are Somali boys dropping out of schools and joining gangs but they are also vulnerable to indoctrination and recruitment to become suicide bombers.

It has become apparent that when Somali boys drop out of schools, their problems are not only limited to gang activity but also to the possibility of being indoctrinated and becoming extremists. In October 2008, members of the Somali community in Minneapolis became aware that a dozen Somali boys who had been missing had participated in the suicide bombings in northern Somalia, in Somaliland and Puntland. The young men had joined Al-Shabab (youth), an extremist militant organization with ties to Al-Qaeda. Al-Shabab controls most of southern Somalia and actively recruits Somali boys in the United States. Law enforcement and intelligence officials in the United States informed the Senate Committee on Homeland Security that a number of Somali-Americans from several U.S. cities, such as Minneapolis, Minnesota, had recently traveled to Somalia to join Al-Shabaab. It was reported that the missing Somali youth were motivated to joined Al-Shabab because of president George Bush's support for Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia in 2006 (Bender & Murphy, 2009).

Even though members of the Somali community opposed the invasion of Somalia by Ethiopia, no one had envisioned that Somali youth from the United States would join Al-Shabab (youth). The 12 young men missing from Minnesota and other US states ranged in age from high school to college students. The concern of the U.S. government was that young Somali men could be indoctrinated and trained in camps in southern Somalia and then return to the United States. In addition, both the US government and members of Somali communities abroad and in Somalia are apprehensive that Al-Shabab's links and its links with Al-Qaida could continue to

play a role in fueling and prolonging the civil war, which could turn the country into a safe heaven for Al-Qaida. That is, the goal of Al-Shabab is to overthrow the transitional government and seize control of the entire country. The question is what members of the local and state governments, Somali communities, and schools could do prevent the recruitment and radicalization Somali youth in the United States. Certainly, there is a need for state governments to take a proactive approach that seeks to build a partnership with Somali communities and schools and to arrive at solutions that would integrate Somali youth into mainstream society. For this reason, one should never underestimate the long-term consequences of Somali youth dropping out of school. In other words, we need to address the question of what role schools might play to integrate these students into the schools and society.

Personal Position

My interest in this topic stemmed from my desire to understand the beliefs that guide school principals' approaches to working with Somali immigrant high school students, and the extent to which school principals currently are addressing the educational needs of these recently arrived students. After witnessing many young, recently arrived Somali immigrant boys drop out of high school, including my cousin, I contemplated how principals might better interact and work with these Somali students. I wondered whether there are certain ideologies and school structures that may be contributing to the marginalization of Somali students and ultimately that cause these students to drop out of high school, or conversely, whether there are certain ideologies and school structures that could promote their success. I was interested in what barriers existed in schools for Somali immigrants, as well as what supports might exist.

Unfortunately, many Somali parents come to the United States in search of a better life, only to find that their children are vulnerable not only to joining gangs or ending up in prison but

also to being indoctrinated and recruited to fight the civil war in Somalia. I am a firm believer that the best hope for Somali immigrant children is a school that provides an adequate education and one that attends to the diverse educational needs of every student. My goal in this study was to examine school principals' approaches to educating Somali students. Based on my findings, I proposed recommendations that I anticipate will contribute positively to change and that will ultimately assist school leaders to tap into Somali immigrant students' potential, improve their schooling, and thereby support them in adapting to and integrating into the new culture.

Overview of the Conceptual Framework

This study utilized the transformative cross-cultural leadership model outlined by Shields (2003). Shields developed transformative cross-cultural leadership as a theoretical framework that could assist school leaders to create schools that are appropriate for culturally diverse student populations. Transformative cross-cultural leadership urges school leaders to have a moral cause, take a stand, and challenge inequities in the status quo to promote deep democracy in the school. The model examines schools from the lenses of power, race, class, social, and community contexts. As outlined by Shields, transformative cross-cultural leadership is grounded in cultural awareness, moral principles, meaning, understanding, justice, caring, and the use of power to promote a school that is a "community of difference." Transformative cross-cultural leadership raises questions about inequities, justice, and democracy because the theory seeks to advance the values of equity and social betterment (Shields, 2009). Transformative cross-cultural leaders promote deep democracy by analyzing and reevaluating the norms, beliefs, values, power structures, and practices of the school to transform the school into a community of difference (Shields, 2003). A community of difference begins with the principle that schools must eliminate the notion of homogeneity that is used to regard schools as homogeneous

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organizations in which there are predetermined "shared norms, beliefs and values" (p. 55). This is the foundation on which schools are based. A community of difference, according to Shields (2003), is concerned with the creation of schools that are built on the principle of heterogeneity, in which the aspirations and needs of diverse cultural groups are recognized, respected, and discussed. By locating schools within the community and also referring to them as communities of difference, Shields (2003) hopes to differentiate them from schools located within a traditional community, one that is assumed to be homogenous and to be built on the assumptions of shared norms, beliefs, and values that must be adopted by newcomers. A community of difference, in contrast, is based on shared dialogue, respect, and inclusion. A community of difference is recognized as a heterogeneous school and community, and it is built on democratic values.

Overview of the Methodology

The methodology for this study is more fully developed in Chapter Three. I conducted case studies focusing on the administrators (principals and assistant principals) of two high schools with large populations of recently arrived Somali refugee and immigrant students. Using a framework based on transformative cross-cultural leadership, I interviewed school principals, assistant principals, ESL teachers, parents, students, and school community liaisons. This study used a purposeful sampling technique in which personal networks were used to identify school administrators who had relatively large numbers of Somali immigrant students in their schools. The criteria for selecting the school administrators involved the number of years they have worked with Somali immigrant students, with two years being the minimum period required for the administrators to have been an administrator in the chosen schools. I used semistructured interviews conducted with the school principals, some parents, school community liaisons, and teachers.

Definitions

In this study, I clarified certain concepts that pertain to Somali immigrant students.

Refugee: According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the

UNHCR Convention of 1951 defined a refugee as a person who has:

> A well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR, 1951, p. 14).

In this study, refugee refers to those people who have come into the United States under the

UNHCR provision.

Immigrant: refers to anyone who is a foreign-born person who has been admitted to reside

permanently in the United States as a Lawful Permanent Resident. In addition, the term

immigrant is used to refer to someone who is either deemed legal or illegal. Because the

immigration status of Somali communities is either immigrants or recently arrived refugees, I

used both words (refugees and immigrants) interchangeably. In other words, even Somali

students who are immigrants still face the same challenges that refugee students experience in

the school.

Deficit thinking: This concept stems from:

> Deficit theories that hypothesize that some people are deficient in intelligence and/or achievement either because of generic inferiority (because of their racial background) or because of cultural deprivation (because of cultural background and/or because they have been deprived of cultural experiences and activities deemed by the majority to be indispensable for growth and development). (Nieto, 2000, p. 383).

Indeed, deficit thinking involves negative thinking held by certain school administrators and

teachers, who attribute the academic challenges students encounter in school to the students'

background, and related to such aspects as ethnicity, poverty, and culture. In other words, teachers blame students and regard children as not prepared to learn because of their backgrounds or the types of homes they come from, and therefore set low expectations for those students (Betsinger, García, & Guerra, 2001). When educators are influenced by deficit thinking, they resort to low expectations of immigrant and minority students, thus hampering the possibility of creating an equitable learning environment.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that owing to the time constraints, I did not shadow administrators to observe how they worked with the teachers and students. Another limitation is that it lacks the perspectives of district administrators, such as the superintendent, curriculum directors, and ESL directors. I chose not to include these administrators because the goal of the study was to focus on only high school administrators. This study was delimited to only two schools located in one urban city in a Midwest state. The limitation of this study was that it is a small sample that will focus on one geographical area; therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalizable to other geographical areas. Despite this limitation, there is much to be learned from this study, which will explore the approaches of school principals toward working with Somali immigrant students.

Significance of the Study

First, I chose this topic to develop a better understanding of the needs of Somali immigrant students. Second, I believe this study is important because there is a gap in the literature on school leadership and Somali immigrant students. Research on both Somali and immigrant students is minimal. In fact, according to Riehl (2000), there is inadequate research that carefully explores school administrators and immigrant and refugee students in general.

Therefore, this study will contribute to the literature on the roles of school leaders in addressing the educational needs of Somali immigrant students in particular and of other immigrant students in general. In addition, it is hoped that this study will contribute to a better understanding of the educational issues unique to Somali immigrant high school students and how to address them.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter provided a brief discussion of the history of the armed conflict that caused the migration of Somali students and their families to the United States. On the part of the schools, there is a need to create learning environments that address the needs of Somali refugees and immigrant students. It is vital that schools first understand the context in which these students are situated within the school and the community. For school leaders to provide adequate education that attends to the needs of these students, the experiences of Somali refugee students, including acculturation stress, language barriers, poor socioeconomic conditions, and past experience with armed conflict, must be understood. Hence, creating a supportive learning environment requires leaders who are inclusive and committed to the values of social justice.

In this chapter, an overview of literature concerned with the experiences of immigrant students with the American public school system was offered. In addition, an overview of the leadership literature (transformative and transformational), which is discussed further in Chapter Two, was presented in this chapter. Shields' (2003) transformative cross-cultural framework was outlined. The limitations and delimitations of the study were outlined, as well as the significance of this study.

In the next chapter, the literature review draws from literature on immigrant students in American schools, the experiences of refugee and immigrant students (including Somali refugees) with schools, and the responses of the school organizations in which those students are

situated. In addition, in the literature review chapter, transformational and transformative leadership theory is discussed in detail. In Chapter Three, I discuss the methodology of the study, as well as the procedures for data collection, data analysis, and standards of validation. In chapters Four and Five, the findings of school one and two will be discussed. Then, in chapter Six I will provide an overview of the study, followed by a discussion section. Then, I will provide recommendations and end the chapter with implications of the study for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, I provide an overview of the literature discussing the experiences of Somali refugee and immigrant students with schools in the United States, and the schools' responses to the needs of these students. Because inadequate attention has been given to research concerning Somali immigrant students in American public schools (Forman, 2001), the discussion of the experiences of Somali students and their families consists of a subsection of the literature on immigrant students in general. Second, given that this study explored leadership constructs that inform the ways in which school principals work with Somali immigrant students, the literature review is drawn mainly from transformational and transformative leadership theory. More specifically, transformative leadership theory provides the theoretical framework because this theory examines issues of values, power, culture, and school structures that could present barriers to the success of Somali immigrant students in school.

Overview of Literature on Immigrant, Somali Immigrant, and Refugee Students

The current system of education in the United States appears to face challenges in educating students from ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Numerous scholars including Gardiner and Enomoto (2006); Gitlin, Buendia, Grosland, and Doumbia (2003); and Shields, Bishop, and Mazawi (2005) have shown that public schools face the challenge of fostering equitable learning environments that attend to the needs of students of color, immigrants, and students from impoverished families. Schools maintain structures that continue to marginalize students of color. For instance, public schools are still institutions that stratify students by race and class, and thereby contribute to inequities in which students of color and refugee and immigrant students are lagging behind academically and are at risk of dropping

out of high school. Schools maintain structures and practices that include tracking systems, which place immigrant and African American students in general basic skills classes (Nieto, 2000). In addition, Darling-Hammond (2004) contended that tracking contributes to two different types of education: Students in high tracks often have the best-trained teachers. Hence, students in high tracks learn in smaller groups with better resources than students in lower tracks. Additionally, higher expectations are placed on students in the higher tracks, whose instruction includes creative writing and open-ended research. In contrast, students in the lower tracks are expected to fill in blanks and engage in rote memorization. Here, the concern is that tracking benefits high-performing students at the expense of students in the lower tracks. Therefore, the tracking system results in situations in which the minority and economically disadvantaged students could populate the lower tracks. Thus, this raises equity concerns.

Darling-Hammond (2004) described the inequities that are prevalent in American public schools. For example, numerous low-income students and students of color attend schools that she describes as "apartheid" schools. In these schools, there are larger class sizes, fewer teachers and counselors, fewer extracurricular activities, and fewer books and other materials. Immigrant students often are concentrated in high-poverty schools, which Darling-Hammond describes as lacking the resources to educate students effectively. Most of the immigrant and refugee students are concentrated in these high-poverty schools in the United States (Darboe, 2003; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001).

Educators' lack of understanding of the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students also plays a role in how minority students are marginalized in the classroom. Delpit (2001) explained the different educational paradigms held by some Caucasian educators and parents compared with minority educators and parents. She contended,

Many liberal educators hold that the primary goal for education is for children to become autonomous, to develop fully whom they are in the classroom setting without having arbitrary, outside standards forced upon them. This is a very reasonable goal for people whose children have already internalized its codes. But parents who don't function within that culture often want something else. It's not that they disagree with the former aim; it's just that they want something more. They want to ensure that the school provides their children with discourse patterns, interactional styles, and spoken and written language codes that will allow them success in a larger society (2001, p. 585).

This argues that to educate students of color, including immigrant students, the expectation of the schools is for students to assimilate into the Anglo-Saxon culture. On the part of school leaders and educators, there is a need to understand, as Delpit suggested, the goals that other cultures have when they send their children to public school.

Further, Delpit (2001) explained the cultural mismatch between classroom teachers and students of color. She asserted that White teachers use many directives, such as "Is this where the scissors belong?" when a Black teacher would say, "Put those scissors on that shelf." The Black students reacting to these different types of teachers may not realize that they are both commands and might ignore the less directive one. Delpit emphasized the importance of training teachers adequately on diversity and multicultural issues. In addition, she suggested that teachers need to give students the tools to play this game. She stated that educators have to be aware of the growing number of minorities within the public school system and try to teach them to possess the qualities that will give them capital, without taking away from their culture.

With respect to attending to the needs of immigrant and refugee students, the current American public school system appears to be unsuitable for educating refugee and immigrant children whose needs are different from those of their American-born counterparts. Refugee and immigrant families often are concentrated in urban areas, where there is high unemployment and where their families are in poverty. Consequently, immigrant youth may "acquire" or assimilate

into a negative culture, such as into the culture of gangs and drugs; thus, their prospects for educational achievement are diminished (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001).

The Unique Needs of Refugee and Immigrant Students

The literature indicates that to address the needs of refugee and immigrant students in high school, it is important first to understand the various backgrounds of these students. Immigrant and refugee students have certain characteristics that must be recognized and understood if school leaders are to educate this population effectively. Research that focuses on refugee and immigrant students has revealed that to educate immigrant and refugee students, attention to their psychological and social needs is first required (Rutter, 2006). For instance, many immigrant children who are attending American schools are from war-torn developing countries. According to Machel (2001), "War undermines the very foundation of children's lives, destroying their homes, splintering their communities and shattering their trust in adults" (p. 80). In addition, refugee children who were exposed to the traumas of war often have witnessed violence or killings and have experienced prolonged stays in refugee camps (Bateman, 1993). Children suffering from the traumas of war experience psychological effects, which include effects on "emotion, behavior, thoughts, memory, learning ability, perceptions and understanding" (Machel, 2001, p. 80). Moreover, their recent arrival and interruption of formal education contribute to the reasons immigrant and refugee students have different needs from American-born children.

Rutter (2003) showed that most refugee camps are known to have harsh environments that are not conducive to the psychological well-being of young children and their families. She indicated that the inadequate water and food, poor sanitation, malnutrition, and overcrowding that are prevalent in camps contribute to high mortality. Somali children and families are not

immune from other sources of instability within the camps, including robbery, a lack of culturally appropriate food, starvation, and malnutrition (Abdi, 2002). Moreover, Rutter (2003) showed that prolonged stays for more than 10 years had disturbing effects on the psychological and physical health of parents and their children. In fact, many Somali families have experienced prolonged stays in refugee camps and have endured these distressing situations (Abdi, 2002).

In addition to the exposure of Somali immigrant children to civil war and their prolonged stays in refugee camps, some Somali students who have settled in the United States suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A study that examined the relationship between trauma exposure, postresettlement stressors, perceived discrimination, and mental health issues in Somali adolescent refugees between the ages of 12 and 19 who had been living in the United States for one year showed that trauma was associated with PTSD (Ellis, Lincoln, McDonald, & Cabral, 2008). The researchers also found that post resettlement stressors, acculturative stressors, and perceived discrimination contributed significantly to PTSD. Certainly, this study suggests that schools must take into account the unique needs of adolescents exposed to trauma. Thus, it is necessary for school leaders to create successful learning experiences that involve recognizing the linguistic, psychological, socioeconomic, and cultural needs of recently arrived Somali immigrant children.

The challenges that Somali immigrant students encounter in schools are found across the United States, as well as in Canada and the United Kingdom. The findings of a study conducted by Rutter (2006) on Somali students in the United Kingdom showed that an interrupted education; exposure to violence while in East Africa or Yemen; higher student absenteeism and truancy because of family responsibilities; negative teacher perceptions; racial harassment, leading to disengagement from education; a lack of access to enrichment activities; poverty; and

the parental illiteracy of some new arrivals were all factors that contributed to the difficulties that Somali children encountered in the educational system (pp. 193-194).

Prejudice and Discrimination

Rutter (2006) showed that Somali immigrant and refugee children experienced stereotyping in school that caused them to feel unwelcome and isolated. In all the schools that Rutter examined in her study, she found that the teachers adhered to deficit thinking, which included perceptions that because Somali boys were "traumatized" or "aggressive," they could not be expected to learn. Rutter indicated the teachers constructed the identity of Somali boys as "mad rather than bad" (p. 190). The study also showed that Somali boys constituted the majority of students who were expelled from school. Additionally, the study showed that teachers characterized girls as being "passive and oppressed Muslim women" (p. 190). This indicates that because of a lack of cultural understanding of the lived experiences of Somali immigrant students, deficit thinking and false attributions influenced how the school worked with these Somali students and their families.

A large body of literature shows that immigrant students, regardless of race, continue to experience discrimination in school, which involves teachers having low expectations of immigrant students and engaging in deficit thinking toward them (Gibson, 1998; Gitlin et al., 2003; Katz, 1999; McBrien, 2005; Rutter, 2006). Schools appear to be organizations within which immigrant and refugee students continue to experience discrimination and isolation. Gibson (1998) conducted a study that examined the English language acquisition, academic achievement, and acculturation process of Punjabi and Mexican immigrant students attending U.S. schools. Gibson noted that Punjabi and Mexican students not only faced challenges such as language barriers and academic difficulties, but had also been marginalized by the schools. For

instance, Punjabi students endured racist attributions regarding the dress code and hairstyles for boys, as well as a "climate of racial hostility" from within the school and the community. Furthermore, Punjabi students who were newly arrived immigrants did not have access to adequate programs that could have integrated them into the regular programs. Instead, there were low expectations of the Punjabi students; for example, these students were placed into lower academic tracks that lacked academic rigor. Gibson (1998) also found that Mexican students in one of the schools in California were not exempted from the deficit thinking approach held by educators. The author suggested the need to create programs that adequately assist immigrant students to integrate into the schools without having the students compromise their values and culture.

To understand the factors that influence student dropout rates from school, it is imperative to look at Finn's (1989) model of "frustration self-esteem." This model helps explain the underlying factors that contribute to students' withdrawal from school. Finn's model shows that dropping out of school is a "developmental" process, which begins when the student experiences academic failure. School failure is the initial stage that diminishes a student's self-esteem; this in turn contributes to behavior problems that further diminish the student's school performance. As part of the cycle, according to Finn's model, the student ultimately drops out of school or is expelled by the school for behavioral issues.

Furthermore, Finn (1989) provided a second model of "participation–identification," which focuses on students' involvement in school and includes both "behavioral and emotional components" (p. 117). Finn's model emphasized that students' lack of identification with school and lack of participation in school activities, such as academic and extracurricular activities, will result in school failure. This will ultimately contribute to their dropping out of school. These

models best explain the reasons Somali immigrant students withdraw from school. Indeed, Somali immigrant students do experience not only alienation, but also a lack of support from the schools (Rutter, 2006). Darboe (2003) showed that Somali students in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area experienced disengagement from education and high dropout rates.

Gitlin et al. (2003) conducted a qualitative study that examined Kausanar Middle School, which is located in a middle-class neighborhood. The study investigated approaches to educating immigrant and refugee students, which included Mexicans, Bosnians, Somalis, and Sudanese. The authors collected data on school assemblies, lunchroom practices, bus activities, and discipline policies. The findings of the research showed that immigrant students were at once welcomed and marginalized by school structures and policies. For instance, the approach of the school personnel toward immigrant and refugee students revealed a perception of students' primary languages and cultures as deficits that students had to overcome to be successful in an American middle-class school. Among the school structures that marginalized students was the lack of late transportation, which would have permitted immigrant children to participate in after-school activities, such as sports clubs and other after-school activities.

In addition, findings from the study by Gitlin et al. (2003) showed compelling evidence that administrators' approach toward Mexican, Bosnian, Somali, and Sudanese ESL students were influenced by deficit thinking. The administrators' approaches were to reduce the perceived deficits, according to which students were regarded as devoid of social order. For example, one assistant principal stated that because some ESL students had never attended school in their home countries, he used discipline as a socialization process, in addition to punishing kids for wrongdoing. He asserted, "The ESL kids are primarily the kids that I deal with. . . ." (Gitlin et al., 2003, p. 108). The students, on the other hand, encountered challenges related to the ways in

which learning was expected occur and what was expected from them with respect to learning and internalizing the codes of conduct.

Several studies of Somali immigrant students consistently have shown that recently arrived Somali refugees and immigrants not only encounter academic challenges but also experience marginalization in various schools (Darboe, 2003; Forman, 2001). School leaders appear to lack an understanding of the educational needs of these students. Forman (2001), who studied two high schools in Massachusetts, in the United States, and Ontario, Canada, reported that Somali immigrant students were defined by and relegated into prescribed identities. These students experienced marginalization because school administrators and educators dealt with them based on their immigrant status and lived experiences. According to Forman,

> As students, they struggle against the constraint of imposed and narrowly prescribed identities which are frequently conceived as a deficit, seeking knowledge not just as a means of entering into the national fold but as a means to help them navigate the codes and symbols of their new countries on their own terms (p. 45).

There appeared to be a lack of understanding on the part of educators and administrators of ways to nurture students' potential and create culturally inclusive learning environments. Instead, Somali students struggled not only to adapt to North American high school culture, but also to tolerate institutional racism, which focused on maintaining the status quo and school structures that did not necessarily contribute to tapping the students' potential.

Lewiston, Maine, is a prime example of the prevalence of community-wide racism and a lack of cultural understanding of Somali students and their families. Recently arrived Somali students encountered mistrust, bias, and harassment from members of the school community in Lewiston (Bradley, 2007). Bradley, the assistant principal of Lewiston High School, reported that because of ethnic tension that existed among the students, the school took a proactive approach by partnering with other agencies, such as the Center for Hate Violence. The center

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developed student leadership, promoted dialogue, and facilitated cultural understanding between Somalis and other students (Bradley, 2007).

Some schools have begun programs such as newcomer programs. Newcomer programs are transitional programs (i.e., self-contained programs focusing on both the English language and academic content) that are provided to students (Forman, 2001; Zehr, 2001). Some districts in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Columbus, Ohio created newcomer programs in which refugee students with no prior schooling were placed for a period of up to one year. Within the newcomer program, students were taught subjects that included science, math, social science, and English language classes. However, the schools did not provide programs that targeted the social and psychological aspects that were appropriate for refugee students whose language and culture were different from the mainstream American culture (Zehr, 2001).

Certainly, it can be concluded that immigrants and refugees, including Somali students who have experienced armed conflict, have unique needs that must be addressed if these students are to be integrated into schools and into society more effectively. The literature consistently points out that school leaders and educators are not adequately equipped to understand the lived experiences and needs of refugee and immigrant students.

Transformational Leadership Theory

In the discussion of improving schools or changing schools into effective organizations that educate students, transformational leadership is a model that is commonly used. The focus of transformational leadership is on transforming schools into more effective organizations based on transformational theory. One of the founders of the theory, Bass (1985), developed a model of transformational leadership. In this model, theoretically, the purpose is to motivate organizational members by (1) raising followers' levels of "consciousness" about the importance

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and value of specified and idealized goals, and (2) getting followers to transcend their own self-interests for the team and the organization (p. 20). Bass and Avollio (1990) stated that transformational leadership causes organizational members to produce more than what is expected from them. The theory expects the school leader to be a "social architect" in terms of creating shared meanings, a shared vision, and change for the organization. Transformational leadership theory looks at schools through the lens of organizations, and the objective is to create a "purpose" for the organizational members and to achieve organizational goals.

Leithwood (1992) has applied transformational leadership theories to schools. He regarded transformational leadership as a "form of consensual or facilitative power" that is exercised through other people (p. 10). The focus is on exercising leadership through others to accomplish the goals of the school. Proponents of transformational leadership (Fullan, 1996; Harris, 2001; Leithwood & Janzi, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2003) have shown that the goal of transformational leadership is to advance organizational capacity by creating and articulating a vision; conveying high performance expectations; providing individualized support and intellectual stimulation to organizational members; and building a productive school culture, providing instructional improvement, and promoting a shared decision-making process in the organization (Leithwood & Janzi, 1999). The end value of the theory is student achievement. At the organizational level, transformational leadership has the potential to build the capacity to promote organizational learning and thereby unlock the teachers' knowledge and energy to become active participants in the school change process. However, missing from the values that the theory seeks to promote are issues of power, culture, equity, equality, and diversity, all of which have an impact on how values and resources are allocated in the school, and which in turn have an impact on the achievement of refugees and immigrant students.

Scholars of transformational leadership (Marzano, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2001) have indicated that school leaders must mobilize all the stakeholders of the organization into collective action. They have observed that the principal's role is to facilitate a collaborative culture and collegiality, in which the teachers participate in the decision-making process of the school. Transformational leadership also encourages school leaders to promote stewardship and to empower teachers by involving them in stewarding the vision and providing them with opportunities to be innovative and implement the school vision (Marzano, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2001). Empowerment is necessary; however, it is aimed at achieving organizational goals, rather than at empowering marginalized refugee parents and students, who are excluded from decision-making processes.

In addition, the theory appears to place emphasis on the organizational aspects of the schools. Most of the scholars that have discussed school change and improvement have addressed school change from an organizational perspective. For example, Fullan (1995) stated, "The schools are not currently a learning organization. And teaching is not a learning profession" (p. 232). He contends that a successful learning organization can occur when "capacity" is created throughout the school. In this case, capacity refers to sustaining the expansion of the knowledge and skills of the teachers, performing action inquiry (information sharing), and building "strong ties with organizations and associates outside the school for professional development" (p. 232). It is evident that Fullan emphasized the importance of the teachers engaging in inquiry-based learning as an integral part of organizational learning. As he discussed ways to build capacity in schools to change them, he touched on ways to change instructional strategies for diverse students.

Fullan (1995) contended that as part of the capacity building for organizational learning, the traditional role of the teachers should be changed from a role that is solely focused on teaching to a role in which the teachers are counselors and mentors. He also suggested that not only is it vital for teachers to understand the diversity of multiethnic students with different learning abilities but also that teachers must be committed to making a difference in the lives of all students, particularly the disadvantaged students. It is important to note that despite the emphasis on teacher development, the theory lacks ways to change teachers' deficit thinking, which plays a role in the school's low expectations for refugee and immigrant students (Gibson. 1998; Katz, 1999; McBrien 2005; Rutter, 2006). It is clear that in this theory, improving the school organization does not involve addressing inequity, power imbalances, and barriers to the creation of democratic schools. It is also clear that in the theory, improving organizational performance does not involve ways to attend to the needs of ethically and linguistically diverse students, including the needs of refugee and immigrant children. Any discussion of organizational learning also must include innovative ways to democratize the school and extend opportunities to marginalized groups in the school community. Advocates of transformational leadership have yet to address how transformational leaders might address issues of power, hegemony, and inequities, which are barriers to creating democratic schools that represent the collective interests of the entire community.

Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt (1998) conducted a study that showed links between transformational leadership, organizational learning, and school change. School principals who exhibited transformational leadership were able to move the teachers to commit to and engage in ongoing learning and change in the school. The authors found that some school principals exhibited various dimensions of transformational leadership. For instance, teachers reported that

some principals articulated the vision and mobilized them to engage in learning, most of the teachers indicated that their principal provided support for their professional learning, and the teachers in all the schools indicated that the principals provided moral support; some mentioned that the "principals are always there for us. . . . They are being supportive, open, accessible and sympathetic" (p. 66). The emphasis appears to be at the organizational level (more specifically, on teachers), and there is less focus on how transformational leadership influences the external environment in terms of creating linkages between the school and the families.

Transformational leadership does emphasize that to change schools and improve students' academic performance, capacity building is imperative; however, one can be skeptical whether transformational leadership, with its emphasis on the organization, could transform schools into learning environments that are viable for educating refugees and students of color, who are culturally and linguistically different from the majority of educators. Second, a limitation of the theory is that providing the teachers with support and enhancing their profession is not adequate if the ideas of equity, diversity, and hegemony are not part of the conversation. Third, despite attempts to improve the academic performance of all the students, transformational leadership has yet to provide solutions in terms of ways to develop dialogic relationships between educators and parents from marginalized, low socioeconomic, refugee, and immigrant families. Indeed, the theory does not extend the role of school principals beyond that of meeting organizational goals. Hence, it is doubtful whether transformational leadership would close the achievement gap and improve the academic performance of refugee and immigrant students unless it also attends to issues of poverty, race, and hegemony. Starratt (2005), who advocated for responsible leadership in schools, warned school leaders to shun decisions that benefit some students—namely, those from more affluent families—while marginalizing and

disadvantaging minority students. He proposed that principals take more of a "public servant" role and advocate for the "common good" of the entire school community. Certainly, transformational leadership does not extend the role of the school principal to one of a public "intellectual" who questions the status quo and seeks to reduce barriers to social justice in schools.

Leithwood (1995) observed that transformational leadership is intertwined with instructional leadership, for which the goal is "designed to affect classroom instruction quite directly, through . . . supervision, coaching, staff development, modeling, and other means of influencing teachers' thinking and practice" (p. 3). Instructional leadership must lead to student achievement, but it appears that instructional leadership does not challenge the beliefs of hegemony in terms of making the pedagogy and curriculum relevant to diverse students' lives. For instance, Marzano (2003) and Schmoker (2001) noted that as instructional leaders, school principals must ensure a "common curriculum" that is practical. I concur with the authors that there has to be an overarching standardized core curriculum; however, the approach currently appears to be "one size fits all." Neither takes into account the importance of making the curriculum relevant to the educational needs of students of color and refugees, whose cultures and values may not be represented in the curriculum. This is the challenge that transformational leadership fails to address. The theory seeks to change schools within the framework of the dominant hegemonic Caucasian middle-class perspective.

It appears that transformational leadership theory seeks to work within a system that maintains institutionalized inequities and the status quo; as a result, it rarely provides innovative ways to reach out to marginalized students and families, including the families of refugees and other students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Thus, transformational theory does not

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appear to provide solutions in terms of creating democratic schools that advance the collective interests of the entire community. This is a challenge that transformational theory has yet to overcome.

Even though the theory has the potential to promote a collaborative school culture, promote instructional leadership, and mobilize teachers to improve their instruction, the limitations of the theory are that it downplays school structures that are often barriers to creating democratic schools and that cause inequities within the school. In addition, the notion of empowerment is limited because it does not encourage school leaders to shift their paradigms or the paradigms of their teachers. The empowerment of teachers must involve challenging their preconceived notions and values as well as providing them with the opportunity to tap into their energies. Therefore, transformational theory refrains from discussing prejudices and preconceived assumptions that educators may conceal. Furthermore, transformational leadership does not challenge the status quo, or raise questions about the purpose of schooling (Shields, 2003). Instead, it seeks to improve schools within the framework of the hegemony and power imbalances that are prevalent in American public schools. In addition, because of its overemphasis on improving the organization to meet its goals, the theory focuses less on social justice, poverty, race, and the impact those might have on student learning, and it appears to regard those issues as beyond the scope of what the school can do. In other words, the perspective of this theory seems to be that the school is designed to educate children who come ready to learn.

Moreover, the theory does not adequately address the challenge of ways to connect schools with the community, particularly among marginalized families. Research has consistently shown the importance of connecting school improvement with the community. In

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order to attend to the needs of refugee and immigrant students, it is critical that transforming the school involve connecting the school to the community (Shields, 2003). Changing schools must involve attending to social justice issues such as equity and poverty; thus, addressing these issues would require a learning process on the part of the school principals and teachers. This is an issue that cannot be ignored because it poses a challenge for principals of schools with large populations of refugee, immigrant, and otherwise marginalized students. As Briar-Lawson (2000) observed, "Most challenges facing communities and schools today are multisystemic and tied to poverty. The solutions must be similarly multisystemic" (p. 534). This shows the interdependent nature of the community and the school; thus, examining the school from the lens of the organization alone is not adequate. For this reason, I chose transformative leadership because its focus encompasses the school and the community as well as the political, social, and cultural conditions that have an impact on the school. That is, transformative leadership provides an adequate approach to educating diverse students. Therefore, I will use transformative leadership for this study as a theoretical framework because it addresses not only issues of equity, diversity, power and social justice, but also because it provides ways to advance transformative school improvement (Shields, 2009).

Transformative Leadership

This study will use a transformative cross-cultural leadership model. Shields (2003) developed the theoretical framework of cross-cultural leadership—a framework that has the potential to inform school leaders about creating schools that are appropriate for culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. The model examines schools through the lenses of power, race, class, and social and community contexts.

Conceptual Framework

Shields' (2003) transformative cross-cultural model recommends that school leaders engage in authentic leadership that is devoted to a moral cause. She indicated that school leaders must investigate wherever inequities can found within the school structures and educational practices. That is, school leaders must recognize and affirm diverse cultures and thereby foster inclusive, caring, and high-performing schools that take into consideration the changing demographics of the schools. Shields' cross-cultural model raises the bar for school leaders by encouraging them to create a community of difference in schools.

Shields (2003) who has contributed to transformative leadership theory, developed a model that can provide school principals not only with a framework for creating an inclusive school environments, but also one for establishing socially just schools that educate students of color and refugees adequately. To achieve this, Shields recommended that transformative cross-cultural leaders understand the diverse cultural contexts in which they operate and that they promote the creation of a culture that takes into account the changing populations of the school or district (Shields, 2003). The transformative cross-cultural leader must always take a conscientious approach toward the feelings and perceptions of others. According to Shields (2003), the cross-cultural transformative leader must model an ethical decision-making process and set the standard for all within a community of difference. As part of the decision-making process, leaders and teachers must continuously ask themselves, before carrying out an action, (a) who benefits, and who is disadvantaged; (b) who is included, and who is excluded; (c) who is privileged, and who is marginalized; (d) who is legitimated, and who is devalued; (e) to whom are we listening, and who are we not hearing; and (f) what data are we using for our decision making (Shields, 2003, p. 81). Shields' model may encourage school principals serving

ethnically diverse students and refugee families to grapple with the values the school accepts and to assess school policies and practices genuinely. Additionally, not only is the model superb for eliminating school structures that inhibit the creation of culturally inclusive schools but it also may assist principals in finding ways to provide a voice for and a hospitable place to refugee students and their families, who would otherwise be less likely to be involved in the schools because of their cultural and linguistic difference.

Cross-cultural   **Transformative**

Moral and Authentic

Figure 1. Transformative cross-cultural leadership (Shields, 2003, p. 29).

Transformative leadership, which is part of transformative cross-cultural leadership, also examines schools from the standpoint of power, race, class, and social and community contexts. It is focused on advancing the values of social justice, such as equity, dialogue, and democratic schooling. These are discussed in the following sections of this chapter. To understand the values and goals that transformative leadership theory promotes, I first shed some light on the assumptions on which the theory is based. Foster (1986), one of the pioneers of transformative leadership, stated, "Leadership must be critically educative: it cannot only look at the conditions in which we live, but it must decide how to change them" (p. 185). Foster expanded the role of

school leaders to engage them as public servants who seek to promote democratic schools that contribute to the betterment of society. Indeed, Foster's definition of leadership as "educative" has become one of the core values of transformative theory. The leader as "educative" is seen as key for transforming schools into socially just and democratic learning communities. The notion of the leader as educator is also embedded in the works of Quantz, Rogers, and Dantley (1991) and Shields (2003). The authors contend that transformative leaders should be devoted to educating the dominant groups in the community about the real meaning of democracy and about the collective interests of the entire community (Quantz et al., 1991). These scholars echoed that school leaders must transcend their administrative positions that focus on attaining organizational goals. Instead, they need to become leaders who question the status quo and who promote conversations about the values and structures of the school, as well as becoming leaders who educate the public about the injustices and inequities that are institutionalized in public schools.

Moral Principals

Transformative leadership theory is embedded in moral and ethical values (Shields, 2003). In this theory, schools are analyzed from an angle that transcends the organizational perspective. That is, the theory provides an analysis of school leadership that encompasses political, social, cultural, and economic perspectives, which have an impact on public schooling and student achievement. The core of transformative leadership raises questions about inequities, justice, and democracy because the theory seeks to advance the values of equity and social betterment (Shields, 2009).

Dantley and Tillman (2006) discussed transformative leadership as being intertwined with moral values. They noted that school leaders who espouse a moral position as public

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intellectuals are aware of the important role that education can play in "freeing" students to question and "interrogate" the goals and values that schools advance. Moral transformative leaders are public intellectuals who seek to advance social justice and the creation of democratic schools by facilitating learning environments where students are active participants in their learning. Additionally, Dantley (2003) asserted that transformative leadership "not only assumes a different position to the conventional forms of school leadership but also promises a reformed, if needed not totally reconstructed definition of this social construction" (p. 3). This suggests that transformative leadership is embedded in moral purpose, which transcends administrative bureaucracy and locates schools within the social, economic, and political context of schooling. In addition, Giroux (1997) discussed the notion of the leader as a public intellectual. His perspective on transformative leadership raises school leaders to the role of public intellectuals. He noted, "Whether in schools or in other spheres, public intellectuals must struggle to create the conditions that enable students and others to become cultural producers who can rewrite their own experiences and perceptions by engaging with various texts, ideological positions and theories" (p. 363). As Giroux suggested, the responsibility of advancing democratic schools can be taken on by school leaders who are *public intellectuals*, those who have the capability of creating democratic schools that allow the minds of students to flourish intellectually and who also promote the collective interests of society.

Transformative Leadership and Socially Just Schools

Numerous studies have shown that transformative leadership seeks to improve schools and turn them into socially just democratic environments for schools to attend to the diverse needs of all students (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman & Starratt, 2002; Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Riehl, 2000; Shields, 2003; Theoharis, 2007a; Theoharis & O'toole 2011; Shields , 2010).

Scholars have shown that school leaders must become transformative leaders and thereby create socially just schools. One of the objectives of transformative leadership is to foster equitable learning environments that attend to the needs of students of color or other students from impoverished families. Transformative leadership theory advocates for genuinely democratic schools that are socially just. This is not to suggest that the goal of transformative leadership is limited to creating socially just schools, as Astin and Astin (2000) explained:

> We believe that the values and ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; to encourage respect for difference and diversity; to strengthen democracy, civic life, and civic responsibility; and to promote cultural enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honestly; the advancement of knowledge, and personal freedom coupled with responsibility (p. 6).

This shows that the goal of transformative leadership transcends the goals of student achievement and socially just schools. Indeed, transformative leadership sees the school as one of the starting points to promoting equity and social justice and thereby strengthening democracy.

The theory has the potential to inform school administrators of how to create more caring and hospitable learning environments. School leaders are expected to meet the growing demands for change in the educational system and to attempt to eliminate the ever-persistent achievement gap; perhaps transformative leadership theory could provide a framework for this transformation. Transformative leadership theory is vital for enlightening school principals on ways to create schools that are appropriate for culturally diverse student populations. To achieve this, schools ultimately need to strive to become what Shields (2003) described as

> communities of difference—communities in which we value and respect one another as we learn how to live and work together. These schools are communities in which all students, regardless of home situations or backgrounds, are expected to learn and are helped to achieve high standards. They are communities in which difference is neither feared nor excluded but included, understood, and respected (p. xii).

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The notion of "community of difference" could become useful to school administrators and assist them in striving to create caring learning environments that affirm the identity and culture of refugee students and families.

Transforming schools into socially just and democratic organizations requires school leaders to challenge the status quo and the fairness of educational policies. According to Merchant and Shoho (2006) leaders must not just accept the status quo but also must challenge policies; more specifically, school leaders must take a firm position in promoting equitable schools. As Merchant and Shoho (2006) noted, "We believe that too narrow a focus on compliance with federal, state, and district mandates distracts administrators from raising important questions about the consequences of implementing such mandates, which is likely to perpetuate serious inequities in student learning opportunities and outcomes" (p. 85).This suggests school leaders cannot to be complacent in maintaining an educational system that may further marginalize students, but rather must analyze the system and identify areas in which policies further marginalize certain students. This also would involve school leaders being required to use their positions to address power imbalances in schools and communities. As Quantz et al. (1991) stated, "Transformative leaders must be willing to use the authority of democracy if they are to achieve transformation. Transformative leadership does not imply the diminishing of power, but the diminishing of undemocratic power relationships" (p. 102). This is a call for school principals to deconstruct school structures that perpetuate racism and oppression within the school. It also advocates for school principals abandoning the traditional approach to leadership and promoting inclusiveness, thereby permitting marginalized groups to participate in the decision-making processes of the school. Transformative leadership may provide a hospitable space in which the voices of parents of refugee and immigrant children are heard. The theory has

the potential to persuade school leaders to advance the values of social justice by seeking to

promote school communities that are socially just. To promote democratically just schools that

are built on principles of social justice requires school leaders to engage in self-reflection and

ponder how the decisions they make affect the lives of the students and community members. As

Furman and Shields (2005) contended,

> Leadership for social justice requires a careful examination of one's own beliefs and
> practices and those of the institution within which one works, for justice is played out in
> both individual relationships and systemically, in policies that assume that any single
> approach to curriculum, programming, resource allocations, or accountability is
> appropriate for children (p. 126).

This is where the school leaders must consider their impact not only on the lives of students but

also on those of the community and society.

Leading with Care

Transformative leadership promotes the notion of caring. Leaders must embed "care" in

their leadership practices. This involves doing work that is deeply embedded in transformative

political work (Dillard, 1995; Furman, 2002; Starratt, 1991, 2005). For instance, Furman (2002)

created a new leadership theory that focuses on the moral purpose of leadership, highlighting

what leadership ought to be. She asserted that individuals in education must lead for the ethic of

caring environments that include socially just classrooms and democratic communities within the

schools.

How does leading with the ethic of care translate into caring in schools that have refugee

and immigrant students? This approach would involve school leaders modeling care in their

leadership practices and also encouraging teachers to care (Noddings, 2002), and it would

support teachers entering into a dialogue with children so that they could understand the

students' academic, psychological, and social needs, including their lived experiences (Fienberg,

2000; Machel, 2001; Shields, 2004). Leading with the ethic of care also would contribute to the eradication of institutionalized inequalities in school structures, language, and culture, and would protect the human dignity of others (Larson & Murtadha, 2002). Starratt (1992) proposed the ethics of critique, care, and justice as the foundation on which schools are based. He explained the ethic of critique and encouraged school principals not to accept "the way things are" in the school, which is shaped by power, privilege, interest, and influence. The ethic of critique calls for educational administrators to take on "social responsibility" and be an agent of society. It encourages school leaders to create an ethical learning environment for all members of the school. The ethic of critique challenges school principals to confront the political power, privilege, and interests that represent the interests of only the dominant groups in society. Starratt suggested that for a school to be founded on the ethic of critique, school leaders must tackle school structures that marginalize certain groups, such as homogeneous tracking, criteria that are used to place certain students in gifted programs while others are placed in nongifted programs.

According to Starratt (1991), a school that adheres to the ethic of care addresses the "underside" of administration, which involves the power and domination that comes with authority. To attend to the underside of school administration involves deconstructing the desire to dominate and control and identifying factors that may lead to stereotypes, such as racial, sexual, or ethical ones. These stereotypes prevent sincere conversations or the possibility of open, trusting communication from occurring. The ethic of care has the possibility of contributing to a relationship of caring between school leaders and teachers, students, and parents in which the leaders pay "deep" attention to the uniqueness of each individual. The ethic of care can be ingrained in a school culture and implemented by being responsive to the

uniqueness of each person, by forsaking the language of bureaucracy, and by replacing it with a language of humor, metaphor, and personalized messages.

To create democratic schools that serve the collective interests of the community, Starratt (1991) advocated for the ethic of justice. He contended that school leaders can promote an ethic of justice in their schools by ensuring that "specific ethical learning activities are structured within curricular and extracurricular programs to encourage discussion of individual choices as well as discussions of school community choices" (p. 193). He also indicated that discussion of a multicultural curriculum should focus not only on ways to promote an understanding of different cultures with a school but also must involve the historical and current conditions that have contributed to unjust relationships between different ethnic groups and cultures. Starratt promoted the creation of a space within the school in which a healthy dialogue takes place and where issues of racism, power, and hegemony that have contributed to the marginalization of certain groups are be brought to the forefront. School leaders who apply the ethic of justice in their administrative practice promote active listening, conflict resolution, and values clarification. Further, Starratt indicated that the ethic of justice requires that school leaders create a school that serves both the community and the individual. He placed emphasis on the school as the organization that represents the collective interests of the community. Attending to the needs of the individual student should not be mistaken for attending to the needs of special interests that tend to dominate schools.

Dialogue and Understanding

Transformative leadership theory emphasizes the importance of dialogue as a way to improve schools to become communities that educate ethnically and culturally diverse students. If school leaders are to create an inclusive school environment and attend to the needs of

refugees and immigrant students, deep dialogue, not merely superficial or one-way

communication, is fundamental for building a collaborative school culture in which refugee

students and their parents are active participants in the schooling process (Shields, 2004).

Additionally, dialogue is a first step toward fostering a healthy school climate that sustains a

democratic learning environment. For instance, Bakhtin (1984), Shields (2004), and Shields and

Edwards (2005) have shown that dialogue is the vehicle for building "meaningful relationships"

among diverse members of the school and community. For school leaders to turn their schools

into culturally inclusive learning communities, it is essential to build relationships and trust

among the teachers, students, and families, including refugee and immigrant parents. Shields and

Edwards (2005) recommend the use of a carnival as a "catalyst" to "recreate and rejuvenate

dialogue" (p. 141). In addition, they indicated that dialogue can be used not only to build

relationships but also to diminish certain organizational factors that have perpetuated inequities

and hindered a healthy learning environment. Shields and Edwards (2005) promoted a kind of

dialogue as an ontology that would become "a way of life" for all the stakeholders in the school.

In other words, such dialogue would allow teachers and other educators to be open to people of

other cultures and to gain an understanding of the others. The concept behind this type of

dialogue is to lead into democratic relationships among diverse groups in the school community.

Hence, transformative leadership theory could enlighten school principals, perhaps

leading them to create nonacademic activities that might possibly provide the opportunities for

refugee families and teachers to interact and get to know each other on a personal level. An

approach that involves relationship building could assist the school principals' efforts not only to

reduce barriers among the immigrant and refugee families and the teachers but also to enable

them to create a more inclusive school culture that would sustain partnerships with families.

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Genuine dialogue that promotes cultural understanding is vital for transforming schools into democratic schools that attend to the needs of refugee and immigrant students.

Creating a Successful Learning Environment for Refugee and Immigrant Students

Scholars who discuss equity have promoted the values of transformative leadership. They have shown that school principals must examine how equitable their schools are (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004) and also may have an outsider or "critical friend" who advocates for social justice in the schools. The critical friend with keen eyes observes and examines how equitable the school policies, structures, and relationships are between the school and marginalized members of the community. The critical friend challenges "oppressive and exclusionary" policies by questioning school values and structures that might contribute to inequities (Carrington & Robinson, 2006).

Equity audits might help school principals become aware of their stance as well as the values, attitudes, and practices that are ingrained in the school and that may have led to impediments to an equitable education for students (Skrla et al., 2004). For instance, schools that have refugee and immigrant high school populations might establish equitable access to enrichment and extracurricular, gifted, and preuniversity courses. The authors recommend that refugee students be placed into those programs to enhance the equity of the programs and to create learning experiences for them (Harklau, 2008). Teaching refugee and immigrant students the sociocultural expectations and providing them with the tools to prepare for college are also important ways of attending to the needs of these students (Walqui, 2008).

The literature consistently recommends that to address the needs of refugee students, school principals ought to end the "one size fits all" approach to educating children and change their schools into learning communities that attend to the diverse needs of the students. Hence, in

creating a successful learning environment for refugee and immigrant children, leaders might (a)

challenge teachers' deficit thinking through conversations and professional development, and

thereby alter their attitudes; (b) include the diverse needs of the children in the school's vision

and goals, and communicate the message that it is the responsibility of educators in the entire

school and community to educate refugee and immigrant students; and (c) create a belief that

refugee and immigrant students can be successful in rigorous classes, instead of tracking children

into lower tracked classes, and thereby eradicate segregated programs and create heterogeneous

grouping (Coady et al., 2008; Dwyer, 1998; Theaharis & O'toole, 2011). These

recommendations appear to be embedded in the social justice values that are also intertwined

with transformative leadership.

To attend to the needs of refugee children, some school leaders consider small learning

environments vital. For instance, a Houston, Texas school district divided one of its large high

schools (Lee High School) into smaller learning communities to attend to the needs of the Latino

and immigrant students. The program is reported to have had promising results in meeting the

needs of the refugee and immigrant students because the school provided "continuity and support

systems for navigating high school" (Hood, 2003, p. 7). To provide supportive learning

environments to individual students, every 12 to 18 students were grouped together and worked

with a counselor, teachers, and an administrator. It seems that grouping immigrant students and

placing them into small learning communities enabled the school leaders to provide

individualized programs that focused not only on academics but also on attending to the

students' personal issues. Furthermore, other schools have emphasized multicultural education,

used students' home languages as sources for creating dropout prevention programs, and hired

psychologists to provide support services to immigrant students (Bateman, 1993). The preceding

examples emphasize the fact that some urban schools have begun to address the educational needs of immigrant and refugee students.

Because schools seem to be arenas for "cultural politics," the discussion of culture is integral to attending to the needs of the refugee and immigrant students. Research that focuses on transforming schools for diverse students, including refugee and immigrant children, consistently has shown that school principals must create culturally inclusive school environments for these students and their families (Corson, 1998; Dwyer, 1998; Shields, 2003; Theaharis, 2007a). The first step is not to treat students and parents as homogeneous, but to recognize their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Second, school principals have the responsibility to create successful learning environments and to focus on connecting the school to refugee and immigrant students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

Transformative leadership informs school principals about ways to create culturally inclusive learning environments. To establish such environments for refugee children, school leaders must facilitate an inclusive curriculum and pedagogy for ethnically diverse students (Dantley & Tillman 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Migliacci & Verplaetse, 2008; Shields, 2004). It is the responsibility of school leaders to establish spaces for diverse students to express their lived experiences in the curriculum as well as in the learning environment (Shields, 2004). Ladson-Billings (1994) called for schools to transform the curriculum to be what she described as "culturally relevant" She recommended that educators and teachers adopt and implement culturally relevant knowledge and teaching. According to Ladson-Billings, culturally relevant knowledge is the notion of recognizing the significance of the knowledge that students from different cultural backgrounds bring to the classroom and respecting it. Culturally relevant teaching focuses on the teacher facilitating knowledge and preparing students to be critical

thinkers, thereby supporting them in identifying relationships among "community, state and globe" (p. 49). Transformative leadership appears to have the potential to assist school leaders to critically examine the underlying assumptions on which the curriculum is based and to strive to replace it with a curriculum based on a "conversation that makes sense of things" for students and their families (Grumet, 1995, p. 19).

Kumashiro (2000) discussed creating a learning environment in schools in which the education is also antioppressive. He provided a model that could assist school leaders in creating democratic learning environments. This model involves four ways to promote antioppression education, which includes "education for the other." This involves changing school structures and creating learning environments that provide positive experiences for students who are "othered" or marginalized. According to Kumashiro,

> Educators and students need to examine not only how some groups and identities are othered, that is marginalized, denigrated, violated in society, but also how some groups are favored, normalized, privileged, as well as how this dual process is legitimized and by social structures and competing ideologies (p. 31).

This type of education promotes discussion about how preconceived assumptions and ideologies contribute to the marginalization of the other. When educators and students understand the lived experiences of marginalized students, they will be empathic and build relationships that are equitable and democratic.

Schools and Community Contexts

Transformative leadership, through its emphasis on dialogue, certainly is needed for schools with diverse student backgrounds that strive to promote inclusive partnerships with ethnically diverse families, including refugee and immigrants. The theory promotes change in the traditional approach to parental involvement and provides an approach that is appropriate for refugee and immigrant parents. For instance, Lopez (2001) and Scheurich and Skrla (2003) have

challenged the existing models of the school parent partnership, noting that the traditional model, which represents the values of the dominant Caucasian middle class, must be deconstructed and replaced with one that is culturally viable for ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse families. Lopez (2001) observed that administrators and teachers tend to define parental involvement in schools as parents being members of the Parent–Teacher Association or volunteers for the school. He contended that school educators' definitions of parental involvement are not inclusive that marginalized parents who do not volunteer for the school or are not involved with school activities are regarded as uninvolved. Furthermore, he contended, "Marginalized parents . . . are involved to a significant extent in the educational lives of their children, yet much of their involvement remains outside academic interpretations of involvement" (p. 3). Certainly, transformative leadership seeks to diminish the hegemonic school model that expects marginalized parents to conform to the Caucasian middle-class culture and to replace it with one that is appropriate for a community of difference.

A more culturally viable model for the parent school partnership involves developing schedules that are flexible and that could accommodate parents' busy lifestyles; conducting parent school meetings in a variety of languages; enlisting volunteers from churches, mosques, and synagogues; and using their expertise (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). In reality, these transformative ideas have been used by some school administrators who have refugee and low-income families in their schools. For instance, one school principal tapped positively into "the culture, lives and ways of these parents" (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p. 126). Using a transformative approach, the principal organized parent–school meetings in the backyards of some Mexican parents' houses; this appeared to have aroused the parents' potential and also transformed the relationship between the school and the Mexican parents. It contributed to

collaboration between the school and the parents as many other parents began to engage in conversations about the schooling of their children. Certainly, this example shows that school leaders who engage in transformative work build a deeper relationship with parents from various backgrounds.

Transformative work that attends to the needs of refugee and immigrant families is vital. In addition, understanding the needs of these parents is key to creating a strong link between the school and the families. Gardiner and Enomoto (2006) studied some principals who engaged in transformative work to improve education for immigrants and students of color. The school leaders engaged in transformative work by advocating for marginalized families and by providing programs that included providing ESL classes for parents, providing day care, and hiring parents as cafeteria workers or teachers' assistants. I concur with the approach of these principals because when working with ethnically and linguistically diverse populations, a different approach is imperative—one that is knowledgeable about the parents' social and economic conditions.

Critique of Transformative Leadership Theory

Transformative leadership theory has the potential to transform schools into democratic learning environments that are equitable for refugees and other students. The theory could possibly provide an orientation to school leaders and educators regarding ways to advocate for empowerment and for democratic schools. The theory's emphasis on dialogue is imperative because it provides a framework that may inform school leaders of ways to promote dialogic relationships in their schools, thereby decreasing the disconnect between educators and marginalized parents, including the parents of refugees. In addition, transformative leadership challenges certain values and ideologies that inhibit the establishment of equitable schools.

Unquestionably, the theory also promotes awareness and an understanding of the hierarchical structure of schools, as well as an understanding of the oppression and power imbalances that can be found in schools.

Because transformative leadership theory advances the values of social justice and democracy, thereby showing the urgency for change, it views schools as places to begin transformation in American society. For instance, as Furman and Shields (2005) noted,

> The concept of social justice that is appropriate for increasingly diverse 21st century schools is one that focuses on multiple aspects of equity. These include: acknowledgement of injustices related to power and privilege, including inputs, outcomes, behaviors and attitudes; [and] recognition of individual prejudice as well as collective inequities (p. 125).

It shows that the school is the focal point, whereby if genuine democracy is practiced, it may spill over and transform society. Furthermore, because the theory embraces moral aspects of leadership, I believe it has the potential to encourage school leaders to engage in a paradigm shift.

Even though both transformative and transformational leadership theories provide insightful frameworks for transforming schools, the theories are very different. Whereas transformational leadership has the potential to inform school leaders of ways to promote organizational learning and capacity building, it does not provide an adequate framework that could assist school leaders in providing innovative ways to create successful learning environments and address the needs of refugee students.

To attend to the needs of refugee and immigrant students and to provide an adequate education that meets the educational needs of each student, inequality and inequities in schools need to be addressed. Thus, transformative leadership is imperative for creating democratic schools. It is a leadership that could encourage educational leaders to "unpack" the concept of

democracy and evaluate the true meaning of democracy in their schools. In addition, transformative leadership appears to provide an inclusive approach that could help school leaders promote the principles of social justice, which include recognition of diversity, addressing inequities, inclusion, and dialogue. To promote genuine democracy in schools, it is vital that school leaders advance the values of social justice and become advocates for refugees and marginalized groups in schools. I believe that transformative leadership could provide an orientation for school leaders regarding ways to advocate for the empowerment of refugees and immigrant families. Indeed, it is vital that school leaders and teachers be exposed to the idea of transformative leadership because it embraces the moral aspects of leadership and promotes the empowerment of marginalized groups, as well as providing insightful ways to create schools that can adequately educate refugee and other minority students. The following table (Table 1) illustrates the distinctions among the three theories of transactional, transformational and transformative leadership.

Table 1. Distinctions Among Three Theories of Leadership

	Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Transformative Leadership
Foundation	An exchange	Meet the needs of complex and diverse systems	Critique and promise
Emphasis	Means	Organization	Deep and equitable change in social conditions
Processes	Immediate cooperation through mutual agreement and benefit	Understanding of organizational culture; setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program	Deconstruction and reconstruction of social/cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity, acknowledgement of power and privilege; dialectic between individual and social
Key values	Honesty, responsibility, fairness, and honoring commitments	Efficiency, effectiveness, equality	Liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, justice
Goal	Agreement; mutual goal advancement	Organizational change; effectiveness	Individual, organizational and societal transformation
Power	Mostly ignored	Inspirational	Positional, hegemonic, tool for oppression as well as for action
Leader	Ensures smooth and efficient organizational operation through transactions	Looks for motive, develops common purpose, focuses on organizational goals	Lives with tension, and challenge; requires moral courage, activism
Related theories	Bureaucratic leadership Scientific management	School effectiveness School reform School Improvement Instructional leadership	Critical theories (race, gender) Cultural and social reproduction Leadership for social justice

Conclusion

The literature on school leadership and immigrant students appears to be inadequate.

Empirical studies showing how school leaders can work with Somali immigrant students are

lacking (Forman, 2001). Limited research appears to have been done on school principals and

Somali and other immigrant students. According to Riehl (2000), research that carefully explores

school administrators and immigrant students is inadequate in general. Therefore, this study bridges the gap in the literature in the sense that it contributes to our understanding of school leaders' roles in addressing the educational needs of Somali immigrant students in particular and other immigrant students in general.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the frame of reference for this study in terms of the research tradition under which the study falls. It also discusses the methodology of the study, as well as procedures for data collection, analysis, and standards of validation.

Review of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore which leadership constructs inform the ways school administrators work with groups of Somali immigrant students in high schools in the Midwest. Specific emphasis was given to whether their work is informed by transformative leadership (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Riehl, 2000; Shields, 2009; Shields, 2003).

Research Questions

The central question guiding this study was, "What leadership constructs inform the ways in which school administrators (principals and assistant principals) work with groups of Somali immigrant students in high schools in the Midwest?" In addition to this central question, the following questions furthered our understanding:

1. What beliefs guide the ways in which educational leaders work with Somali immigrant students and their families?

2. How do school leaders work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes?

3. What kinds of accommodations (supports, programs, and environments) do school leaders promote?

4. Does transformative leadership inform school administrators' approaches to educating Somali immigrant students?

Research Paradigm

In this study, my frame of reference is the radical humanist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) which was used as a lens to understand school leaders' beliefs and approaches to addressing the needs of Somali refugee and immigrant students. The radical humanist paradigm requires one to understand the ideologies that shape institutions, and it also promotes "revolutionary change" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

Radical humanist change takes a subjectivist point view in examining the social world. This paradigm focuses on the inequities, hegemony, and power that pervade societal structures that need to be replaced (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The inequities and marginalization that are prevalent in American schools are the result of structures and ideologies that shape the social order of American society. This study falls under the research tradition of radical humanist change. I used the lens of the radical humanist paradigm not only to understand educational leaders' beliefs about Somali immigrant students but also to examine the dominant ideologies and school structures that could marginalize students and ultimately hinder their potential. Because the radical humanist paradigm requires researchers to understand the ideologies that shape institutions and thereby promote "revolutionary change," I believe this paradigm was appropriate for my study. Hence, I used the transformative leadership model, which seeks to change schools into socially just and democratic organizations. Ultimately, my goal was to examine whether the decisions and approaches of school leaders are informed by transformative leadership. Therefore, based on the findings of the study, I made assertions and provided empirically based recommendations that will inform educators and school leaders working with Somali refugee and immigrant students to address their needs adequately.

Regardless of the political environment and the challenges school leaders encounter from the educational system, I believe that school leaders have the moral responsibility to create equitable schools and to be the voice for marginalized groups (immigrants, refugees, economically disadvantaged Caucasians, and other minorities). I hold school leaders accountable for identifying the status quo and addressing the ideologies that are the sources of inequity. Thus, the radical humanist paradigm influenced how I collected data; in other words, I focused on how school leaders address issues of power, race, inequity, and social justice. Instead of understanding school leaders' situations and perspectives, I was inclined to place more emphasis on how school leaders promote change in their schools as they work with Somali immigrant students.

Methodology

This study used the exploratory case method. Yin (2009) asserted that the case study method is appropriate to "understand a real-life phenomenon" (p. 18). Stake (1995) described a case study as "a well bounded, specific, complex, and functioning thing which means a person or a program" (p. 25). Both Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) have shown that a case study is an empirical inquiry that involves in-depth examination of an issue, person, group, community, or program. In addition, Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) suggested that to gain good sources of evidence, the researcher must use multiple sources of data, such as document analysis, observations, and interviews. Further, Yin (2009) distinguished among types of case studies and placed them into three main categories, explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory. Yin indicated that the case study method is appropriate for research questions that focus on "why" and "how." According to Yin (2009), the type of case study method that a researcher uses is determined by the research questions that guide the study. For instance, research questions that have "what"

questions as the focal point are exploratory; thus, an exploratory case study is appropriate. On

the other hand, "how" and "why" questions can be a compelling force for an explanatory case

study method (Yin, 2009). Because the focus of my study was on understanding a leadership

phenomenon, it sought to explore and understand leadership constructs that inform the ways in

which school principals and assist principals work with groups of Somali immigrant students in

high schools in the Midwest; thus, using a case study method was appropriate. Indeed,

understanding constructs that inform school leaders' actions was not only complex but also was a

process that required the use of a case study method.

Moreover, I used case study method because it permitted me to explore and gain an in-

depth understanding of the leadership paradigms that inform school administrators' work with

Somali immigrant students. Because my unit of analysis was school principals, assistant

principals and deans in the context of the schools in which they were situated, my study falls

under the exploratory case study method. However, using an exploratory case study method did

not necessary mean that this study was limited to investigating and describing findings related to

the leadership constructs that inform the work of school administrators with Somali immigrant

students. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested, a case study must have an action criterion that will

facilitate action on the part of readers. The research should not only raise the consciousness of

the readers but also offer information that will enable readers to use the research. The authors

were against ending case studies with assertions; they contended that it is not adequate to provide

"suggestions for further research." Instead, they asserted that the study must provide

recommendations in which the researcher provides "action alternatives" for those influenced by

similar studies. What we can learn from Lincoln and Guba (1985) was that one ought not to do

research only for the sake of exploring an issue; rather, it is important to take into consideration

that the study should be used and that it should contribute to the betterment of society. My approach toward doing case study research was aligned with the approach of Lincoln and Guba. As I have indicated in this chapter, this study was informed by the radical humanist research paradigm, which has defined the purpose of research as promoting "radical change" that contributes to the betterment of societal conditions (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Therefore, the study was limited to exploring the leadership beliefs of school administrators that inform the ways in which they work with groups of Somali immigrant students in high schools in the Midwest. Certainly, based on the findings of the study, I provided assertions and empirically based recommendations that could inform school leaders of ways to create a learning environment that is appropriate for attending to the educational needs of Somali immigrant students and other culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Yin (2009) showed that multiple-case study designs are stronger and can be more robust studies than a single case. In fact, he asserted that "trying to use even two-case designs is therefore a worthy objective, compared to doing a single-case study" (p. 24). Stake (1995) also contended that multiple-case study or collective case study provides rich information that can lead to "better understanding and better theorizing." Therefore, I conducted two case studies to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex issue of leadership constructs that may inform school administrators' approaches to working with recently arrived Somali immigrant students. In addition, by using a two-case-study approach, I was able to conduct comparison of the two cases.

Participants in the Study

The method of selecting administrators (principals and assistant principals) involved a purposeful sampling technique. Maxwell (1998) showed that purposeful sampling has the

following benefits: (a) Purposeful sampling can used to achieve representativeness or typicality of the settings, individuals, or activities selected; (b) purposeful sampling can be used to capture the heterogeneity in the population adequately; (c) a sample can be purposefully selected to allow the examination of cases that are critical for the theories the study began with, or that have subsequently been critical; and (d) purposeful sampling can be used to establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for differences between settings or individuals, a common strategy in multiple-case qualitative studies (pp. 87-88).

This qualitative study combined aspects of convenience and purposeful sampling. It was a convenience sample because the participants (school administers) were chosen from a city located in one geographical area of the Midwest. The sample was purposeful because personal networks were used to identify school administers who worked with a relatively large Somali immigrant student population. My first starting point was to use personal networks in a Midwestern state, to identify two school principals and their assistant principals from schools that have relatively large Somali immigrant populations. The criteria for selecting the administrators involved the number of years they have been working with Somali immigrant students, with two years being the minimum period required to be an administrator in the schools chosen as case cites. In addition to the school principals and the assistant principals, to gain an in-depth understanding of school administrators' leadership approaches toward working with Somali students, people in various capacities within the school were recruited for this study. These participants included English as Second Language teachers, school–community liaisons, guidance counselors, Somali students and parents. A convenience sample of eight parents who have children in the two high schools chosen for the study were selected. The school liason officers were used to identfy Somali parents who were willing to participate in this study.

Interviews with the parents involved conducting separate interviews with each parent who has a child in the two high schools. For each school, the purpose of interviewing parents was to gather information regarding their perspectives on school leadership and the school–community partnership. Interviews with parents were held either in their houses or at the schools.

Accessing the Schools

First, I assumed that because I am a Somali native, I would be able to gain access to the schools easily. However, accessing the schools was somewhat challenging in the sense that I had to go through a gatekeeper: In two of the schools with a large population of Somali students, I was required to submit a proposal to the school district to obtain approval to conduct research activities there. Second, Somali personal networks (a Somali school–parent liaison and teachers) connected me with administrators and the Somali parents. Without the assistance of the Somali parent liaison and the teachers, this study would not have been possible. Third, I found that gaining access to the parents was a daunting task because, as a researcher, I was viewed as an outsider from another state. In fact, some of the parents viewed me with suspicion, believing that I was using them for grant purposes, and declined to participate in this study.

<div align="center">

Data Collection

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Before data collection began, human subject approval and permission to carry out the research activities were obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Data collection for this study took place for a period of three months from January to February 2010. Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with the administrators, teachers, students, and some parents. Follow-up interviews with the administrators, as well as with some parents, were conducted during the month of June, 2010.

Using a transformative cross-cultural leadership theoretical framework, I conducted

semistructured interviews with administrators (principals and assist principals). Interview

questions were linked to the conceptual framework (Figure 1) so that the questions solicited

information pertaining to the theoretical framework as well as to the purpose of the study. For

instance, the questions asked of the administrators pertained to the following categories: their

understanding of a culturally inclusive school organization; ways they worked with ethnically

diverse families; how they addressed issues of power, class, and race in their schools; their

understanding of social justice issues, such as creating a learning environment that is equitable to

all students; how they promoted a collaborative school culture among the culturally diverse

members of the school; and their understanding of an educational leader who promotes change

and who attends to the needs of all students, including Somali immigrant students, in his/her

school.

To gain a variety of perspectives on the leadership beliefs of school administrators and

their work with Somali students, data were collected from teachers of English language learners,

guidance counselors, school–community liaisons, and Somali parents. It was vital to interview

these people because they had important information on experiences of the students with school

administrators and/ or leadeship. Parents were asked questions about issues such as barriers they

may have experienced in terms of educating their children in a U.S. public school, their

perspectives on how inclusive of other cultures the school is, their perspectives on school–family

partnerships, and their perceptions regarding whether the school provides an equitable learning

environment that attends to the needs of their children.

Data collection involved conducting one semistructured interview of duration of

approximately one hour with each of the participants in the study. While I interviewed the

participants, probes were be used to gather insights and more detailed information from the participants (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Semistructured interviews provided me the opportunity to probe and ask follow-up questions. Follow-up interviews were conducted with the administrators, as well as one of the guidance counselors and one of the ESL teachers. With the interviewees' consent, all of the interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed.

Other sources of data collected included some observations, such as ESL classes and administrators' interactions with the students. Creswell (2007) showed that observations provide the researcher with an opportunity to observe issues that the participants may find challenging to discuss. I conducted some observations that involved interaction of some of the administrators with students, as well as some of the ESL classes. From observations, I gained a perspective on what the schools were like in terms of the school climate, culture, and teacher–student interactions. Observational data and document analysis complemented the interview data. For instance, the document analysis and some of the observational data permitted me to analyze data from multiple sources. Documents such as reports, school improvement plans and some materials that pertained to school programs were obtained and analyzed. Certainly, documents permit the researcher to understand the perspectives and "thoughtful" verbal communication of the participants (Creswell, 2007). Documents about school improvement plans and some report cards about the students were used for this study. Other documents that included non-academic programs such as leadership and internship were utilized and analyzed to gain information on school administrators' approaches toward attending to the needs of Somali immigrant students.

Data Analysis

According to qualitative researchers, data collection and analysis is an ongoing process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2009, Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) consisting of "open-ended data" and "moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data" (Creswell, 2009, p. 183). As Creswell noted, some qualitative researchers regard data analysis like "peeling back the layers of an onion," (p. 183), which means analyzing and interpreting the data to construct meaning or to understand the big picture.

Working with a large quantity of qualitative research data required a systemic process of organizing the interview data into categories. This involved using coding, which is "a process of applying codes to chunks of text so that those chunks can be interlinked to highlight similarities and differences within and between texts" (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 22). Coding permits the researcher to organize the interview data into categories of themes (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Therefore, after the interviews were transcribed and checked for errors that may have occurred during transcription, I loaded the transcribed interviews, document analysis, and some observational notes into NVivo 8, a qualitative software program used for data coding, management, and analysis (Creswell, 2009). After transcription was completed, I read and reread the transcriptions and identified themes with codes. For instance, the codes that were used to label themes included "educational leaders' leadership beliefs," and the subtheme for this category is "leadership," in which I had subcodes that included "transformational" and "transformative." Other codes for major themes included "equity," "program inclusiveness," "care,""relationship," and "dialogue."

Beliefs about Somali students and families was another code used to identify the theme of whether school administrators are culturally proficient. The codes used included "deficit

thinking," "understanding of Somali culture and Islam," and "school–family partnership" After the themes were identified, text segments were retrieved and placed in categories under the relevant codes. In addition, the data that were analyzed addressed the central guiding question as well as the four main research questions of the study. Moreover, apart from using NVivo 8, I used theme analysis, a process through which themes were identified, highlighted, and compared within the findings of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Standards of Validation

Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended that multiple sources of data be used to allow for data triangulation and to enhance the validity or credibility of the findings. As indicated in this chapter, I used a variety of sources of data, including interviews, documents analysis, and some observations. Other ways that threats to reliability or the dependability of findings were addressed are outlined below.

It is vital to build thick descriptive data. Thick description permits the reader to assess about the transferability of the findings to other context (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Using thick description, I provided pattern matching, built cross-case comparison and analysis, and provided interpretations that have identified rival explanations for the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) disagreed with the notion of "generalizability" because a study presents a particular context, and each background and issue is different. This study focused on one geographical area of a metropolitan city in a Midwestern state; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to schools in other states.

To ensure the dependability of the research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested using peer review or a debriefer as an external check. The debriefer provides the researcher with a constructive critique of the research by asking questions about the research, methods, meanings,

and interpretations. Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) also suggested member checking as another way of reducing threats to the internal validity or the credibility of the qualitative study. This involves granting the participants in the study a space and providing them the opportunity to examine the interview data so that they can provide their own perspectives on the accuracy of the information they have provided. Member checking was implemented with some of the participants in the study to determine the accuracy of the transcribed interview data. For instance, before I conducting follow-up interviews with the administrators and some of the teachers, I explained to them the previous information that I gathered from them. All of the participants with whom I did member checking agreed with the accuracy of transcribed data.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that qualitative research also should be judged on "authenticity criteria," which includes criteria of fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, and catalytic authenticity. Ontological authentication requires that the research should benefit the participants in the study and other groups who are concerned with the research. It is my hope that this study will benefit the participants in that it will inform school leaders and policy makers by providing them with ways to build capacity in their schools so that they will be able to address the many factors that might influence Somali immigrant students' abilities to adapt and succeed in the schools. Catalytic authenticity calls for research to contribute to action. In other words, the research must be used to make a change and contribute to the betterment of society.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended that studies must be based on fairness criteria, which involves presenting "a balanced view" that represents the values and belief systems that may contribute to the conflicts in institutions. I concur with Lincoln and Guba regarding the importance of recognizing the role of values and ideologies in institutions, because these often

contribute to the marginalization of certain groups in schools as well as in society. In this study, I ensured fairness by presenting not only the different voices and perspectives of the participants but also the multiple realities that the participants experience.

Educative authentication necessitates that research must increase the participants' understanding of their own positions and also distinguish among the ideologies and constructions that people hold, which are ingrained in diverse value systems. My hope is that these two case studies will encourage school leaders to reflect on how the beliefs that guide their leadership practices either empower or marginalize ethnically diverse students and families. School administrators work in schools that are contradictory places that contain not only liberation but also domination (Quantz, Rogers, & Dantley, 1991). In addition, this study may contribute to dialogue on institutional barriers to creating equitable learning environments that attend to the needs of Somali immigrant students as well as other ethnically diverse students.

A Brief Description about a Center for Refugee Students

The district in which the two schools are located created a welcoming center for refugee students. The purpose of the center was to provide an acculturation process to orient students to the educational system in the United States. Upon arrival, the refugee and immigrant students were registered at the welcoming center and received various services, such as English placement testing, registration in school, and registration of their parents in adult English classes. Many of the Somali students came to the welcoming center upon their arrival. Some of the refugee students lacked literacy skills in English as well as in their native language. Hence, the welcoming school played a vital role in providing students with the necessary academic skills. For instance, students were taught English in five skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural enrichment. In addition, students in the welcoming center were required to

take core courses in math, English language arts, reading, science, and physical education. After the refugee students became acclimated, they were transitioned into the public schools. Administrators indicated that the welcoming center did well at ensuring that students were adjusted to the school system.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology that I have used for this study. I outlined the ways in which I conducted this research, which included the method, selection of participants for the study, data collection, and data analysis. In the following chapter, I present the findings of the study. To maintain the uniqueness of each case (school), the findings of the two case studies are examined and reported in two separate chapters, Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

Chapter Four: Findings for School One: Hillcrest High

"You know, our job is all encompassing! If it requires me to be their mother or their teacher or the nurse or a counselor or a psychologist or a means of resources, it's just part of my philosophy that by any means necessary, to get the kids where they need to go."

—Susan, assistant principal

I conducted this study to examine whether high school administrators' leadership practices depicted elements of transformative leadership that would create schools that were more inclusive and supportive of Somali refugee students. A cross-cultural transformative leadership model and the four major guiding research questions of this study were used to analyze the data. The purpose of this study was to explore leadership constructs that informed the ways in which school administrators worked with groups of Somali immigrant students in two high schools in the Midwest, with specific emphasis on whether their work was informed by transformative leadership. The central question guiding this study was, "What kind of leadership informs the ways in which school administrators work with groups of Somali immigrant students attending high schools in the Midwest?" In addition to this central question, the following questions were used to guide the study: (a) "What beliefs guide the ways in which educational leaders work with Somali immigrant students and their families?" (b) "How do school administrators work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes? (c) "What kinds of accommodations (supports, programs, and environments) do school administrators promote?" and (d) "Does transformative leadership inform school administrators' approaches to educating Somali immigrant students?"

This chapter presents a case study of Hillcrest High School, which is one of the two schools examined in the study. I used the pseudonym Hillcrest to protect the identity of the research participants. Hillcrest is one of the schools that has a relatively high population of

Somali students. This school is located in a metropolitan city in a Midwestern state. I begin the chapter by presenting an overview of the school, which includes the school background, barriers experienced by Somali students, and challenges the school has faced, such as ethnic tensions and addressing racial tensions. I also provide an overview of the data collection process as well as the participants in the study. Then, using the guiding questions to organize and present the data, I discuss major themes that emerged from the study, which include the values and beliefs that shaped the administrators' leadership, equity, inclusion, care, and school partnership with the Somali families.

In this chapter, I present data that pertains to the major research question and the guiding research questions. With the conceptual framework and purpose of the study in mind, data were analyzed and coded into themes that responded to the major research question and the objective or guiding questions. Most of the data are presented in the form of passages or as summaries in the form of bulleted lists. Data collection involved conducting one semistructured interview with each of the participants for the duration of approximately one hour. After the first set of interviews was completed, I conducted follow-up in-depth interviews with the administrators. In addition, a document analysis (e.g., of school improvement plans) was performed and used for this study.

Participants interviewed from this school were the principal and assistant principals, four parents and four students, the Somali parent liaison, the school guidance counselor, the school program coordinator, and two ESL teachers. Semistructured interviews were conducted with the participants, and a document analysis was performed. I interviewed three of the four administrators at the school; the other administrator did not qualify for an interview because she had been at Hillcrest for only one year. To protect the identity of the school and the research

participants, pseudonyms were used. Table 2 contains the pseudonyms of the participants, their

ethnicities, and their roles in the school.

Table 2. Participants of the Study in Hillcrest School

Name	Ethnicity	Position
Alex	African American	Principal
Peter	African American	Assistant principal
Susan	African American	Assistant principal
Nora	Caucasian	Guidance counselor
Suad	Somali	School–parent liaison
Marian	African American	School coordinator
Teryl	African American	Teacher
Ellen	Caucasian	Teacher
Sarah	Caucasian	Teacher
Saed	Somali	Student
Anab	Somali	Student
Saynab	Somali	Student
Hamda	Somali	Student
Saakin	Somali	Parent
Yusuf	Somali	Parent
Nuura	Somali	Parent
Sahra	Somali	Parent

An Overview of the School

School Background

Hillcrest High School is located in a metropolitan city in the Midwest. The school was

first built as a township high school; however, in 1970s it was annexed into the metropolitan city

district, which includes a large urban school district. The school building appears to be one of the

newest buildings in the district. It is a medium-sized brick building with two floors and is easily

accessible. The total number of students who attend the school is 766 of which 710 are Black

(including 250 Somali students), 5 are Asian, 28 are Caucasian, 17 are Hispanic and 6 are other.

Eighty-eight percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

Framed art showing diversity—the hands of young people from different ethnic backgrounds—was hung at the front of the office. Perhaps the art portrayed White, Black, and Latino/Latina student diversity in the school. Pictures of distinguished basketball players from previous years were hung in the cafeteria. I visited an ESL social science class, where some of the students' papers and essays on different topics were displayed, such as the Great Depression and the Civil Rights Movement. I also observed the ESL English classroom. There were 18 students in this spacious room, and students' pictures were displayed on a side wall. Since 1985, the teacher has taken pictures of her students and posted them in her classroom. She indicated that she posts the pictures of her students each year. The 10th-grade ESL class had two major bulletin boards. On one bulletin board, students' work were posted, such as grammar and grammar instruction reinforcement, as well as students' papers, including reflections they had written based on articles from newspapers and magazines. The bulletin board also had a map of the world. Inside the classroom, students' chairs were set in four rows facing the blackboard. On the left side of the classroom, close to the wall, was a bookshelf, and on top of the book shelf, the teacher placed language review sheets to be used by the students that day. On one of walls of the classroom were essays and journal writings that the students had written.

In addition, there were newspapers and magazines, such as *TIME for Kids* (the *TIME Magazine* for children) and other news magazines intended for ESL students. On the front page of these magazines, it read "easy English news." The January 2010 issue included articles on addictions, Martin Luther King Day, and the State of the Union speech that President Obama had given on January 27, 2010. The teacher indicated that to enhance students' reading and comprehension, she would buy the magazines with her own money. The students read and wrote reflection pieces on different topics. This teacher appeared to a motherly figure to the students

because of the care and attention she gave them. She asked one of the young boys who worked night shift if he had gotten some sleep. She indicated that some of the students had no choice but to work at night to support their families back in Africa.

With respect to how students were interacting, it was not easy to see whether their interaction was positive or negative. This was because students were socializing along ethnic lines. For instance, during the lunch hour, I noticed that the Somali students sat together, whereas the African American students had their own corner and interacted with one another.

The school climate appeared to be positive. There was a sense of community and connectedness among the teachers, instructional aides, and administrators. For instance, on my first day of data collection, one of the guidance counselors suggested that I have lunch with her and the administrators. Two of the guidance counselors, two administrators, the janitor, and one teacher all appeared have positive relationships and to be socially well connected with one another. The school had a custom in which some of the teachers and administrators would have lunch either in the cafeteria or in their classrooms. As Susan, one of the administrators, indicated, when the teachers had their lunch in either the cafeteria or their classrooms, this eliminated the teachers gossiping about the students. Susan pointed out, "We sit out and eat with the kids in the cafeteria. Because if you eat with the kids in the cafeteria, kids know that, you know. They're comfortable with them; you can come and talk to them and laugh and joke. So a lot of the staff just sit in the cafeteria and eat, so you don't have that lounge conversation where everyone's sitting around, you know, talking about kids."

Another time, I noticed that some of the students addressed the administrators by their first names. I noticed one student who needed a pass refer to the assist principal Mr. Peter by his

first name. This was an indication that the school was not punitive and rigid; rather, it was an environment that was inviting and positive.

Barriers Faced by Somali Students

Before 2007, the school underwent various challenges, which included having low academic achievement. This resulted in the school being put on an academic watch list. Compounding this problem was the language barrier that Somali students faced. Still, students continued to have not only an English language barrier, but also other challenges, such as the following:

- *Mental issues*. Some of the Somali students who were exposed to the civil war and life in the refugee camps suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder.

- *Gaps in their education*. Some of the students, especially those who resided for many years in refugee camps had a gap in their education. As Peter, the assistant principal, commented, "That's like coming in with an elementary education to a high school."

- *Difficulty passing standardized tests*. Students had difficulty in passing the state-mandated standardized test, which consisted of five parts. Some of the students who were expected to graduate could not graduate because of the state standardized tests.

Ethnic Tensions

With the arrival of Somali students, the initial contact between Somali and African American students was "very adversarial." Because of the lack of communication, ethnic tensions arose between the African American majority and the Somali minority. The ethnic rivalry contributed to some serious fights. Alex, the principal, shared that when he came to the school in 2006, there were cultural misunderstandings between African American and Somali students that contributed to the ethnic conflict. He believed African American students viewed

the Somalis as foreigners and therefore did not respect them. Somali students, on the other hand, had negative perceptions that included stereotypes about African American students. Thus, the conflict was the result of a lack of communication. As a result, Somali boys engaged in fights with African American boys. The conflict turned into gang fights.

In 2006, a sad incident also occurred, in which four African American boys dragged a 16-year old developmentally disabled African American girl into the school auditorium and gang raped her. To avoid media coverage, one of the district administrators advised the girl's father not to call the police. When the father reported the crime, the school district dismissed the entire school administration, replacing them with the current principal, Alex, and the assistant principals, Peter and Susan.

Addressing Racial Tensions

Peter stated that to address the issue of ethnic tension, they had to take a proactive approach to the situation. For instance, Peter and Alex focused on promoting cultural understanding by making it mandatory for students who fought to learn each other's culture. He stated,

> One thing we found if we had a cross cultural fight, where an African American was fighting with a Somali student, once they got back from their suspension, they had to sit with one another for a week at lunch time, and we gave them a list of 10 things that they had learn about the other student in that week. That was embarrassing for them. What it did was eliminate the urge to fight, and it created an understanding. . . . They had to find out what relatives you had here? What was your favorite food? What did you like to do? Hobbies and interests, things like that. We got them to talk to one another!

The administrators created cultural exchange sessions, including the International Club in which the students were asked to have an international fair at which they did dances, shared food, and interacted with one another through the discussion. The cultural exchange encouraged relationship building not only within the school but also between the school and the Somali

families. As Peter explained, he and Alex reached out to the Somali community and began conversations with community leaders. Peter commented on the close relationship he built with one of the community leaders as a positive occurrence that had enhanced the collaboration between the community and the school. He explained,

> Another thing we definitely felt like we had to do is, the chief came over here, Somali tribal chief in one of the apartment complex areas. He and I became very close! He had a son here! He used to tell his son, "This is your father while you are at school." And I told him, "I will watch him like my son, but I will watch all the kids like they are mine." He encouraged kids to come here. He would go back and talk to his community about programs in our school, and talk about the positive things we do in this school. And tell his people, "I don't want you acting up in Hillcrest. . . . Hillcrest is a good school." We actually began to get even more students come here and we filled up all of our units and had a waiting list for students wanting to come here. Because of that relationship we created, he came over, he and several other families came here, we shared the culture at the parent–teacher meeting.

Given that the school had to overcome various challenges, from 2007 to 2011 it made significant strides. Since 2007, Hillcrest has moved from the academic watch list to continuous improvement to being an effective school. For instance, in 2010, 10th-grade students met state standards in the areas of reading, writing, math, and social studies, and science increased by 9.1%. Tenth graders scored higher than in the other schools in the district in all areas except science. In addition, 11th-grade students met state standards for reading, writing, math, social studies, and science increased by 12.3%. The school has met Adequate Yearly Progress in math, reading, and writing. Hence, the administrators indicated that they strive to sustain capacity building for student achievement.

School Administrators' Educational Leadership Philosophy

To provide a springboard for understanding the administrators' leadership approach to improving education for Somali immigrant students, in this section I discuss their leadership philosophies. Moreover, the findings from this school show that the administrators' leadership

philosophies depicted the values and the ideology that motivates their leadership practice. The three administrators I interviewed described their leadership philosophy as being embedded in a sense of respect and care for the faculty and students. Alex, the school principal, is an African American male who has been in education for 15 years. He was an English teacher for 9 years in the district, and at Hillcrest, he had been assistant principal for 2 years and principal beginning in 2007. Alex's leadership philosophy appeared to be founded on elements of love and respect for everyone in his building. He asserted that he treated everyone how he would like to be treated. He viewed his role as being a facilitator.

Hence, Alex's beliefs were that all children could learn and be successful if they were provided support and learning opportunities that attended to their individual needs. Although he was committed to the goal of providing students educational opportunities, he claimed that he had accomplished and continued to strive to achieve that goal. In his quest to achieve student success, he believed that it was his responsibility to inspire positive growth in his students and teachers. As such, he regarded his students as though they were his own children. As he put it,

> I think if I keep the same goals in mind that I have for my kids, then I will accomplish those goals here for these students. I want my children to be successful and I want my kids to have the best opportunities they can have. So if I keep the same mindset for these kids here, I think I can achieve what it is I want to achieve here which is to have the best possible educational experience for kids here to have, just as I would for my own.

Alex stated that to accomplish the goal of student success,

> First of all, I bring in all the resources I can to make sure our students' educational experience here is the best possible. That takes a lot of work, it takes a lot of outside resources, and it takes a lot of knocking on doors to get the same thing for our kids here, just like any other kind of school in the district or outside the district may have advantages.

Indeed, he recognized the importance of soliciting community resources to address the needs of the students. While in Alex's office, I saw a picture of him holding an award given by a Somali

community leader, which thanked him for being committed to the educational success of Somali students at Hillcrest. Peter, the assistant principal, in describing Alex's leadership, said,

> First, you have Mr. Alex as an instructional leader. He is the kind of person that demands without saying, commands your respect. He loves what he does, and I think he conveys a message of, "I love everybody that I'm working with" and that, as long as you are here, know that you are supported, I respect your ideas and your thoughts, and I just think he pushes to get the best from everybody because of the way he models that.

The administrators at Hillcrest appeared to be grounded by a similar educational philosophy, which focused on the whole child. Peter, an African American male, had been an administrator for 24 years at various schools within the district. In the summer of 2005, as Peter was planning to retire, the district called him back to be the assistant principal of Hillcrest school.

Suad represented a nongovernmental organization and worked with the school as a school–parent liaison officer; her role was to enhance school–family communication. She spent Mondays and Wednesdays at Hillcrest. She described Peter as a leader who led with his heart— he genuinely cares about the well-being of the students and everyone else in the building. Peter's definition of his philosophy of education was grounded in humility, which sought to lead faculty and students by displaying a positive attitude and respect, and he empowered them through those values. He explained,

> My personal philosophy is that you win with people. I don't go around thinking that I'm the wisest person in the building. There are a lot of wise people in this building, and my job is to gain their collective wisdom together to make it one—to put our collective vision together for this building that is based upon what everybody wants, not just what I want to see.

Peter also believed that a combination of compassion, empathy, and connectivity was vital to building healthy relationships. He argued that through positive relationships, change could occur. He contended,

> If you can't build relationships, you can't be successful in anything you do. I believe in treating people fairly, getting people involved, having people interact with one another, and give them the best I got, and I expect them to give me the best they have in terms of making the overall programs successful. I am open to ideas because I want them to think outside the box. If they [teachers] want to try something new, I give them the opportunity to do that.

Without sharing with the administrators that they engage in transformative work, I sought to understand the underlying assumptions of each administrator's leadership approach. In his own words, Peter added that the values that shaped his leadership were public service, community work, and social justice. He indicated that these values informed his leadership:

> For me, as long as I've been in teaching, which is about 40 years now, it has been lifelong in terms of what I do. I've taken kids to homeless shelters; I've met with people in the middle of the night, picked up a kid on the street in the middle of the night and took him someplace where they could find shelter, like a homeless shelter or something like that. I've dealt with families of abuse and taken kids out of homes where they were abused. I believe that you have to go the extra mile to get. No, we're not social workers, but it is not- it is not a job for me, it is a ministry for me!

As he was explaining his work with the students to me, tears were falling from his eyes. Indeed, the tears were a sign of how passionate he was about the transformative work he was doing.

Like Alex and Peter, Susan, an African American assistant principal she based her leadership philosophy on the principles of respect, care, and accountability. She contended that despite the students' demographics, each and every student could be educated successfully. Susan believed her role as an administrator was all "encompassing," which involved attending to the social needs of the students and instilling in students the values of contributing back to the community through civic duties. She described the values that shaped her leadership as follows:

> You know, our job is all encompassing! If it requires me to be their mother or their teacher or the nurse or a counselor or a psychologist or a means of resources, it's just part of my philosophy that by any means necessary, to get the kids where they need to go. . . . I don't spend a lot of money. I mean, there is a lot of stuff out there that they can get for free; sometimes they just don't know how to attach themselves to the right people or the right resources in order to be successful. So, you know, my philosophy is if that is what it

takes for them to go to the next level, that's my job, is to either show them how to get the
resources or get the resources for them.

For all these administrators, their understanding of their positions transcended the definitions of
school administrators. It involved occupying multifaceted roles to achieve educational success
for students.

Equity

The major research question that anchors this section of the study is, "How do school
leaders work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes? "In this section, I present
data that show various elements of transformative leadership practice in which the administrators
at Hillcrest were engaging as it pertained to promoting equity in their school. The school
administrators at Hillcrest responded to the question of how they promoted equitable outcomes
for their students by first claiming that they had achieved the goal of ensuring equitable
outcomes between the Somali and American students.

The leadership team at Hillcrest indicated that they sought equitable outcomes for all
students through a collaborative effort among the administrators and teachers. To support
English as second language (ESL) students, in addition to the ESL classes, the administrators
created additional ESL units in social science, science, and math, which were taught by teachers
certified in ESL. One of the teachers who taught math was Somali. Because some of the Somali
students arrived during the school year, Peter indicated that to foster school adjustment and
support, students were placed in the ESL units. It is important to make the distinction that the
ESL units were not remedial classes; rather, these classes were regular classes that were taught
by teachers certified in ESL. In addition, each class had a Somali instructional aide who provided
instructional support to the students. According to the principal and the assistant principals, some
of the ways they sought to work with the teachers involved evaluating student progress and using

data to guide their decisions. The teachers and the administrators placed students in the regular program once they saw they could function in regular non-ESL classes. For instance, Susan explained that for Somali students to achieve academic success, instructional supervision was vital. That is, each administrator worked with a grade level and used a collaborative approach to enhance the academic performance of students. She asserted,

> Our ESL students have access to the ESL classroom. The ones that are outside the ESL classroom, they still have the support of the programs. A lot of our teachers would work with them during the lunch time. There are kids who get passes to get assistance. We have several who go to the library early in the morning to do their work ahead of time and work with them.

In addition, she stated that every week she met with her ninth-grade teachers to monitor and discuss student progress. Each student was given an individual student success plan, which included a student engagement section (academic and career goals, interests and hobbies, and recreation), academic achievement section, and behavior section. Administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and students used the individual success plans to keep track of student academic performance.

Further, Susan and the other administrators pointed out that through conversations with the teachers, they identified students who were not performing well academically and a plan of action was developed by the parents, teachers, and administrators. An intervention that involved credit recovery and provided additional resources, such as tutoring, was used to support the students. The following illustrates the interventions administrators and teachers established to promote equitable educational outcome for all students:

- Built positive relationships between the teachers and students to understand students' diverse backgrounds and experiences.

- Focused on enhancing students' English language proficiency by emphasizing writing and reading through inquiry-based assignments and projects in the areas of science and social studies.

- Created resource rooms used to provide additional support to students who are in need of assistance with school work.

- Promoted a culture of high expectations to ensure that students can meet expectations and the standards.

- Created a structured method of tracking students to college-bound courses, which is also intended to increase student graduation.

- Established support classes for students who struggle with math, science, or literacy skills, which are intended to prepare students for the state standardized exams.

As the administrators continued to discuss the question of equity, they indicated that because the majority of their students (88%) were low-income students qualified for free and reduced-price lunches), this made their school a high-poverty school. In addition, the administrators addressed the equity question by pointing to the educational system and how it perpetuated inequity among schools. In other words, there is inequity between Hillcrest High School and schools in the neighboring districts, which they claim insufficient resources are available to provide their students with an adequate education. To provide both Somali and other students an adequate education, the administrators had to take an advocacy role to address the poverty in their school. Thus, for them, engaging in advocacy was a way of challenging inequitable policies and a means of harnessing resources from the community. That said, the following section focuses on some of the creative ways the administrators addressed poverty, which, in their view, played a vital role in perpetuating inequity.

Addressing Poverty

Mitigating poverty and attending to the social needs of students is an element of transformative leadership work that the administrators at the school were engaged. The overwhelming majority of Hillcrest students qualified for free or reduced-price lunches. Fortunately, the three administrators interviewed for this study showed an understanding of the

impact of poverty on student learning. Alex, the school principal, had created comprehensive

partnerships with various service agencies, including community, public, and nongovernmental

social agencies. Alex viewed such partnerships as a vital way to harness the resources that his

students needed. He explained,

> First of all, I bring in all the resources I can to make sure our students' educational experience here is the best possible. That takes a lot of work, it takes a lot of outside resources, and it takes a lot of knocking on doors to get the same thing for our kids here just like any other kind of school in the district or outside the district may have advantages.

Alex contended that to harness resources for his school requires one to be politically savvy and

to build relationships with businesses as well as social and community agencies. He added,

> It is a process, I guess. You know, first of all, you step forward to the surrounding community. We are around a lot of corporations. Weston Mall is here; that's retail! Sometimes a lot of those industries want to come in, assist or volunteer sometimes. That sometimes comes to you; we do not have to go after it! As far as the community is concerned, there are things going on, functions going on within the community; I try to attend those just simply because our kids are from that community.

He indicated that having positive relationships with community agencies enabled him to have

certain programs in his school, such as the shoe fund and a clothing program that provides

clothes to students who are in need. He would receive donations from agencies for field trips that

are provided to students who are not able to afford the cost for the trip, and from grocery stores,

he would get food that is provided to students who have no food at home. Both of the assistant

administrators commended the principal for his dedication to bringing resources to the school.

Susan believed students were well taken care of. When I asked her if she believed there were

some Somali students whose needs were not being met, she responded, "I don't! I really don't

because we have got a principal who is very, very giving. These students get a lot! They get staff

from here. . . . As far as giving them what they need, supplying them materials, feeding them

when they go to trips, they get a lot from this building."

Here Susan's explanation might sound patronizing; however, in this quote she explained administrators' dedication to providing resources to both Somali and other American students. As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, mitigating poverty in their school was part of addressing equity.

In their quest to attend to the needs of the students and reduce barriers to academic success, Hillcrest administrators worked to eliminate the notion of deficit thinking from their school. They did not see students' socioeconomic backgrounds as a deficit but as a challenge to be confronted. These administrators believed that it was their responsibility to provide students the resources they needed to ensure that they were successful in school. As I was interviewing Susan, I saw in her office stacks of school supplies, including notebooks, pencils, pens, and folders. She explained that she would buy the school supplies with money from her own pocket and would provide them to students whose parents were unemployed. She believed both Somali and non-Somali student families were facing tough economic times; therefore, to ensure that students could learn, she provided all the necessary supplies they needed. The following passage describes the transformative work, such as addressing poverty that Susan engaged in at her school:

> I know that my kids are not going to come to school with papers, pencils, folders, ink pens, and those are the kinds of things that they are pulled out of class for, which to me is trivial. So kids know I keep pencils on my desk, ink pens, I have got folders, I have got papers, and I have few notebooks. So if they don't have it, they have to come and get it. They have to ask—don't take anything from my desk!—but the answer is always yes, get a pencil, get whatever. . . . I got a little box of candy over there. You can always have it, but you have to learn to ask. You just don't drop in here and pick up stuff. So I just buy papers and stack them up here. So I do that kind of stuff.

This shows that addressing the social and economic conditions of their school involved engaging in a mandate to effect deep and equitable change in their school. I believe that one cannot effect

deep and equitable change in their schools without addressing poverty. In addition, Susan shared

a conversation she had with one of her students who arrived late for school:

> We have students who do not always have-if an alarm clock is stopping a child from coming to school, it is $9.99 at Wal-Mart. That is what it takes to get them here to school. I had a kid say to me . . . I said to him, "You are not in school. You are late every single day. Why aren't you here?" And his answer was, "I can't get up in the morning." "Why can't you get up in the morning?" "Because my alarm clock broke and my mom couldn't afford to buy me another one." . . . I said him, "I am on my way to Wal-Mart; I live by Wal-Mart. I'll buy you a clock." I bought him a clock . . . so he comes to school every day.

Moreover, she contended that she maintains a high standard for the kids and she does not

want kids to use their demographic background as an excuse not to perform well in school. She

has high expectations for the students to learn. She stated that when some of her students would

use excuses, she did not accept excuses for not taking responsibility. She contended,

> I hear some of the students say to me, "You don't understand where I am coming from." But what I say to them is, "Once you get into this building, I will guarantee you that you are semi-warm, you are gonna be dry, and you are gonna be safe, and you are gonna be educated if you want to be. No matter where else you are coming from—that is outside this building. In this building we are gonna give you everything you need. We are going to feed you, we are gonna keep you warm, we don't make you buy books. If you need pencils, I will give them to you. If you don't have food, I will feed you." No kid in this school ever goes hungry! We make sure they have that! If you don't have clothes, we make sure we get you clothes.

These administrators not only desire and expect students to succeed, but they also have a deep

understanding that creating a positive environment is vital if success is to be achieved.

To triangulate the data and confirm the uniformity of the information that the

administrators had given me, I interviewed one of the guidance counselors, a school–parent

liaison, and two ESL teachers (a Somali and a Caucasian). The data consistently showed that the

teachers and the counselors confirmed that the school administers' leadership approaches

focused on transformative work that removed barriers to students' academic success. For

instance, Nora, the guidance counselor, asserted that when Somali and other low-income

students were not able to pay the fees for a college application, the fees were waived. Suad, the Somali school–parent liaison, indicated that the administrators utilized the services that were offered by the organization for which she worked. They collaborated with the local nongovernmental organizations and obtained resources that enabled them to address the issues students faced, such as poverty, homelessness, and violence. For instance, Suad's organization provided counseling to students who were in need of that service. She believed Hillcrest was a classic example of a school that had a strong partnership with the organization and utilized its services. Partnerships such as these contributed to the success of Hillcrest administrators in diminishing the effects of poverty in their school and in helping students stay in school. Certainly, engaging in advocacy leadership enabled the administrators to address the equity issue. In fact, some of the administrators, such as Susan, argued that there was no such inequity in their school. As she put it, "My theory is that if you really need an education and you come to the right place and mind to do education, whether you have the necessary materials or not, we will work with you and provide you whatever you need for you to be successful." She also added that the school provided educational resources to both Somali and American students, such as visits to museums and other cultural sites, to enrich their educational experience. However, Peter discussed one inequity issue in their school: the state standardized tests, which Somali students struggled to pass because of the vocabulary. To address this issue, he would collaborate with the ESL teachers. He said, "They talk about the needs they have, how testing should be done to make it more equitable. They can keep me abreast; that's why I said I listen to my people because they know what they are doing." Table 3 summarizes community services the administrators utilized to address student needs and mitigate poverty in their school.

Table 3. Community Organizations

Student need	Community organizations that provide resources to the school
Food	Food bank and food collected within the school
Clothes	Clothing organizations
Mental illness (counseling and therapy)	Community health clinics and the university hospital
Shelter or housing	Homeless shelters and low-income housing
Volunteering, internships, and employment	Local businesses, public institutions, senior homes, and local nonprofit organizations
After-school programs	Somali community centers and privately owned programs

Inclusion

The following section illustrates the findings that pertain to the third question, "What kinds of accommodations (supports, programs, and environments) do school leaders promote?"As I examined the structures and programs that would promote adjustment for the Somali students, the responses to this question evoked two major themes: inclusion and care. The element of *inclusion* refers to the extent to which students are integrated into school programs, such as leadership, sports, and school organizations, that could play a role in fostering interaction between Somali students and their American-born peers. In addition, in this section I discuss the element of *care* that emerged as a theme.

With respect to examining how inclusive the administrators are in terms of soliciting students for participation in school programs, the findings revealed positive, encouraging results. Some of the ways the administrators integrated Somali students into school programs involved the belief that the only way to ensure their academic success was to integrate students into mainstream academic and nonacademic programs. Alex explained how inclusive his school was:

> I tell you this: Here we have had a unique experience, we have had our first Somali homecoming king, we had another Somali student who was a basketball player, and he was the first Somali all star player. So my thing is, and I guess the way we do it is fair, and we make sure that our Somali brothers and sisters have the same opportunities—

educational experience, extracurricular experience—that any other student gets. And that's my biggest piece!

Peter elaborated that they have put an enormous effort into creating a school culture that is inclusive, and this has involved a collaborative effort among the administrators and the teachers.

Peter related how they created an inclusive learning community:

> We started to make sure, in our academic and nonacademic programs, we tried to encourage Somali students to get involved in those. We had no Somali student in any team except soccer. It was all Somali! We now have them playing basketball, football, soccer, baseball, and track, they are in all activities.

In addition, Peter contended that to sustain an inclusive school is a collaborative effort to which the teachers are committed. He described how the teachers encouraged students to become involved in programs:

> Like, the coach would tell them, "Hey, you look like a football player. Why aren't you in a team?" I never thought about that! "I think you ought to join the team." Just encouraging them to get involved, and the more we did that . . . it just took off. They felt like they were part of the school. This year, they had a homecoming king and queen team. The king was Somali. It was not even close in terms of the election, and he won the election by a landslide. We also had one in the talent show, another Somali student won the talent show. They are in the choir, they are in drama, arts; they doing everything, and they are fully apart of the mainstream of this school, and we encourage that. I love what I see—that they have completely integrated.

The following shows the responses of the administrators to the question, "What impact did your leadership had on Somali students and the school in general?"

- Improved relationships and created a positive school climate.

- Created a school environment in which the students feel "valued, a sense of belonging, inclusiveness, respected, and understood."

- Eliminated barriers to student success.

- Focused on supporting students' academic and social needs.

- Empowered teachers.

- Created a collaborative culture based on the elements of dialogue and collegiality.

- Set a culture of high expectations for students.

The above statements show that the administrators are focused on promoting a positive learning environment that attends to the needs of the students.

Moreover, Marian, one of the school coordinators responsible for the leadership, internship, and career development programs, attested that Somali students were active participants in nonacademic programs. She indicated that the ESL and regular teachers played a vital role in encouraging students to participate in school programs: "I know Ms. Ellen and Ms. Sarah are good about it—they're the ESL English teachers—they're good about reminding the students to do this and to do that, to keep them involved." She added that she would personally visit classes and recruit students for the programs. Some of the nonacademic programs in which Somali students participate include:

- Leadership program: 30 girls and 30 boys that are perceived to be leaders who are in good academic standing, but leaders overall that other students look up to and respond to. Students are trained in leadership skills and trained by experts from leadership programs outside the school. The students visit middle schools and provide information about expectations and what it is like to be in a high school. They also perform tutoring in a program in the local elementary schools.

- I Know I Can, a college-readiness program: Marian goes into the classroom and talks with the students about the process. She stated, "I have letters I send home to all the parents, and I also have a newsletter that I send home to everybody—I give it to all the students, and we talk about scholarships."

- Crossroads: This program, which focuses on enhancing student career development, is intended for graduating seniors. Through this program, students apply for internships, job placement, volunteering, and preparation for the state graduation test.

- International club: This club is intended for students interested in international and global perspectives.

The findings about school inclusiveness suggested that the adjustment and integration of Somali students could be achieved successfully through existing programs. In addition, it is important to

take into account that the administrators' leadership played a major role in creating school inclusiveness, which in turn contributed to students' adjustment and integration at Hillcrest.

<div align="center">**Care**</div>

A transformative cross-cultural leadership paradigm emphasizes the importance of promoting a caring learning environment within schools that house diverse student populations. In administrators' responses to the question, "What kind of accommodations (supports, programs, and environments) do school administrators promote?" the element of care was a major response. As such, I examined whether the school administrators' leadership was embedded in care. Hence, in this section, I discuss how Hillcrest school administrators practiced care within both the school and the community. Within the school, the theme of care was a recurring theme in the interviews conducted with administrators and students. In addition, care for the community was found within the theme of care.

Care from the Administrators as Perceived by the Students

The interview data showed that Hillcrest had a culture that promoted a sense of family and connectedness among the administrators, teachers, and students. There was a connectedness that extended from the administrators and teachers to the students. To gain an understanding of the family-oriented culture, I sought the perspectives of Somali students at Hillcrest by interviewing four students. Two students were ready to graduate from Hillcrest in June. Saed, an honor roll student, had been accepted to study engineering at a major research university in the city. Saed had come to the United States in 1991, along with his parents and siblings, from the Salax Maguru refugee camp in Mombasa, Kenya, when Saed was five years old. The following is a narrative about Saed's experience at Hillcrest as it pertained to the administrators, teachers, and school culture:

I listen to my parents! I listen to the teachers! The teachers always believed in me. They used to tell me, "Try your best." Whenever I struggled with some of my schoolwork, the teachers used to help me during the lunch hour. The Somali instructional aides use to help me if I don't understand something. Mr. Alex became the principal when I was a freshman and he brought changes to the school. We used to get assistance with the English language—the instructional staff helped the students. I was in a regular program! Mr. Alex and Mr. Peter are really good people! They would give advice to students who were not focusing in school. Mr. Alex would say, "I believe in you; you can do this!" Like the first time you messed up, he would tell you, "This is between you and me; I won't tell your parents, but I need to see a change in you. I have a trust in you!" He kept on saying that to students, and in the end, students ended up changing. For instance, the school standardized test scores improved, and we had 150 students graduate this year. Thirty students are Somalis, including me! Mr. Peter would also call you and ask you what support you need in order to succeed in school. The teachers are also good! I never had any problem with the teachers. I always did my schoolwork !

I also interviewed two 10th-grade girls who were friends. They shared with me that their parents had recently gotten divorced. They both shared the struggles their families faced. One girl reported that her father had moved to the Middle East, and it bothered her that he was absent from her life. Both girls indicated that the divorce in their families had an impact on them in the sense that they blamed their fathers for not being part of their lives. However, these two girls indicated that they received support from their administrators and teachers and they felt good to be at Hillcrest because they perceived that the school welcomed and supported Somali students. They also suggested that although they were expected to do well in school, they struggled with some subjects, such as math and science. They both said that they did get the support they needed, particularly from Teryl, an African American teacher working on her school administration certification, who was dean of students at Hillcrest. The girls indicated that she provided them support and guidance. One of the girls said, "She is really nice. I like going to her. She always acts like she is a counselor, and everybody goes to her because she's been here for so long, and she knows everything." The narrative shows the girls viewed Teryl as a mother figure.

The testimonies from these Somali students indicated a sense of belonging to the school, and they felt that the administrators and the teachers cared for them. Anab, a 12th-grade student who was about to graduate, had been admitted to a nursing program in a 4-year university. She indicated that she had come to the United States as a refugee with her cousin and her cousin's children. Anab mentioned that without the care and support that she had received from the cousin and the teachers, she would not have been successful in school. She contended, "In this school we get support! If you do your part, you will achieve your goals!" Similarly, Saed said that because of the caring environment the teachers and administrators had created, they were able to achieve success in their schooling. He stated, "The administrators were involved in whatever students were doing. For instance, if we succeed in something, the administrators would come and visit us in the classroom. If a student has a problem with something, he or she would turn to the administrators and seek their support." To understand student perceptions of the administrators' leadership, I asked, "What impact did the administrators' leadership have on you?" Students' perceptions are summarized in the following list:

- Felt being valued, a sense of belonging, inclusiveness, respected

- Administrators provided for academic and social support

- Felt care from the administers and teachers

- Created a caring environment

- Set expectations for students

These comments support the finding that administrators practiced care within the school.

Care from the Administrators

Other ways the school administrators practiced transformative leadership also included elements of care. In the data collected from some of the teachers, parents, and students, they all

echoed that Hillcrest administrators exhibited genuine care for the students. Care from the administrators involved not only developing strong relationships, understanding students' lived experiences, and attending to their needs but also valuing, acknowledging, and knowing the students personally. Participants in the study commented that the administrators created a school culture that was built on the elements of care, they modeled care for the teachers and students. For instance, Peter mentioned that caring for the students was what they were all about. As he explained his care for the students, he commented that when he was hiring teachers, he looked for values that were child centered. As he put it,

> I am in charge of all the interviews for- probably 95% of the people we hire are hired by me as the head of the committee. Now, I usually let the committee decide, but administrators have veto power over the committee. I have the final say! What I'm looking for is, number one and foremost, people who love students first. If you talk about "I love teaching," one of the first questions we ask is, "Talk about your experience as a teacher and why you got into teaching." Well, if the reason you got into teaching was because I love teaching math, that's ok, but I want to hear that you love teaching kids math, not that you love teaching math to kids. There's a big difference between the two. And that's what I'm looking for, that the bottom line is, do you care about these kids? Do you treat these kids like they're your own? Does that mean pamper and baby them? It just means you care enough about them to see them succeed, and that's first in your mind. After that, then I'm looking for intellectually, what do you bring to the table? Are you capable . . . are you competent at what you do? What's your vision? I want to know about your vision for your particular job, if you're hired. Give me your vision for this position. You know, if you're coming in as a science teacher, what's your vision as a science teacher? Do you just want to come in and teach the old book just the way it is, or do you have some ideas about some creative things that you want to do? What extracurricular activities do you want to be involved in? Is your job an 8 to 3 job, or are you just going to be here until you get the job done, whatever time it takes to do that? Are you going to be in after school or are you going to attend events that are nonacademic to watch your kids that you teach in informal situations outside of the classroom? How much do you care about kids to go that extra mile, and what do you bring to this table, in terms of your creativity, your intellect, all of those things?

Peter's statement illustrates that Hillcrest administrators looked for values that were compatible with the social justice work they promoted in their school. Further, all the administrators echoed that caring for the students was fundamental to their work because it enabled the administrators

and the teachers to earn the trust of the students. For instance, Alex commented that the students wanted to know that their teachers cared about them: "I want my children to be successful, and I want my kids to have the best opportunities they can have."

The administrators' message of love and caring was constantly communicated to the students. Statements such as, "We care about these students" and "We want students to be successful and we make sure that is the purpose," and sentiments such as "Loving kids is what it's all about and that is our sole purpose of existing" were mentioned by all the administrators. All the administrators echoed that they provided their students opportunities that more affluent schools had. Students repeatedly made statements that included, "They care about us" and "They are supportive of us because they give us the chance to overcome our shortcomings." These were recurring statements in the data. Nora, one of the guidance counselors, described the school principal's gentle approach toward the students and stated, "I have only seen the principal raise his voice—in the five years I've been here—three times. And we're all like sitting, like "What?" and the one time, he was yelling as he went down the hall because there was a fight during state testing, which is our state graduation test." In addition, the administrators exhibited care by promoting an understanding among the teachers, African American and Somali students, and their families. They took a proactive approach, which included reaching out to the Somali community, reducing stereotypes against the Somalis, and educating the teachers about the culture and the needs of the Somali community. Ellen, the ESL teacher, Nora, the guidance counselor, and Suad, Somali parent–school liaison shared testimonies of some of the ways administrators cared about the kids and promoted their welfare, which are illustrated in the following points.

- Empowered Somali students by encouraging them to participate in volunteering opportunities so that they interact with people so that they improve English language skills and other skills.

- Assistant principal, Peter provides "individual counseling" to Somali students asking them the type of support they need.

- Eliminated the stereotypes against Somali students by providing cultural sensitivity training where Somali community leaders were invited to provide professional development to the teachers about Somali culture and values, as well as the expectations that the parents had for the children and the school. These are ongoing discussions which are facilitated by Alex and Peter who indicated that, "in these discussions we encourage open and frank discussion with the Somali community and the teachers."

- Encouraged Somali students to share their unique experiences and history by providing them a platform such as international organization within the school which enabled Somali students to inform teachers, students and even administrators about various places they have been in Africa and their experiences about various countries they have lived before they came to the United States.

Promoting inclusion in nonacademic programs enhanced the integration and adjustment of Somali students in school.

Care for the Community

The administrators at Hillcrest had a deep understanding of their community. There was a sense of connectedness between the school and the community in which the administrators and the teachers took a proactive role in engaging with the community and providing support to members of the community who might be in need. As all the administrators echoed, doing social justice work and addressing the needs of the community was an integral part of their leadership practice. Nora reported that the administrators established a link between the school and the community, which was a mutually beneficial relationship. She explained that the school gave back to the community in that they encouraged students to be volunteers for the community. For instance, students in the leadership program, including Somali students, went to the middle schools and shared with the students what life in high school was like. Saed mentioned that he

enjoyed addressing them and sharing his experiences at Hillcrest High. In addition, Nora

provided testimony of how they were involved with the community: "They go out, and the basis

of it is community—civic. Community service. This past winter, as a matter of fact, we did our

annual holiday at the Senior Citizens' Building, where we actually go and do a craft with them

and talk with them." They also collected children's books and donated them to the Somali

community.

Further, Susan explained the administrators' devotion to the community as she shared her

commitment to social justice and how she promoted the values of giving back to the community.

She indicated that she not only expected students to perform well in school but also sought to

educate and instill the values of social justice in her students. For instance, she discussed her

support for low-income families and the importance of assisting families who were living in

abject poverty. However, she indicated her concern about some of the students becoming selfish

and individualistic. She stated,

> One of the things that I am concerned about, really the concern for me is that—and I have
> talked to several students over this . . . I was really concerned over the holidays because
> we were trying to raise funds to feed five families in this building. Part of it was that the
> students had to give and they don't give because they have been given so much, they
> expect a handout. Part of the reasonable service is that they give back to people
> (community). Mr. Alex and I and some other teachers had conversations. It really
> bothered me that we had given them so much, they expect to be given to them all the
> time, but they don't give in return. And that is a major concern on my side.

The notion of giving back to the community appears to be a culture that is practiced at Hillcrest.

Partnership with the Families

Despite the strong relationship with the community, the lack of strong link between the

school and families is a challenge the administrators have yet to overcome. The administrators

indicated that they understand some of the parents place the sole responsibility of educating

students on their shoulders. The Somalis culturally do not have to be at school to be involved in

their child's education. Both Alex and Peter indicated that they focused on first building trust and

a relationship with the Somali immigrant parents. They suggested that despite the positive

relationship they have with the families, they still struggle to increase parental involvement in

the school. Alex stated,

> Another piece is constantly figuring out ways for parents to get involved. The hardest
> thing to do in this school is to get parents get involved. We only have five students that
> walk home; everybody else is bussed. This school is not surrounded by houses. We are at
> least a mile away. So in terms of having a community school, we have had a terrible time
> in terms of getting the families get involved in school activities, to come to parent
> meetings, things like that. So the liaisons helped us to bring the parents to the school.
> That has been our challenge, getting parents involved.

Parental involvement is a challenge that the administrators must continue to address. One of the

ways they have tried to foster partnership with the parents has been to hold conferences at the

Somali community center or an area where most of the Somali families live. As Peter indicated,

> Sometimes we have to go to the parents' homes or meet with them in a community place
> at some function. That helps! Sometimes we have to have an incentive for them to come
> over or have functions like multicultural nights. That's the hardest piece. When you look
> at the numbers, even in our big functions, such as basketball games, we had 200 parents
> show up out of 700—that's our idea of success. We had a PTO meeting, we had only 10
> people. Parental involvement . . . that's the toughest challenge. I'm not sure if we have
> conquered that. I do believe in going to homes, and we go to the homes a lot of times to
> discuss on ways we can support students that are not performing well academically.

To foster partnership with the Somali families, Alex and Peter stated that trust and a positive

relationship have been fostered with the Somali families. In addition, both of the administrators

contended that they have created a school in which the Somali families feel a sense of belonging

to the school community. For instance, Peter indicated that when the school is open to the Somali

families, they can utilize the school building for functions or cultural activities.

Perspectives from the Parents

To gain the perspectives of the parents, I interviewed four parents whose children were

attending Hillcrest High School. I asked questions that related to their experiences with the

school administrators and the teachers. Responses from the parents were overwhelmingly positive. Saakin, whose daughter attended Hillcrest and graduated from high school in three years, expressed strong contentment with the academic achievement and the graduation rate of Somali students. She stated,

> In the previous years, the school had many challenges, such as ethnic conflict between the Somali and African American students. For the past four years, there was a turnaround in the school in terms of improving relationships and improving student learning. Now, Hillcrest is one of the best public schools in this city. They hired four Somali instructional aides. The Somali liaisons gives us an update about our children by either calling us or sending us letters written in Somali language.

Saakin added that there was a need to improve parental involvement. She commented that she was working with other Somali women's groups to improve parental involvement in the school. She also shared that it was challenging to increase parental involvement because the parents faced obstacles, including the fact that some of the parents were single mothers trying to provide for their families, and in these tough economic times, they could not miss work to be at school. The lack of transportation was another issue that prevented parents from enrolling their children in after-school programs. However, Saakin indicated that despite the challenges that parents faced, they were trying to educate the parents about the importance of being active participants in the education of their children. She remarked,

> We have a Somali community gathering; it is a Somali student graduation where we would like to explain to Somali parents the importance of being involved in their children's education. We want to tell the parents, "Even if the school does not call you, just go to school and check on your child whether he/she attended school. You don't have to wait for the school to call you! You just visit the school and check on your child!"

She added that the administrators "work very hard" to support Somali students and educate them; conversely, "We, the Somali families, must do our part and support the school."

When I asked Yusuf, one of the Somali community leaders and the father of Saed, about his experience with the administrators, his remarks were positive. He shared,

To be frank with you, I really like Hillcrest School. The administrators are remarkable people! The Somali instructional aides are also incredible—they do a good job of not only assisting the kids in school, but also facilitating the partnership between the parents, teachers, and administrators. Even if my son is doing well academically, they would commend me and say, "Continue the good work that you do with your son."

Despite the positive comments that Yusuf expressed, he commented on some parents, saying, "Some of the parents would have to take an extra mile to be able to help their children succeed in school. Some of the parents are not even aware what the children are doing in school. They don't show up for teacher/parent meeting or other school functions." With respect to areas that administrators need to improve in how they work with Somali students and families, Yusuf suggested, "An after-school program is needed! Also, a full-time position of school–family liaison has to be created." He concluded that the school liaison officer is important if the partnership is to be improved.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored leadership constructs that informed the ways in which school administrators worked with groups of Somali refugees and immigrant students attending high schools in the Midwest. More specifically, the study focused on whether school administrators' work was informed by transformative leadership. To gain further understanding of the topic, four major questions were asked, to contribute to our understanding of whether school administrators' leadership practices were informed by transformative leadership. Thus, the findings of the study are related to these questions: "What beliefs guide the ways in which educational leaders work with Somali immigrant students and their families?" "How do school leaders work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes?" "What kinds of accommodations (supports, programs, and environments) do school leaders promote?" "Does transformative leadership inform school principals' approaches to educating Somali immigrant students?"

With respect to the section on leadership beliefs, I discussed certain values that have shaped the school administrators' leadership approach. In their discussions of leadership philosophy, the administrators revealed certain values, which included empathy, equity, care, dialogue, inclusiveness, understanding, respect for difference, commitment to mitigating poverty, and community. Thus, I conclude that these are the values of transformative leadership. Hence, the data revealed that the administrators' approach to working with Somali students depicted transformative leadership.

In the section on equity, I examined the extent to which administrators promoted equitable educational outcomes for all students. Creating equitable outcomes for all students meant providing additional resources to support Somali students adjustment to school. Hence, the findings showed promoting equity for Somali students involved a collaborative approach by the administrators to provide additional resources, such as instructional aides to classrooms that housed Somali students, enhancing English language proficiency, and providing support classes to students to prepare for state standardized tests. Furthermore, the findings revealed that because Hillcrest was a high-poverty school, administrators addressed inequity by utilizing community resources to reduce poverty in their school and attended to the needs of their students. Thus, creating a link between the school and community was vital to harnessing the additional resources the school needed.

For the question related to support programs and structures that were aimed at assisting students to adjust to school, I showed that programs were in place to assist students adjust to school. I presented a discussion of school programs under the theme of inclusion because it was vital to discuss not only school programs, but also the inclusiveness of those programs. As such, the findings yielded that Somali students were integrated in both academic and nonacademic

programs, including language and literacy programs, sports, school-based resources that were linked to agencies, a leadership program, a college-readiness program, and career development and technical education programs.

In the next chapter, using the same research questions, I discuss the findings from the second case study, which focused on Forest High School located in the same school district.

Chapter Five: Findings for School Two: Forest High School

"I am not sure how much the administration respects the kids! Some of them do, it's just very sick. They need to clear this whole place out and start all over again. . . . You don't get people to run a building who don't have any social skills, who don't have a personality and who are not positive."

—Diane, guidance counselor

I conducted this study to examine whether high school administrators' leadership practices depicted elements of transformative leadership that would create schools that were more inclusive and supportive of Somali refugee students. A cross-cultural transformative leadership model and the four major guiding research questions of this study were used to analyze the data. The purpose of this study was to explore leadership constructs that inform the ways in which school administrators' work with groups of Somali immigrant students in high schools in the Midwest, with specific emphasis on whether their work is informed by transformative leadership. The central question guiding this study was, "What kind of leadership informs the ways in which school administrators work with groups of Somali immigrant students attending high schools in the Midwest?" In addition to this central question, the following questions furthered our understanding: (a) "What beliefs guide the ways in which educational leaders work with Somali immigrant students and their families?" (b) "How do school administrators work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes?" (c) "What kinds of accommodations (supports, programs, and environments) do school administrators promote?" and (d) "Does transformative leadership inform school administrators' approaches to educating Somali immigrant students?"

In this chapter, I begin with an overview of the background of Forest High School. I then discuss certain challenges Somali students experience as they try to navigate the high school system. Using the guiding questions as a way to organize and present the data, I then discuss

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major themes that have emerged from the study, which include school administrators' values and leadership beliefs, equity, school program inclusiveness, and deficit thinking. The last two will be discussed together as they relate to school programs.

Participants interviewed in this high school included the principal and three assistant principals, three parents, four students, the school guidance counselor, one Somali instruction aid, and two English as a second language (ESL) teachers. Semistructured interviews were conducted with participants in the study, and a document analysis was completed. Five of the four administrators were interviewed; the remaining administrator chose not to participate in this study. To protect the identity of the school and the research participants, pseudonyms were used. Table 4 contains the pseudonyms of the participants, as well as the ethnicity and role of each person interviewed.

Table 4. Participants of the Study in Forest High

Name	Ethnicity	Position
William	Caucasian	Principal
Sarah	Caucasian	Assistant principal
Brandon	African American	Assistant principal
Jerome	African American	Assistant principal
Diane	Caucasian	Guidance counselor
Lisa	Caucasian	Guidance counselor
Roble	Somali	ESL math teacher
Gail	Caucasian	ESL teacher
Yasmin	Somali	Instructional aide
Brenda	Caucasian	Physical education teacher
Yusuf	Somali	Student
Fuad	Somali	Student
Leban	Somali	Student
Muhibo	Somali	Parent
Halima	Somali	Parent
Ahmed	Somali	Parent

Data collection involved conducting one semistructured interview with each of the participants for a duration of approximately one hour. After the first set of interviews was completed, I conducted follow-up interviews with the administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors to gain a more in-depth understanding of the data. In addition, a limited amount of observational data from the ESL English and math classrooms was used. A document analysis, for example, an analysis of the school improvement plan, was also performed and used for this study.

School Background

Forest High School is located in a metropolitan city in the Midwest. The school is a 70-year-old three-story brick building with wide locker-lined hallways. Forest High School is situated in an economically deprived neighborhood. Historically, the area was in an industrial part of the city in which different factories (e.g., a car manufacturing plant) were previously located. William, the school principal, described the community as follows:

> I think it's socioeconomic. What we find is we're in a distressed part of the city and, you know, if you drive around, you'll see that there's, there's a real divide that occurs on this side of town. This used to be a manufacturing part of town, and General Motors was here, Westinghouse was here, Johnson Control was here, and so this is sort of, the close-knit community has sort of disintegrated around and demographics are changing in the area.

Forest High is undergoing demographic changes in which immigrant families, such as Somalis and Latinos/Latinas, have moved into the community. The demographic changes in the community are reflective of the changes that are occurring in the school as well.

Eighty-seven faculty members teach at Forest High. Most of the teachers are veteran teachers and turnover is low. Forest High faces the challenge of a high mobility rate. During 2009–2010 school year, the school had 657 student withdrawals while 456 students were enrolled. Safety inside the school is a concern for the administrators, parents, students, and the

teachers. In the fall of 2011, during a school assembly on student safety, the throat of a ninth-grade student was slit with a lock-blade pocket knife by another ninth-grade student sitting behind his table. The student was critically injured but survived the attack.

Academically, the school is not doing well. For instance, students did not meet reading and math proficiency standards. The school improvement plan mentions that despite the teachers' attempts to make the lessons engaging, students are "disconnected and bored." Thus, students do not perform well on state standardized tests. This applies not only to subgroup populations such as African Americans and Somalis but also to Caucasian students. Hence, one of the goals teachers and administrators seek to achieve is to build relationships with the students through forms of support and differentiated instruction for students.

On my second day of data collection, I conducted some observations of the school. The school was painted a cream color with oak doors and woodwork. The auditorium had three double outside doors on the first floor and a first floor, balcony, and upper balcony. There were old worn out, dusty rugs, furniture, and windows in some of the classrooms, which did not create an attractive environment for student learning. The moment a student enters the school, he or she will notice the need for some major renovations. The cafeteria was mundane and sterile. However, one of the ESL teachers mentioned that the school had bugs and mice, even on the third floor.

I did not see any display of tasteful or inspirational posters or art on the walls of the school that might portray school values. In the entrance on the first floor are two trophy cases with old trophies in them. Two smaller cases and a larger one had student artwork in them from the art classes and senior activities. There was a large board with the names of the principal, assistant principals and the secretary. The front hall had two bulletin boards showing outreach

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organizations, such as the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program these boards also showed students' results on the state exams and awards. The other was the librarian's bulletin board, which was used to promote some books that students could find in the school library. On another wall on the first floor were two bulletin boards dedicated to former students of Forest High and their accomplishments, including one that showed the students in the National Honor Society. Close to the cafeteria were two additional blank bulletin boards. Pictures of athletes, dating back to when the school first opened, were hung down another hallway.

On the second floor, I also did not see students' work. Some items about government classes were hung on the wall. Outside the counselors' door was the counselors' bulletin board, which showed upcoming events, such as deadlines for college applications, and some pamphlets on career awareness. Several pictures of past students and their accomplishments were hung on the wall by the office. There was also a display case with a picture of the student of the month, which was voted on by the teachers. The third floor had art items hung on the walls.

I observed the classroom of the ESL teacher, Gail, which was very small and had a limited amount of space. She indicated that the room was designed to be a storage closet for the visual equipment. She said, "The janitors wanted to use it for a storage closet, but instead I was given it as a classroom." The ceiling of the room was a white tile that was so low that students could touch it just standing up. The air quality in the room was poor; no other vents for return air or fresh air of any kind were included because it was never intended to be occupied by people. The room was carpeted and appeared to be dusty and unclean. This room was approximately 15×18 feet without windows. It had one door in each of three walls, leaving one wall without a door. A bank of seven computers and one printer were situated against the wall on tables with chairs.

At the most, 23 students were in the classroom for one period during the day. This included three different sections at one time. A 12th-grade senior ESL class, the 10th- and 12th-grade elective ESL class, was for students who needed extra help. There were 23 desk chairs and an aide's desk and chair in the room, with the teacher's desk and chair at the front of the classroom. The room was overcrowded; there was not enough room to walk and barely enough room to use the 8×4 foot green board. The room also had two bookshelves, a four-drawer filing cabinet, and two-drawer filing cabinets. The wall behind the computer was for posters of encouragement, grammar and grammar instruction reinforcement, and a display of student papers. Here, the teacher displayed spelling tests (showing those above a mark of B) and one- to five-paragraph written responses to literature the students were reading as they practiced for the state standardized test, so that others could see well-written examples. The teacher explained that modeling is very important in ESL; hence, grades appeared on the papers as well as corrections. She noted that if they were perfect, the students would not need to be in class and that besides, there was always room for improvement so that scores were not lowered because of mistakes or inconclusive work. The teacher would often leave past papers on the board and put new ones over them to provide evidence of a progression of improvement. The spelling tests were not standard, but the teacher indicated that she felt this empowered the students by learning the prefixes, suffixes, and roots or base words in English. This method made it easier for them to use their dictionaries on tests and gain a quicker understanding of what they were reading. The practice was also aimed at enhancing students' comprehension.

On the third wall were essays, poems, journal writings, and the like that the students had written. The students appeared to have enjoyed reading stories about some of the struggles and difficulties students from other countries had had. On this wall were also small maps of all seven

continents, as well as Palestine, Somalia, and Mexico. On a white, rectangular piece of paper, students wrote their name, the languages spoken, their country, and the city where they were born. This information was then attached by a piece of yarn from their name to their country so that everyone could see where each student was from. This not only showed students the countries everyone was from but also helped them learn about other countries. Everyone had to write four types of poems and each student had to stand in front of the class and recite his or her poem while the other students used the technique of listening for style and content and then helping grade the student's poem. When the poems were posted on the board, some appeared to enjoy.

No student papers were displayed on the hall walls. I asked Gail about the lack of decorations on school walls and was told the principal did not allow them. The teacher mentioned that the principal even took down the 20 to 30 different national flags in the front hall because he considered them inappropriate. She said "I do not know what happened to them, only that before he became principal, the flags were admired and respected. After he came, he took down what had previously been put up in an effort to build relationships."

Challenges

Most of the Somali students at Forest High encounter various challenges. Some of the challenges include a language barrier and a gap in their education, which puts students in a disadvantaged position. Gail, an ESL teacher, discussed that some of the students' education was disrupted while they were in the refugee camps. She reported that her students struggle to understand the subject matter because a basic knowledge of vocabulary is missing. Another challenge students encounter is that those who have never attended school struggle to adjust to school and becoming accustomed to the whole notion of attending high school in the United

States. As an example of the struggles that students face, Gail shared that one her students writes vertically in his notebook. She explained that the boy struggles to overcome the way he writes because when he was in the refugee camp, he had to share a notebook with two other boys, and each one of them had a small section to write vertically. Diane, one of the school guidance counselors, explained that some of the students who have never attended school obviously do not know the school rules or the culture and structured learning environment of a school. The following list summarizes the challenges students encounter once they come to the United States:

- *Social issues such as ethnic tension*. Because of the communication barrier, Somali students have conflicts with their American counterparts. Part of the issue is that some of the American kids view the Somalis as foreigners. Diane remarked, "There is also the issue some of our student population is not as welcoming to the Somali population as they could be."

- *Lack of cultural understanding on the part of the students and the teachers*. Diane reported that many teachers lack an awareness of Somali culture. She said, "We get a little bit of training on Somali culture, maybe a little bit of training on the clans." Thus lack of cultural understanding contributes to some of conflicts between the teachers and students, as Diane said, "Students are judged on, perhaps something that they don't have any control over."

- *Mental issues*. Some of the Somali students who were exposed to the civil war and the refugee camps are suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. The ESL teachers and Diane witness students who live with this Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. They indicated that there is no counseling program available in school. However, students are referred to a mental illness clinic which provides them with medication.

- *Difficulty in adjusting to routines and having to sit in class and focus on learning for a long period of time*. Students are punished for not being able to adjust to school. As Gail explained, "We have problems with teachers that do single them out, and don't give them extra time and will barely tolerate them, so to speak, in the classes, and they don't want to deal with them."

- *Difficulty with standardized testing situations*. Students have difficulty passing the state standardized test, which consists of five parts. Some of the students who are expected to graduate cannot graduate because of these state-mandated tests. Sarah, one of the

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administrators, described the test as follows: "They'll have sample tests there, and you'll see the science, and you'll probably shake your head at all the vocabulary that's needed. Yeah, it's pretty intense." She indicated that students get worried. She added, "Letting them know, calming them down. 'Okay, you may not graduate now, but you're going to graduate. We're just going to keep working on it until you can work with us until you're 22. You know, we're not just going to cut you loose. . .'"

School Administrators' Philosophies of Educational Leadership

The major research question that was used to guide the discussion of administrators' leadership philosophies was, "What beliefs guide the ways in which educational leaders work with Somali immigrant students and their families?" I begin with a discussion of the values of the school principal that shape his leadership and subsequently include the leadership philosophies of other administrators.

William is the principal of Forest High. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in educational administration. He worked in a vocational school for 22 years, where he eventually became an assistant principal. Previously, William had been an administrator for the district he works for now; he had also been the principal of another school in the district for 2.5 years. In 2008, he was transferred to Forest High. He began describing the values that shape his leadership by saying that leadership first begins within the self, managing by walking around, and trying to be flexible. He continued to explain his leadership philosophy:

> With the job of principal, you have to wear a lot of different hats, so you've got to change that leadership style a lot, but basically, our philosophy here, with our students, is 'bring your best to Forest every day,' and what that means is leadership first with yourself, and that means self-discipline, doing the right thing, and we try to model that with our teachers and our staff.

He added that he is a firm believer in preparing students to be lifelong learners. He asserted,

"And that's a part of me that, you know, I try to impart to the students and the teachers, that, you know, we've got to prepare these students to be lifelong learners. Apart from providing students education, students must be lifelong learners." With respect to his vision for educating students, William indicated that his first priority was to provide students a learning environment that was conducive to learning. He explained,

> I think, first and foremost, this has to be the best part of a student's day. They have to have a building that's safe and secure, and in order- once we get the building safe and secure, then we can provide a successful place for our students. Last year, our theme was having a safe, secure, and successful school year. OK? So when I came in here- and we'll walk around the school and you can see- the school was in very bad disrepair. OK? Paint was cracking, plaster falling off the walls, bulletin boards were missing, no messages were going out to the students. OK? So, so we made that our motto last year: Have a safe, secure, and successful school year. And I went about trying to get the building in shape. OK? So as a high school, Forest High School has a very high mobility rate. People are coming in and out all the time. And that, you know, that's not- that's not typical, from my experience, with the Somali community. They've been here, these kids are happy here, and they're sticking with us. I don't see! I don't see that same mobility rate with- with that population. So basically, we're doing a pretty good job getting- getting this as a place where kids want to come. And there used to be- there used to be fights almost every day.

William's priority was not only to make the school a place conducive to learning but also to protect the students from crime and gang activities within the school. As the principal continued to discuss his view of educating students, he contended that it is vital to support student aspirations and instill in them the principles of accountability and hard work. He stated,

> Academically, I'd like to see everybody engaged to their capacity. We need to change the climate in that students need to take the onus on of leadership— they need to be respectful of themselves. I put it real simple: We need to put round pegs in round holes, OK? Students need to see themselves and where they fit into society. They need to see their opportunities and we need to model those opportunities. So what we do here at Forest High School, what I'm doing is I'm bringing in a lot of outside people, speakers— for example, we had a young lady come in, we had a speaker come in and we had an all girls assembly a month ago. We took all the girls from the high school, we put them in the auditorium, and we had a speaker come in, a dynamic speaker to come in and talk about girl things. I left; I don't know what- it was very successful.

William's statement about teaching the notion of responsibility, providing good role models, and

opportunities is the way he supports students.

Moreover, the principal discussed the impact the economic downturn has had on schools

and students. In fact, he shared that he attended Forest High and he experienced challenges

similar to those students are going through today. Hence, such challenges should not hold

students back. As he put it,

> I graduated from this high school. Yeah, so I graduated from this high school; I came up under the same economic conditions that right now are a little in the fact that some of that manufacturing was going on, but this is, you know, this is a situation where, yeah, you can be poor, but you still have something to offer to society, you still have opportunities, you still have the same opportunity. I have the same opportunity to go to college as the kid that's parents can afford to pay for college three times before he even gets there. OK? So what I tell my- what I tell my students is, and I state this all the time, don't let anyone tell you can't go to college. OK? You need to find out, you need to take care of business, you need to be a leader, you need to know yourself, and then you need to do the things that are necessary to get to that next- that next step. OK? So I see that- I see that as the plan to see our students 100% successful. What that means is that if a kid drops out of school, I want that kid to know how to go apply for the job. I want him to know how to explain that barrier, OK? Yeah, dropping out of school is a barrier to employment, but what skills do you have, how are you taking yourself as a round peg and putting in that job as a round hole. OK? How are you going to contribute so that you can manage, take care of yourself or your family or life, or whatever. So I see that, you know, to put it in simple terms, that's where we started, round peg, round hole. But the opportunities, the opportunities for college are there for all of our children.

Despite the economic challenges students are experiencing, William believes that it is possible to

guide students in a positive direction and encourage them to succeed in school.

Sarah has been an administrator at Forest High for three years. Sarah's leadership

philosophy was shaped by the principles of instructional leadership. For Sarah, taking a

facilitative role and creating shared purpose among the teachers is vital. She views her role as a

facilitator who is responsible for assisting the teachers to improve teaching and learning for

students. She stated, "So mine is more of providing support, providing a sounding board, helping

the teachers reflect on 'What's it you want to do? Why do you want to do it? What are the needs of your students? How do we help them progress?' And then providing them the resources and, you know, action plans to help them do what they need to get done." First, she believes that attending to areas that teachers need to improve on would enable her to attend to improving learning for students. Second, Sarah focuses on building relationships so that she can lead. In fact, when I asked Sarah, "How do you describe yourself as an educational leader?" She responded, "I am probably- I am an introvert, so it's- I'm not comfortable going in front of a large groups of people. I do it, obviously, because I've presented papers and things like that. But that's- I'm more of a one-on-one, personal, trying to develop the relationship with not only the teacher, but the student, and that allows me then to lead, or push, where they need to go."

With respect to Sarah's views on Somali students, she described the young girls as being education-wise and academically oriented. She contended that she nourishes and supports the aspirations of the Somali girls. However, she voiced her frustration with the Somali boys in that there are some who are academically oriented and others who are not doing well academically. Sarah stated that she is concerned about a handful of Somali boys who are "falling into groups that aren't good," and she appeared to be frustrated with them. She said, "Those young men, I don't know what to do with them." For Sarah, the perception she holds of the Somali boys is that they have failed to conform to the norms and culture of the school. Certainly, there seemed to be a lack of understanding of the needs of these Somali boys.

Brandon has been an administrator for 3.5 years. He has been an assistant principal at Forest High for two years. He is working on his doctoral degree in school administration. Brandon described his leadership as follows:

> My leadership philosophy is really based on the idea of being a role model for students. I think that I take the approach that students will respect you if they, first of all, know that

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you are working in their best interest. And I take the approach that every student deserves the right to a quality education, and that the basic focus that we all must have is, "How do we, first of all, treat people as human beings, and then, how can we develop them so that they have the skills and knowledge that they need to move forward?"

Brandon also believes that his role as administrator is to be a servant leader who focuses on addressing student needs, whether those needs are academic or social. He elaborated that despite his leadership beliefs, he is consumed by administrative aspects related to his position. He contended,

> As an assistant principal, in this particular school, I do find that most of my time is dealing with more transactional leadership responsibilities in terms of the day-to-day discipline and administrative type of work, and I have to make extra efforts to involve myself in activities that will- make sure I involve myself in activities that give me the opportunity to help to develop leadership skills in students that I don't necessarily see on a regular basis because they're not getting in trouble, you know. So I have to make that extra effort to do that. The good thing is that a part of that, depending on the approach that I take, part of that managerial responsibility allows me to see what the needs are so that I can use that information to create programs and to bring in resources that will help to address those needs.

Brandon views himself as an educational leader who takes pride in being a role model for students. He asserted that he is an advocate for (a) student development and providing quality education to students; (b) maintaining an open-door policy, supporting students, and listening to their concerns; and (c) advocating for the teachers and providing them the support they need. He indicated that some literature on educational leadership, such as the concept of the *ethic of care*, has informed his leadership approach to working with students.

Jerome has been an administrator for 28 years, 10 years of which have been as assistant principal at Forest High. He admits that his leadership approach used to be more authoritative; however, over the years, his leadership beliefs have changed. He claimed that he has learned to share decision-making processes with the teachers. He explained,

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My style is to empower others, you know. And that has occurred with me over the years. . . . I just think when you share, you know, your philosophy and your idea and your mission, you know, that- it's a lot easier to bring people onboard. So mine is one of shared leadership, empowering others to do what they have to do. Early on in my administration, I was probably an autocratic leader. I mean I just- "This is the way it is, this is the way you do it," and you learn over a time that you just can't- you just can't have a continuity, you can't sustain that. And then, too, if everybody is involved in whatever our mission is, then we all take responsibility for the ownership.

With respect to how he works with students, Jerome indicated that he focuses on listening to students and understanding their needs. He mentioned,

Well I just try to be myself. You know, I just try to be myself with all my students. I try to understand! I do a lot of listening! I try to understand where students are coming from and where their parents are coming from. I try not to be- I try not to form previous opinions or prejudice, I try not to do that. I'm always trying to find out about students and their parents and their cultures. Anytime I get an opportunity to talk with someone from a different country, I try to know . . . try to learn about that culture.

There is an indication in his statement of ways to reach out to the Somali families and build relationships with them.

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Equity

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This section of the chapter focuses on the issue of equity. When working with immigrant populations, one of the issues that administrators must grapple with is ensuring an equitable outcome for all students. As such, I present data that pertains to the question, "How do school leaders work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes?" I begin this chapter by discussing how administrators address the need to promote equitable outcomes for students. Second, I examine teachers' perspectives as they pertain to administrators' leadership in terms of ensuring equity for Somali students.

Administrators' Perspectives on Equity

Because Forest High has a large immigrant population, many of whom are Hispanic and Somali students, the district has established certain courses that are taught by teachers certified in

ESL. These courses include ESL English, ESL math, and ESL science. With the exception of

math, which is taught by a Somali teacher, the ESL classes have Somali instructional aides that

provide support to the students and the teachers. According to the principal, students are

transferred to the regular non-ESL classes once they can perform well in those classes. As

William stated, "There is transitioning going on from those specialized classes, which, you

know, the extra help because the teacher, an interpreter, the interpreter acts as a teaching

assistant, and there's some individual explaining going on; there's individual attention going on

so they can achieve at a level." However, he stated that because of the language barrier, there is

an inequity issue, with Somali students not passing state-mandated tests. To address that

challenge, the school holds Saturday classes designed to prepare students for the tests. These

classes are offered several months before students take the tests.

 In Sarah's response to the question of equity, she shared that students who are in poverty

are supported and provided clothing and other assistance that they might need. Sarah indicated

that she depends on ESL teachers to advocate for the kids and identify the needs of the students.

She stated,

> We have the . . . their ESL teachers act as our in-between, so if they see somebody who
> maybe is not eating, you know, is sick or whatever . . . We do have some advantages in
> that Mr. Williams is a past president of a nongovernmental organization, so that if we
> have students that do not have clothing, we can get them that very easily. . . . So if we
> have students who have medical needs, we can work with them. But we're really a Have-
> Not school, you know! And we need a lot.

Despite the resources Sarah claims are provided to low-income students, she reluctantly shared

that when it comes to attending to the needs of immigrant students, it is not easy to convince the

teachers to do what is in the best interests of those students. In fact, she stated that only 50% of

the school teachers who are younger are prepared to work with the students. Thus, to support

Somali and other immigrant students, Sarah uses transactional leadership. She remarked,

> Well, I can tell you that those teachers that are willing to work with not only our ESL, but
> our special ed students, they have accommodations made in their schedule to do that. You
> know, if you're going to go the extra mile for our kids, we'll go the extra mile for you
> too. And so there's not a lot I can do, but I can do that. So that there's, you know, thanks
> for doing it, and you need eighth period off, you got it. When they don't do it, they have
> the regular schedule, but if they're going to work with our kids, if they're going to help
> us, you know, then I will try to- I do the scheduling, I will try to help them also. That's
> why I try to put our students with special needs—ESL and special ed—working with
> teachers who are going to help them be successful. That understand differentiated
> instruction, understand that they may be gone a week because grandpa died in Mexico,
> and they're going to be gone. OK. When they get back, make sure they get their work
> done, rather than penalizing them. I mean, when their immediate family dies, they all go
> back to Mexico.

Sarah's narrative shows there is a lack of a collaborative approach on the part of the

administrators and teachers. She has to compensate some of her teachers who agree to work with

the students.

The discussion of equity was challenging for the principal and the assistant principals.

For instance, promoting equitable educational outcomes for all students was somewhat confused

with placing students in the same classes. Brandon, the ninth-grade administrator, became

confused about the equity issues. He responded that students were assigned to the same class and

he was trying to figure out how inequity would take place in his school. I gave him as an

example the fact that immigrant students, such as the Somalis, do struggle academically because

of the language barrier. Apart from the ESL units, I asked him what he was doing to help the

Somali students adjust to school and provide them support. He responded, "Inequities at this

school! It's hard for me to necessarily identify examples of inequity at this school, because when

a student walks into this school, we schedule them for the same classes as everybody else. There

is no institutional practice that we segregate . . ." Further, we exchanged in a conversation about

the fact that when it comes to applying to colleges, some of the students might lack college

knowledge or how the college application process works. The parents as well may not

understand how the process of transitioning to college works. Then the situation would be, if

additional support programs are not provided that focus on college readiness, and these students

are not advocated for, then it would constitute inequity. Brandon replied,

> Yeah, and I'm trying to, to see if, you know, in my thinking, if that would be an inequity if we're offering it, if we're offering, like say, for example a college- a financial aid workshop, you know, for any student that is a senior, your parents can come out and we're going to help you fill out the financial aid workshop. I'm trying to see if it would be, if it would be an inequity, if, for example, we didn't have a translator there. I'm wondering if- I'm just trying to think if that would be a lack of preparation that equals an inequity, or if it's just an oversight, I don't know.

After reflecting about the question, Brandon said, "I'm sure there are a lot of examples of that,

where the playing field is not leveled because we don't provide the additional resources needed

so that a person who is a non-English speaker would be able to compete as equally as someone

else." Brandon might not understand the needs of the Somali students because he might never

have close encounters with them. He even indicated, "They are not under my radar." In his view,

as with the other administrators, it was the responsibility of the ESL teachers to figure out and

have an understanding of the needs of the Somali students.

Teachers' Perspectives on Equity

To understand issue of equity and gain a different perspective on it, I interviewed a

Diane, guidance counselor, and two ESL teachers: Gail who was an ESL English teacher, and

Roble, a Somali ESL math teacher. Narratives from these staff members painted a discouraging

picture of the relationship between some of the teachers and the administrators as it pertained to

promoting equitable educational outcomes for students. When I asked Gail how the

administrators worked with the teachers to promote equitable outcome for students, she

explained that there was not a culture of collegiality and collaboration among the teachers and

the administrators. She indicated that even though she advocates for the Somalis and other

immigrant students, she does not have the support of her administrators. With respect to the

resources that her students need, she mentioned a lack of space for her ESL students. She

requested a larger room and described her conversation with William, the principal, as follows:

> Having 23 kids in my class, it's difficult; it's too big. And as Mr. William has mentioned I don't want you to complain about the room, but as you can see, the size of the room is very difficult to manage. They don't have space; that's why I ask permission to take the kids in the back of the library so that Yasmin can have kids that are working on projects and they can talk or she can help them with anything that keeps them motivated in the right direction; otherwise they have to be totally silent. They can't read if they are hearing us; they need to be in a quiet room; that's why I try to do things that help both classes. I have no windows. It's hot in here; we either get cold air or whatever air, and as you can see, the air is not very clean in here. We don't regulate any heat when it's cold. It's cold and we've had to sit outside in the halls because it was warmer in the halls than it is in here. When I open the doors, it's so close to the cafeteria, it's very noisy.

Gail's view is that priority is not given to resources that her students need. The room is too small

for the number of students she has in her classroom, and I saw that even the Somali instructional

aide, Yasmin, did not have enough space to walk around and help the students one on one. Gail

contended that even as she advocates for the kids, she is not empowered to do her work in the

sense that the principal has to approve of what she wants to accomplish for her students. Here is

a narrative of one occasion when she wanted to raise money for the graduation expenses of her

ESL students who could not afford to pay the fee:

> When I had approached the principal about some of my students not having enough money to pay for the graduation gowns and for their activities for graduation, it was $130. A lot of these students don't have that kind of extra cash. . . . My principal told me, "Well, you are too passionate about these kids; you gotta let that go."

Gail stated that she then shared her plan to raise money with other teachers, who agreed to contribute. When Mr. William found out, she was reprimanded by her principal, who told her, "You don't do anything unless I tell you it is okay." Gail claimed, "I was not allowed to ask the teachers to go to my colleagues and ask if they could help any specific students or any students to help them with the funding." There seems to be a power issue wherein the principal has to dictate in what ways the teachers support the students. Gail elaborated,

> When I tried to have people at the school ask them if they would like to help any of the students, if there is anyone they would like to help, they said they would. What I had done was I talked to several people and put a notice in several teachers' mailboxes. He called a special teachers' meeting and said, "Whoever did this better step up to it because you are violating what I don't approve of in this school." After the meeting, he said, "You didn't have the right to do that." I said, "Why not? They are my colleagues." He said, "You don't have the right to ask them for anything for your students! You don't do anything unless I tell you it is okay." I was not allowed to ask a teacher to go to my colleagues and ask if they could help any specific students or any students to help them with the funding. I was reprimanded! That was a major big deal, when I have students who cannot afford to pay the graduation money and I tried to help.

Moreover, Gail mentioned that the issue came back for a third time, and this time the principal assured her that he would address it. She reported that he said,

> Ok, we are going to see who can contribute, and then we will let every kid have the opportunity no matter whether they are ESL or not. Then when I went back to ask, "How are my students? Were they able to have extra funds given?" He said, "You don't need to know; this it is not your business." What I did find out was, Mr. William told Roble to "Call each one of these student's parents and say they can't graduate unless they put up the money." That teacher came to me and said this is what the principal did, and "I just had to tell them they couldn't graduate unless they brought the money." Some of the students borrowed the money from friends and families to be able to graduate. I assumed at this point my ESL students who needed the funding never got it. Several teachers said they donated money for the students, but they were never told if the money went to the students they had requested them to go to. So I have been reprimanded for trying to help these students!

The narrative from Gail depicts the lack of a collaborative approach to attending to the needs of the Somali students. In fact, other teachers also complained about the lack of vision and leadership at Forest High in their discussion about attending to the needs of students.

Diane, the guidance counselor, has a master's degree in school counseling. She works with 10th- and 11th-grade students. She has been working at Forest High for four years. Diane explained that the administration is not "very open minded" and does not have "a good knowledge" of working with ethnically and linguistically diverse students. She also added,

> I also think it would be really helpful for our staff to get more training on working with students. Just recognizing differences and understanding. . . . You know I don't know what it is like live in Somalia with that horrible, horrible war, but what I do know is that I recognize differences in anybody and everybody. And work a little bit differently I think—understand people's values and way of life, and understanding that and being able to apply to what is in here.

With respect to promoting equity, Diane commented that she advocates for immigrant and special education students. One way she promotes equitable outcomes for Somali and other students involves building relationships with certain kinds of teachers who share her values of equity and social justice. She explained,

> We have a very weak administration! I have always tried to address inequities since I got here. Individually, I try to eliminate those because those inequities are teachers that are not fair, teachers that have preconceived notions about students. So I place students in classes that have teachers that tend to work well with immigrant students.

Another inequity Diane pointed out is the lack of elective classes in which students could have been supported in subjects they have difficulties. Instead, students are placed in ESL teachers' regular instructional periods that would focus on teaching English. Although that ESL elective is designed to give the students the extra help they need, they cannot get the extra help during that time because the teachers are responsible for teaching English, math, or science during that same time. Hence, that would be an inequity because the teachers cannot give students the attention

they need. Diane contended that even though she continues to advocate for the students, rather

than addressing student needs and inequities, the focus of administrators is to blame the students

themselves. Diane reported that one teacher said in a meeting, "Oh, they're Somali. They're not

going to pass the test anyway, so don't worry about it." The following is Diane's narrative about

the school administration, which provides a picture of the climate and the culture of the school:

> We are-you know, I feel like I'm picked on sometimes. We are not looking at the big picture! We are not looking at the things that are important in our building, such as meeting kids' needs. What I don't like is, everything is a discipline issue. It doesn't matter—and this is because I'm a counselor—it doesn't matter what's going on in the kid's life, you know; we don't take the time to figure that out. The administration, with the exception of one—that would be Mr. Brandon—is very difficult to communicate with, very difficult to get support from. I am not sure that one of our administrators is as knowledgeable as he should be to be an administrator. There's many times where I'll be talking to him about a certain topic or an issue that's going on, and I know from his response that he has no idea what I'm talking about. We have another administrator that speaks inappropriately. The last time I heard her speak, she said, "That kid ain't gonna pass." Now, that's not the kind of role model that we want in our building. I didn't know I was going to be asked all these questions. I don't feel like the job that we do is- is recognized as the job that we do. I don't feel like there's a strong- strong leader in our building. It's always, pass the buck. And you don't- are not given time to explain yourself and why you did something. It's just- cut you off: "And that's what you did, and that's wrong."

In a nutshell, these teachers, including the Somali instructional aide, had strong views about the

school leadership and their inability to promote equitable outcomes for all students. Table 5

summarizes teachers' perspectives about administrators' leadership.

Table 5. Perceptions of School Faculty about Administrators' Leadership

Perception	Example
Lack of administrative support	• The Somali ESL math teacher, Roble, described his agony over not getting enough support from the administration. He mentioned, "I teach math and if I give them a problem, Somali students cannot figure out what they were asked because many of them can't read. I always ask them in English and then tell them in Somali. These students need visual aids to understand better, and as a teacher, I do not have the tools."

Table 5. Perceptions of School Faculty (continued)

A culture of *othering* (i.e., Somalis seen as outsiders)	• Gail, the ESL English teacher, stated, "We have problems with teachers that do single them out, and don't give them extra time and will barely tolerate them, so to speak, in the classes, and they don't want to deal with them. I had one black teacher she told me, I asked about some of my students in her class . . . she knew they might need help, she sends them down to my class. She said, "Oh you mean those foreigners!" She knows that they have cards. Some of their parents are American citizens, so she calls them foreigners. So I do see that it's not right and it's not fair and I can't do anything about it because Mr. William likes this individual, so that tells me Mr. William is very much that way too." • Diane, the guidance counselor, also explained, "The teachers, you know, seriously, racist talk: 'Oh they are from there, what do they know, they have never been to school.' Making some generalities! Generalizations and assumption about people they don't know anything about. It is not all teachers; it is a handful who have a really difficult time getting past some of that. It is not as fun as it used to be. Fortunately, one of the individuals that really was . . . you could look at her grades and look at the Fs and automatically know who the teacher was. But she is gone now, which is good. It is very good for us not to have that, because, you know, the failure rate was entirely too high."
Teachers' lack of ownership of their power	• Yasmin, the Somali instructional aide, said, "Mr. William is an authoritative white male; he doesn't empower the teachers."
Silencing of teachers who support students	• Diane elaborated on how she and a few other teachers that engage in advocacy are being silenced: "Well, I think there's a lot of judgment brought into the way we handle our- how the leaders handle the situations, and you know, personal prejudices are brought into this, and which you know, as an educator you have absolutely no business bringing those kinds of things to the table."
Low expectations of students	• Regarding low expectations of students as part of the culture in the school, Diane said, "I think failure rates in general are very poor in this building, and we as a staff don't do as much as they can to help our kids be successful. Not all of them, and not all of our kids. We have kids that don't come to school because of continuous behavior problems. But, you know, there are some of those kids that are kind of on the outside, whether they be Somali or Americans, that can be . . . you can work with them and get them on the right track. But I don't see a lot of effort going into that."

The teachers' accounts of the administrators' leadership in promoting equitable outcomes for all students portrayed a grim picture of the inability, or perhaps unwillingness, of administrators to create a learning environment in which the educational and social needs of students were addressed. Thus, the inequity issue was compounded by a school culture characterized by a lack of dialogue and collective vision in promoting equitable outcomes for all students.

What Kinds of Accommodations Do School Administrators Promote?

In this section, I examine the findings that relate to sources of support, programs, and an environment that might promote the adjustment of Somali students at Forest High School. Major themes in this section that emerged from the discussion of program inclusiveness are the lack of inclusion of school programs and deficit thinking by administrators and faculty. Also in this section, I explore the experiences of students and parents with school administrators. As I examined school programs and support systems in the school, I looked at the extent to which students were integrated into programs such as sports, the arts, school organizations, and leadership programs that could play a vital role in fostering student adjustments in school, as well as interaction between Somali and American students. In addition, exploring the participation of Somali students in programs would show the inclusiveness, or lack thereof, of the programs. Data showed that Somali students were not fully integrated into the school programs. I asked the administrators whether Somali students participated in school programs. William, the principal, acknowledged that school programs were not inclusive and that it was part of his plan to improve Somali student participation in nonacademic programs. Brandon, on the other hand, stated that he ran the young men's leadership program, which focuses on leadership development in boys and girls. There are two separate programs for girls and boys. The young men's program consists of 25 students, 2 of which are Somali students. In addition,

Brandon talked about the soccer team, which consists of predominantly Somali boys. Indeed, soccer is a game that Somali boys are familiar because soccer is a favorite sport among Somalis. So that I might inquire more about the sports programs, Brandon suggested that I meet with Brenda, who has been working at Forest High for nine years and is the director of the Athletics Department. I asked Brenda about her experience in working with Somali students, and how she supports and encourages them to be involved in sports. She explained that the students she works with have arrived recently and that language is an obstacle to them. She remarked,

> Yeah! They have migrated towards our school, I think. I believe our entire team was Muslim Somali this year, and has been the last couple years. And they are, the Muslim kids that we see, their English is not good. They seem to be in the country for just a couple of years. And in comparison to some of my sister schools in the City League, I think that our kids have a harder time adjusting because they've only been here a couple years. I noticed that—I looked up the transcripts of some of [another school's] kids, and those kids seem to have been here for a long time. They are more mainstream! English, no language barriers; I got on and looked at their grade cards, their grades, good grades. Our kids struggle! They struggle!

She continued emphasizing the challenges—the language and cultural barriers that students experience in school—and avoided discussing how she encourages students to participate in sports. She indicated that Somali boys are involved in track and the soccer team.

I repeated the question; I asked the director how she encourages students to participate in sports. Brenda's response demonstrated a *deficit thinking* approach. She talked about some of the students with whom she has difficulties and suggested, "So, it's almost like they could be in special education because the fact that they can't comprehend and they can't answer it the way it should be answered because of the barriers." She also used patronizing language and characterized some of the students as not willing to work hard. She stated,

> I think that we're trying—I mean, I think we're trying, we're trying. But sometimes it's in my opinion—this is only my opinion—we have some of them that have had so much given to them by us that they expect—it's almost like you just have to do it for them. You

know, it's almost like when somebody says, "Will you go get me a pack of cigarettes? Well now, will you get me a cigarette out? Will you light the cigarette?" The next step is, "Will you smoke the cigarette for me?" So it's almost like that. We bring you here, we put you in schools, we give you housing, we make sure you're fed, if you need healthcare, we've got that taken care of, and when they have, when they have to be responsible for something, "Well, why do I?" You know?

Despite the challenges Brenda has in working with Somali students, she says that building relationships with the students is important. However, she believes the ESL teachers are good at building relationships with the kids. She commented, "The biggest thing is just trying to build relationships with them. I think that our ESL teachers do a tremendous job in building relationships with these kids." This pushes the responsibility of learning about the students' lived experiences and culture onto the ESL teachers.

Some of the data that pertain to student involvement in school programs is not encouraging. In fact, Diane, the guidance counselor, discussed the need to create programs and structures that promote the adjustment of Somali students. She also explained that as much as she encourages students to be involved in sports and other programs, some of the teachers that run the programs are not inclusive. She cited one incident in which a female student was excluded from participating in sports:

> What is interesting is that I had a young lady, a Somali girl, come in and she said, "I want to play volleyball," and I said "Ok, you need to go and talk to the coach." I told where he was, and she came back and she said, "He said he didn't have a schedule yet," and I said, "Ok, go back to him and tell him that you want to play, you want to practice; when do you need to be there?" and he didn't give her an answer, and guess what—the volleyball team is playing.

Part of the reason that the programs were not inclusive, as pointed out by both Diane and Gail, was because the school leadership had failed to create an inclusive environment for the students. There was also evidence showing that only two Somali girls participated in the girls' leadership

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program, which was led by the female administrators who declined to participate in this study. Hence, Diane explained her plan to take over the program and make it more inclusive. She stated that the program has not been very well organized; she and another teacher would run the program. She mentioned, "We both have the same values and we are on the same page about education in general. We are going to be in charge of that. And it will be a very diverse crowd. This year, it hasn't been diverse." Further reasons programs are not inclusive might also be related to the deficit thinking approach that teachers apply. The following list summarizes data relating to the lack of support for the Somali students:

- The lack of understanding of the lived experiences of the Somali students plays a role in the reasons their needs are not attended to. Some of the students have mental illnesses and posttraumatic stress disorders. There is no on-site counseling in school; rather, students are connected to an agency in the city that provides them with counseling. Diane described the needs of the students: "You know, a lot of these students that we have come from horrendous situations, refugee camps, and I hear a lot of horror stories. So we're talking about another set of—and I'll call them emotional issues—with these kids."

- Deficit thinking plays a role in the reasons school programs are not inclusive. Gail suggested, "Number one, the attitude of some of the teachers has to change. For instance, the physical ed teacher didn't like the girls wearing long dresses. But they wear long pants beneath their dresses and sneakers, and she said that doesn't count. She wouldn't give them credit even though they would wear pants beneath their dresses or skirts. She doesn't like anything of them. She goes, "Why are these foreigners even here?" So she has a bad attitude about Somali students. And she also doesn't like the special ed kids. If we have a kid who is special ed and even ESL, that is even worse."

- The poor school climate and culture contributes to the frustration of the teachers that would like to see improved relationships among the faculty and the leadership. Diane described her experience with the administrators as follows:

> It is a very toxic building! It is not a healthy building! It is not a healthy building! I'm talking about teachers and administrators; we all have our baggage, and from what I have seen here, a lot of people bring that baggage. People have a difficult time getting along! People don't like to ask for help; it is my way or the highway.

In this building, you know, we have a culture in this building that is not of a mutual respect anyway.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that there is a lack of support for the faculty. Diane stated,

There is not support here! It is never about what you have done well or what you could do; it is always about what you didn't do, and it certainly reminds me of my dad as I was growing up because my father was very much like that. As a matter of fact, when I get into a discussion about equality, or couldn't we try this and I get spoken to like I am a seven year old, I lose it! I have turned around and walked away. It is to the point right now where I am probably going to leave the building after next year. Because I am not going do this anymore! I am not going to have somebody talk to me that way, treat me that way by the principal. I have another counselor in here and she is as disrespectful as he is. I am not doing that.

The narratives from Diane show the lack of leadership that contributes to the negative treatment of the teachers, which, in turn, results in the victimization of the Somali students. When the adults in the building are hostile to one another, the students are caught in the middle and become the victims.

Despite the absence of a collective vision and a healthy school climate for the students and the teachers, several teachers in the building share certain values of justice and are committed to advocating for the students. These teachers and the guidance counselor strive to attend to the needs of these students. For instance, Diane indicated how she promotes career awareness: For students who show an interest in the field of health, she exposes them to the health careers by inviting doctors and nurses, radiologists to the school. Gail, on the other hand, discussed the importance of providing the students good role models. She suggested to the assistant principal, Jerome, and the principal that she knows a social worker who can get mentors to Hispanic and Somali boys; she explained that the idea did not work because the school leadership never approved it. The Somali ESL teacher, Roble, was another individual with whom the Somali boys were comfortable to talking and praying during the lunch prayer time. These

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teachers built relationships with the students and therefore earned the trust of the students. For

example, the close relationships they built with the students had contributed to the success of

some students. Diane explained the importance of having positive relationships with the students

and said tearfully,

> There are two young men who, in particular, I have really good relationships with. And one of them is a senior this year and he is very, very bright. He did have the advantage of school. I believe he came from Ethiopia and he had the advantage of school, but he did walk several miles to get to school and come here. So he's been in the country 3 years. And I'm so proud of him, because he just got a full ride at the university. And I'm so proud of that! And I have another young man who moved to Minnesota a couple days ago, but I just talked to him yesterday and he said, "I love you and I respect you as my mother." So I think that a kid saying that to me, that I do have- I have some abilities to interact with that population and to be kind of successful.

Advocacy, trust, and positive relationships from some the teachers provided support to some of

the Somali students.

Student Perspectives

To understand students' experience with the school administrators, I interviewed four

students attending Forest High School. Students began sharing the challenges they have

experienced. One of the students, Yusuf, shared his experience as a student. Yusuf was born in

Somalia and grew up in Kenya. While his mother was in the Dadaab refugee camp, he stayed in

Nairobi with his aunt so that he could go to school. Yusuf's father died in Kenya. Currently,

Yusuf is in 11th grade and lives with his mother and four siblings. He began his schooling at

Forest High as a freshman. Some of the challenges he has encountered have been the language

barrier and the living conditions in one of the worst neighborhoods in the city. For instance, he

said,

> I remember that, one day, it was Monday night and then my neighbor turned the music very loud. I couldn't even sleep the whole night, and in the morning I was late for school. The music was so loud and if you dare to say something about it, they will gang up on

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you and beat you up. My neighbors are African American. My mom told me, "Don't say nothing to them, just leave them. You will create more problems for yourself."

Despite the challenges, Yusuf is on the soccer team and performs well in school; his GPA is 3.0. He plans to go to college and study dentistry. I asked Yusuf about the school leadership and support systems in the school. He responded that his science teacher helps him, and at home, his older brother assists him if he has questions about his homework. Yusuf added that even though he performs well in school, other Somali students are struggling academically in school. He commented that no support services are geared toward helping students adjust to school. As he remarked,

> In my opinion, there is no support for Somali students, not that much in this school. . . . I see most of the students complaining about the homework. I had a fellow friend, my fellow student last year, he didn't understand nothing! I used to help him! When I did my work, I used help him too! He didn't get the help he needed; he failed that class. I remember he failed that class! He wanted to play soccer, but he never did because he failed the class. It is very hard for someone who didn't go to school back in Africa; when he comes here, it is going to be hard for him.

Yusuf went on to say the administrators are not supportive either: "You just have to go to them and ask help from them. But they will not come to you and help you until you go to them and say whatever that is bothering you." This implies that a relationship is lacking between the students and the administrators. In addition, Yusuf contends that he as well as other Somali students view the senior school counselor, Lisa, as "unhelpful" and do not get support from her. He suggested,

> I would like to see the administrators work with the Somali children more. Like, they never did that much! If they . . . most of the Somali students, they don't know nothing about college. These seniors, they don't have information about college. When they are about to graduate, that's the time they look for help.

Even though support services that promote adjustment for students are limited, Yusuf's narrative depicts a student who strives to achieve his goals. Yet the success of Yusuf is one of the few examples of Somali students in Forest High who achieved academic success.

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Fuad, a senior, shared his narrative as a refugee student: He was born in 1991 in Mogadishu. His family left when the civil war broke out and went to Hagardheer, to the Dhadhaab refugee camp in Kenya. He lived in the refugee camps for 12 years! He described life in the refugee camp, as well life in the United States as follows:

> There were problems, specially, like, no food, no water, people were dying. I did attend school, but not that much because I was learning Quran. But I went to school, like, for four years, then we moved to Kakuma refugee camp, and since Kakuma I didn't go school. I studied Grade 1 to 4; after Grade 4, I didn't go to school. We moved to United States on January, 2006! I am staying with my mom and father. When I came to United States, I was placed in eighth grade; it was end of the semester in May. I didn't even know nothing of what was going on! I wasn't even that good in speaking English, and then I was just looking at people like, "What is going on? What is going on?" The teacher would come—that teacher was a substitute teacher who spoke Ksawahili and I speak Ksawahili, so he was just kind of helping me out. Then I started ninth grade in 2006, and in ninth grade, I started learning English little by little. . . . In my freshman year, my grades were like A and B, I got C in one class. What they did was they looked at my age, they said, "This guy is 16; let's place him in ninth grade." Actually, in my opinion, one of my teachers, Mr. Karanje—he is African man in another city—he was always telling me, "The reason you come to United States is to have education. Don't act like the other Americans, like what they are doing. Keep on track and do what you gotta do."

Fuad completed 9th and 10th grade in a smaller town close to the city where he resides now. With respect to the support he gets from the school, he shared sentiments about the lack of support for refugee students. He compared Forest High with his previous school and commented that in the other school, they had an after-school program in which students were assisted if they did not understand certain things about the homework. However, at Forest High, he said he was surprised there was no after-school program. Fuad explained how he overcame the challenge of not having an after-school program at the school site:

> I thought there was a tutoring, and then I asked one my friends, "Do we have tutoring after-school program?" And he was like, "No!" I was like, "How do you guys do the homework?" He was like, "We take it home and do it." So what I ended up sometimes do when I had hard time with the homework, all I was doing is staying in school after and ask some teachers if I can stay after school. My best teacher is Mr. David (algebra teacher); he just allowed me to stay. So I was staying with him sometimes. . . . He just showed me how to do it and I was perfect.

Fuad developed his own navigation skills, which enabled him to maintain a GPA of 3.75. He

shared his desire to go to college:

> For me, let me tell you about myself! In my family, I am the only person who is going to attend college. My brothers, they used to go to school in Africa, but when they came to United States, they are too old so they can't go to high school. They already got married and they feel like lazy to go school. They encourage me to go to college. They keep telling me, "Just keep working, then you will get what you need to get it."

Moreover, student conversation about the Grade 12 counselor, Lisa, revealed a negative image

they have about her. Fuad shared that the level of assistance he received from Lisa was very

minimal. In fact, he was confused about what to study in college. He said, "I am still confused

because every time I fill out college application, they ask what are your interests? What is your

career interest? I want to take in university . . . My favorite subject is doing math, I don't know if

I'm gonna be a teacher. I am still trying to find out what my goal is." I asked Fuad, "Why don't

you ask Lisa to assist you in identifying your career interest?" He responded, "The counselor that

we have right now, I don't get help because I don't go there to see her. Sometimes I just go there

to ask my schedule changed, something like that. She is not nice; she unwelcoming." He

mentioned sentiments regarding Lisa and said that Somali students know that she is not friendly,

and they complain about her. He indicated that instead, students like going to Diane, who is more

helpful to them.

With respect to support programs, Fuad suggested that the administrators should create

programs that assist students achieve academic success. He said,

> What I am gonna say is they should provide after-school program. Someone like John doing it. . . . Maybe they could get some more people who can help these kids achieve their goals because some of them, they speak English is not that big deal. But they have a problem in their mind; they don't even know how to read. You can speak, but if you can't read and understand what the question is asking, you can't do what you want to do.

Also, he mentioned the importance of creating a mentoring program. He remarked, "Mentoring program would be good for Somali kids. Someone to tell them this is what to do and this is how to do it." Fuad said that after he graduates from high school, he plans to visit students in his school and be a mentor for them, and share with them his experiences with the university.

Leban is another student I interviewed. Leban's narrative portrays the struggles that Somali immigrant students experience in the United States. The following narrative represents the challenges and experiences that Leban experienced as he tried to adjust to and integrate into the school. Leban was born in Mogadishu, Somalia, and he grew up in the Effo refugee camp in Kenya. When his family first came to the United States, they settled in the state of Connecticut. The family moved from Connecticut to the Midwestern state in which they now reside. Leban had been attending Forest High for three years. Although he is 16 years old, he is not even in junior high because he missed elementary education in the refugee camp and has a gap in his education. Thus, he experiences enormous academic barriers. Leban reported that he was suspended from school because he fought with students who made fun of him. He stated, "I used to fight a lot because I don't know the work. When the teacher asks me, the students laugh, so I used to fight with them. I don't know how to read, that's the problem." Because of the fighting he engaged in at school, he was regarded as a student with a behavior problem. However, he said that he was trying to work hard and improve himself. He indicated he received some help from Roble, who was helping him learn math. Regardless of the support he was receiving from Roble, he continued to face difficulties in learning other subjects. As he remarked, "I have a problem with USA history; I have problems with reading and biology."

As Leban explained his frustration and the situation he was in, he provided mixed sentiments about the support he received from his teachers:

> Like, some of the teachers, they don't want us to be successful! Some others are working hard for us to be successful . . . because you can understand, like, when you go to class, they are just going to give you work and tell you, "Do this." They don't want you to be successful. If they do, they should go and tell you, help me understand everything. They just give you the paper and tell you, like, "Just do it." If you don't know, they don't care!

The narratives from the students at Forest High depict a sense of resiliency in which, despite the feelings they have about receiving less support and the uncaring learning environment, some are able to pursue their aspirations whereas others, such as Leban, are merely trying to stay in school. The following bullet points summarize students' experiences with the administrators' leadership. I asked the students, "What impact did the administrators' leadership have on you?"

- Felt less support from administrators. ("Some teachers and one of the counselors are more supportive.")

- Felt unwelcomed and not valued

- Felt tension with American students

- Lacked involvement in school programs, such as nonacademic programs.

- Lacked a relationship with the administrators. ("Administrators don't understand our situation.")

These statements indicate the administrators' leadership failure in fostering an equitable learning environment that attends to the needs of Somali immigrant students.

Perspectives from the Parents

To gain an understanding of the parents' perspectives on whether school administrators are successful in creating support programs and environments that foster the adjustment of Somali students, as well as whether a partnership with families is fostered, I interviewed three parents whose children were attending Forest High School. In this school, it was not easy to find parents to participate in this study. Some of the parents suspected that I was using them not only

for research purposes but also for grant-making purposes (i.e., using them to make money).

Fortunately, I located three parents who were willing to participate in this project.

Findings from the data showed that parents' experiences with the school were somewhat different. Muhibo, whose three daughters graduated in the same semester and began studying at the university, shared that her daughters' success was due to the support she provided them. Muhibo indicated that she and her husband were divorced, and despite their differences, they were committed to supporting their children to succeed in school. In addition, Muhibo said that the civil war interrupted her daughters' elementary education. However, when the family moved to Kenya, the girls were supported by their eldest son, who came to the United Stated as a refugee. Muhibo indicated that her son did not receive an education because he had to support the family. The three girls' education was not compromised because they were enrolled in a private school in Kenya. When the family came to the United States, Muhibo said her daughters were interpreters for her. She shared a narrative about the success of her daughters at Forest High:

> One of the things that helped my daughters is that they were staying with their dad, who lives close to the school. I collaborated with their father and made sure that they do what they are supposed to do! Their father is married to another lady, and she is good to my daughters. The father is ill, but still we collaborated to educate our daughters. I became friends with the stepmother so that I would go to her house and spend time with my daughters. I even used to take care of her babies; I would take them to daycare or babysit for her. One other thing that has contributed to my daughters' success in school is that God has guided my daughters into the right path. Secondly, I made sure that they were not influenced by other girls that were dropouts! I also did not allow them to learn how to drive until they finished high school. This prevented them from having a car, and I never allowed other young ladies to come and pick up my daughters. I was always involved in my daughters' education. I used to come and visit them here in the school. I got to know the teachers because of my frequent visits to the school. The school would call my daughters' father, and they would also call me to let me what was going on. The teachers have gotten to know me very well! I have always been involved in my daughters' schooling.

Muhibo's narrative illustrates that the mother is literate and had a formal education in the Somali language, but she does not speak English. Hence, she focused on one goal, which was to have her daughters graduate from high school and enroll in a university. To achieve the goal of educating her daughters, she learned to navigate the school system and build relationships with the teachers. Gail commented that Muhibo collaborated with her up until her daughters were about to graduate from school. She stated, "When her daughters were about to graduate, the mother came to school one day and kissed my forehead, thanking me about how I supported the girls." This shows the appreciation Muhibo had for the teachers. With regard to how the school worked with the family, Muhibo mentioned that her daughters were not involved in programs, except for one daughter who participated in an internship program.

To understand the struggles that Leban encountered in school, I had to find out the *multiple realities* of his life. Hence, I decided to visit Leban's parents, Halima and her husband Ahmed, who agreed to participate in this study. The parents have six children including Leban. The family moved from the Effo refugee camp to the United States in 2005. Not only do the parents have an English language barrier but also they are illiterate. Ahmed takes an English language class while Halima stays at home to take of her baby. However, they both shared the challenges they face in terms of learning the English language. For instance, Halima said she had been attending an ESL class that was offered at one of the Somali community centers. She said the class was not taught well because the teacher was a Somali man who was not certified in teaching ESL. Halima indicated she and most of the students were therefore struggling to learn the English language. She shared her desire to learn the English language; however, she found it challenging to acquire the language skills. She wished that an English class were offered at Forest High. She explained,

I have already requested adult ESL, but the administrators said they don't have ESL programs for the adults. I asked the social worker at the welfare office and requested that she help me enroll to a better school, and give me bus fare so that I attend a school in another neighborhood. But there was not much help from the social worker. I even requested a daycare for my baby so that I could attend school. They said I have to pay for the daycare. I am refugee. How I am supposed to pay for a daycare? If the government is not assisting me to learn the language, how should I learn the language? So I decided to stay at home. My husband still attends the Somali community school!

Ahmed shared that he was not learning much but that he planned to go to a school that was taught by an American teacher certified in teaching the English language. Despite the language barrier, Leban's parents also shared their economic situation and the struggle that the family was experiencing. Ahmed commented,

Now, I don't work, I have been laid off for 2 years. I used to work at a factory in nearby city. I was laid off! Each month, I get $600 check from unemployment. In addition to the $600, we get food stamps. The rent is cheap! We use the $600 to pay the phone bill, car insurance, electrical bill, soap, shampoos, and clothing for the children. We don't even send money to our family back home. I looked for jobs, but with my language barrier, it is not easy to find a job. When I apply for jobs, they say they will call me, but nobody calls me for an interview.

In addition to the harsh financial situation the family is experiencing, Ahmed also reported that the neighborhood they reside is one of the worst housing projects in the city, and this problem is also compounded by gangs and violence in the neighborhood. Hence, the parents indicated that they fear for the safety of their children.

With regard to Leban's education, I asked the parents about their experience with the school. Halima stated that her son had a gap in his education and he struggled academically in school. She reported that some of the teachers viewed her son as unmotivated in learning. She contended,

My son is not doing well academically. He is failing in math and science courses. My son is not performing well in school because he has gaps in his education— he missed from first grade to the fifth grade. When we came to United States, he began from the sixth grade and now he is in the 10th grade. I think his struggle comes from the gap he has in education. . . . The problem with my son is that he is struggling with school! The teachers

think that he is not interested in school. But my son has a gap in his education; he does not understand what goes on in class and the teachers think he is not serious about school. When they give him homework, the teachers think he does not want to do the work, but how can he do when he does not even understand what is going on? Therefore, there is a misunderstanding between the teachers and my son. Everyday he gets up and get ready for school! We never wake him up for school! We never wake him up! Everyday he gets ready for school and he goes to school on time. He is determined to be in school, but he gets frustrated when he does not understand the material.

Leban's parents discussed that despite the academic challenges Leban was experiencing in school, they had a desire to see him graduate from high school. They pointed out that Leban did not get the support he needed from school. Halima added that the administrators and some of the teachers did not understand the support her son needed. I asked the parents if they had explained their concerns to the administrators. Ahmed responded that he shared his concerns with one of the administrators, but still there was no support for his son. In addition, he said his son's educational needs were not being met because of a lack of communication and understanding between the school leadership and their family. Thus, the parents concurred that there was not adequate support to assist their son to succeed in school. In fact, the communication the parents had with the school was limited. Halima indicated, "The school sends us letters when something happens. For example, they send us letters showing that Leban is not academically doing well. They say, your son fought with a teacher. We need to talk to you; come to the school. The school calls us or sends us a letter. That is the type of communication we have with the school." Halima's statement demonstrates that school partnership with the families was minimal.

Further, Leban's parents discussed the importance of creating support systems for Leban and other immigrant students. Halima echoed,

We want the school administrators to work on ways to help my son graduate from high school. I would like my son to be able to go to college! School administrators should assist us in helping our children succeed in school. We want our kids to do well in school and be able to attend college. We want them to become productive members of this society. We would like the school to create an after-school program that would be able to

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bridge the educational gap my son has in his schooling. We would like the school to support our son in terms of improving his academic performance. We also need a better communication with the school. There is a misunderstanding about my son! If my son misbehaves, we need to talk about that!

The narrative of Leban's family portrays the multifaceted challenges Leban and his family are experiencing and the administrators' failure to address the educational needs of Leban.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on exploring leadership constructs that inform the ways in which school administrators work with Somali refugee and immigrant student groups attending high school in a Midwestern city. The study purposely focused on whether school administrators' work was informed by transformative leadership. Hence, the chapter was framed around the following four major guiding questions: "What beliefs guide the ways in which educational leaders work with Somali immigrant students and their families?" "How do school administrators work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes?" "What kinds of accommodations (supports, programs, and environments) do school administrators promote?" and "Does transformative leadership inform school administrators' approaches to educating Somali immigrant students?" The findings of this chapter are reflective of the guiding research questions as well as the main research question.

In the beginning of the chapter, I provided a snapshot of some major challenges Somali students are experiencing at Forest High School. These challenges include difficulty in adjusting to school, difficulty in mastering state standardized tests, and mental issues such as posttraumatic stress disorder. After a brief discussion of these challenges and students' experiences at Forest High, I focused on the first research question, "What beliefs guide the ways in which educational leaders work with Somali immigrant students and their families?" I explored values and leadership beliefs that have shaped the school administrators' leadership practice.

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Administrators' discussion of values and beliefs that have shaped their leadership showed diverse perspectives. For instance, William, the principal, perceived himself as a politician and a resourceful person. He believed that students ought to be prepared to be lifelong learners. Creating a learning environment that would be conducive to learning (improving the school climate and creating a safe and secure building) were the main aspects of his values and beliefs that he discussed. On the other hand, Sarah, the assistant principal, viewed herself as a facilitator and emphasized the importance of promoting a collective vision, providing support, and improving teaching and learning. She encouraged teachers to reflect on their teaching practice. Brandon, an assistant principal, viewed himself as a servant leader who advocated for the students and teachers. His main goal was to support the needs of students. Jerome, an assistant principal, believed in the notion of empowering others. He also sought to listen to people and understand where they were coming from.

In the section on equity, I explored whether administrators promoted equitable outcomes for all students. The data yielded discouraging evidence. The findings indicated that apart from the ESL units and the two Somali instructional aides who were provided to address students' language barriers, insufficient resources were allocated to the ESL students. Inequities the teachers reported included a lack of a classroom space that was conducive to learning and a lack of resources for instructional purposes. Thus, the leadership and the vision that could have encouraged equity in the school appeared to be missing. It is important to note that few teachers and a guidance counselor promoted equity in the school. For instance, the guidance counselor promoted equity by placing Somali students with teachers that worked well with immigrant students.

For the question that focused on support programs and structures that enabled students to adjust to school, I looked at the extent to which Somali students were involved in school programs, such as academic or social programs, including leadership, sports, college readiness, and career development programs. In addition, I examined whether administrators created specific programs intended to support Somali students' adjustment to school. The data revealed that with the exception of soccer, Somali students were not encouraged to participate in school programs that may have fostered their adjustment to and integration into the school. Based on the evidence, the administrators were not proactive in encouraging students to participate in school programs. In addition, prejudice and stereotypes held by the some of the teachers and coaches played a role in students' lack of participation in school programs. Data gathered from the students revealed the need for an after-school program, which was badly needed by Somali students. In short, students at Forest High faced challenges, yet some students found a way to navigate the high school system and were able to graduate from school.

In the next chapter, I provide an overview of the study, followed by a discussion of the results. I then provide recommendations and end the chapter with implications of the study for further research.

Chapter Six: Lessons Learned

In this chapter, I present an overview of the study. I discuss the purpose of the study as well as the conceptual framework. The findings discussed in Chapters Four and Five have addressed the main research question as well as the four guiding questions of the study. Hence, I draw together the findings of this study in relation to the research literature on leadership and immigrant students. I conclude the chapter with implications of the study.

Overview of the Study

This study explored leadership constructs that inform the ways in which school principals work with groups of Somali immigrant students in high schools in the Midwest, with specific emphasis on whether their work is informed by transformative leadership. This study also examined the approach of school principals who work with Somali immigrant students and their parents in an effort to understand how the school principals might best respond to the needs of recently arrived Somali immigrant students. This study was guided by the transformative cross-cultural framework of Shields (2003). Transformative cross-cultural leaders understand the diverse cultural context in which they operate and promote the creation of a culture that takes into account the changing populations of the school or district (Shields, 2003). The transformative cross-cultural leader must always be conscientious about the feelings and perceptions of others. In addition, Shields (2003) expressed the view that the cross-cultural transformative leader must model an ethical decision-making process and set the standard for all within the community of difference. As part of the decision-making process, leaders and teachers must continuously ask themselves, before carrying out an action, (a) who benefits, and who is disadvantaged; (b) who is included, and who is excluded; (c) who is privileged, and who is marginalized; (d) who is legitimated, and who is devalued; (e) to whom are we listening, and

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who are we not hearing; and (f) what data are we using for our decision making (Shields, 2003, p. 81). Additionally, meeting the educational needs of diverse groups of students requires educational transformative leaders to foster democratic schools and classrooms. To do so, educational leaders need to incorporate social justice into their leadership practice.

Data from this study came from two high schools located in an urban city in the Midwestern region of the United States. To gain an in-depth understanding of the complex issue of the leadership constructs that informed school principals' approaches to working with recently arrived Somali immigrant students, I used a case study method to "understand a real-life phenomenon" (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, Yin (2009) showed that multiple-case study designs are stronger and can be more robust studies than a single case. In fact, he asserted that "trying to use even two-case designs is therefore a worthy objective, compared to doing a single-case study" (p. 24). Stake (1995) also contended that multiple-case studies or a collective case study provides rich information that can lead to better understanding and better theorizing. As such, I carried out two case studies and gained contrasting findings.

Discussion

In this study, two cases were chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of whether transformative leadership was informing school administrators' leadership practices. Both cases provided different major insights related to how administrators created learning environments that were equitable, inclusive, and connected the schools with the community. Hence, in this section, the final research question, namely, "Does transformative leadership inform administrators' approaches to educating Somali immigrant and refugee students?" was used to guide the cross-case analysis of Hillcrest and Forest High, and to offer a discussion of the two cases. Both schools are located in the same school district and have similar Somali student

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populations that experience language, academic, economic, and social barriers, yet in these two

schools, the leadership operated in totally different ways as teachers and administrators worked

with the Somali students. The comparison of the two cases showed striking differences with

respect to whether the leadership approaches of the administrators was informed by

transformative leadership. As the cross-case analysis table 6 illustrates, the findings did not show

any similarity in terms of administrators' leadership when working with Somali students.

Table 6. Comparison of Cases Showing Whether Administrators Engaged in Transformative Leadership

Value	Similarities	Hillcrest High	Forest High
Promoting equity and change	Both schools had Somali refugee students who experienced barriers to academic success and language proficiency.	Administrators and teachers sought equitable outcomes for all students through a collaborative vision.	To promote equity in her school, one administrator used transactional leadership. She identified teachers who were willing to work with ESL students and made accommodations in their schedule by giving them the eighth period off.
		Administrators built positive relationships between the teachers and students to understand students' diverse backgrounds and experiences.	Addressing inequities was not part of the vision for the school. The lack of collaboration and collegiality among the teachers and administrators was an obstacle to addressing inequities.
	Both schools had teachers certified in (in the content area and ESL) in math, science, and social studies.	Administrators used a holistic approach to address inequities. This involved addressing poverty as well as providing opportunities for students to succeed.	One guidance counselor promoted equitable outcomes for Somali students by building relationships with certain teachers who shared her values of equity and social justice. She placed students in classes with teachers who tended to work well with immigrant students.
		Created a structured method of tracking students into college-bound courses.	
		Promoted a culture of high expectations to ensure that students could meet the standards.	
		Support classes were established for students struggling with math, science, or literacy skills. These classes were intended to prepare students for the state standardized exams.	

Table 6. Comparison of Cases (continued)

Inclusive school environment	Through ongoing dialogue and professional development, administrators deconstructed the stereotypes and deficit thinking toward Somali students and created new knowledge frameworks of Somali culture and values, parents' aspirations for their children, and the lived experiences of the Somali students.	The school had a culture of "othering," in which Somalis were seen as outsiders. Somalis were seen as foreigners.
	Improved relationships created a positive school climate and a sense of community.	Deficit thinking played a role in the reasons school programs were not inclusive. One ESL teacher suggested, "Number one, the attitude of some of the teachers has to change."
	Administrators successfully integrated Somali students through academic and nonacademic programs, including college-readiness programs, leadership programs, sports, the arts, and career development.	Somali students were not fully integrated into the school academic and nonacademic programs. Few students participated in college-readiness programs, leadership programs, sports, the arts, and career development.
	School vision focused on supporting students' academic and social needs.	The overall vision of the school did not represent the needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students.
	A school environment was created in which students felt "valued, a sense of belonging, inclusiveness, respected, and understood."	
	Built positive relationships and partnerships with the Somali community. Through the Somali parent liaison, administrators encouraged ongoing communication with the Somali families.	Positive relationships did not exist between the administrators, teachers and students.

Lack of communication with the families hindered the collaboration between the parents, teachers and administrators. |

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Transformative Leadership Practice

Leading for Equity

Promoting equitable educational outcomes for students is one of the essential elements that transformative leadership theory seeks to advance. It can be argued, based on the data, Hillcrest administrators engaged in one of the eight tenants of transformative leadership: *the mandate to effect deep and equitable change* (Shields, 2009). The poverty in the administrators' school forced them to produce a *mandate* to promote equitable outcomes in their school. Foster (1986), who discussed the role of transformative leaders, stated, "Leadership must be critically educative: it cannot only look at the conditions in which we live, but it must decide how to change them" (p. 185). Hillcrest High School administrators educated their teachers about the importance of mitigating poverty and the difficult situations that students experienced. The administrators engaged in transformative leadership not only by providing support and learning opportunities to students but also by creating a systemic approach to addressing social and economic conditions of their students. Alex (the principal), Peter (an assistant principal), and Susan (an assistant principal) demonstrated a deep understanding of how poverty affects student learning and academic achievement. Hence, addressing poverty in their school and harnessing resources for their students were not acts of charity; rather, they were ways of providing resources to their students so that the students received the same opportunities as students in more affluent schools. As Alex explained,

> First of all, I bring in all the resources I can to make sure our students' educational experience here is the best possible. That takes a lot of work, it takes a lot of outside resources, and it takes a lot of knocking on doors to get the same thing for our kids here just like any other kind of school in the district or outside the district may have advantages.

Susan, who was also deeply committed to providing school materials to the students, discussed the importance of providing the students resources so that they would be able to learn. For Alex and the assistant principals to mitigate poverty in their school, which perpetuated inequity, it was vital for them to create a comprehensive partnership with various service agencies, including community, public, and nongovernmental social agencies. Addressing poverty as way to provide resources to students and attending to their needs is an approach that transformative leadership theory keenly promotes. As Astin and Astin (2000) explained, "We believe that the values and ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life . . ." (p. 6). Certainly, I concur with the administrators that addressing socioeconomic issues is an integral part of addressing inequity. Addressing inequity requires one to take a holistic approach that not only requires an examination of the allocation of school resources as well as the norms and values of the school but also demands that one mitigate the socioeconomic conditions that affect student learning and academic achievement.

With respect to addressing inequities at Forest High School, the discussion of equity was not an easy one for the administrators. For instance, William, the principal, commented that students transition from specialized ESL units into other regular classes. However, as Diane indicated, when students transitioned to the regular class, they still needed academic support services, and adequate support was not available to them. On the other hand, Brandon, an assistant principal, stated, "I'm sure there are a lot of examples of that where the playing field is not leveled because we don't provide the additional resources needed so that a person who is a non-English-speaker would be able to compete as equally as someone else." Certainly, Brandon's statement depicted the failure of the school administrators in fostering an equitable learning environment that attended to the needs of Somali immigrant students. In addition,

inequity was taking place in classes that were taught by some older teachers. As Sarah, an assistant principal, indicated, when it came to attending to the needs of immigrant students, it was not easy to convince the teachers to do what was in the best interests of those students. Sarah commented that only 50% of the novice teachers and teachers who were younger were prepared to work with the students. Indeed, some of the administrators, such as Sarah, were aware of the inequity that existed in their school; however, the issue was not discussed or questioned. Merchant and Shoho (2006) explained that administrators are lured away from addressing inequities by government mandates that might not necessarily be in tune with the existing realities in schools. The authors said, "We believe that too narrow a focus on compliance with federal, state, and district mandates distracts administrators from raising important questions about the consequences of implementing such mandates, which is likely to perpetuate serious inequities in student learning opportunities and outcomes." (p. 85). Hence, one can challenge the status quo when one believes that inequity is taking place in one's school. However, William, the principal, did not really believe there were inequities in his school, whereas Sarah as least assigned refugee students to teachers that she thought tended to work with them better. It never crossed Brandon's mind that inequity could occur, even in regular classes.

Transformative leadership research suggests that to achieve the goal of equity, it is the responsibility of school administrators to ensure equitable outcomes for all students. The objectives of transformative leadership are to foster equitable learning environments that attend to the needs of students of color or other students from impoverished families (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman & Starratt, 2002; Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Riehl, 2000; Shields, 2003; Theoharis, 2007a; Theoharis & O'toole, 2011). In the case of Forest High, it was obvious that when only 50% of the teachers were willing to go the extra mile for the students, then the reality

was that inequities did occur in the classes of the teachers who were resistant to working with the refugee students. Merchant and Shoho (2006) suggested that school leaders must not just accept the status quo but must also challenge policies; more specifically, school leaders must take a firm position in promoting equitable schools. Forest High administrators were not at a level to question the teachers and engage in a deep conversation about the reasons they seemed resistant to working with refugee students. William, the principal, and the other administrators did not feel the urgency to question the status quo and change it for the betterment of all students.

In spite of Forest High administrators' failure to addressing inequities in the school, there were teachers, such as Diane and Gail, who showed leadership and an understanding of the inequities. Furman and Shields (2005) explained,

> Leadership for social justice requires a careful examination of one's own beliefs and practices and those of the institution within which one works, for justice is played out in both individual relationships and systemically, in policies that assume that any single approach to curriculum, programming, resource allocations, or accountability is appropriate for children. (p. 126)

Certainly, Diane and Gail have a deep understanding of the values they stand for, which are the values of equity and social justice, which they promote in a tactful way. For instance, Diane explained that she promotes equitable outcomes for Somali and other students by first building a relationship with certain kind of teachers who are also committed to the values of equity and social justice. Diane contended, "We have a very weak administration! I have always tried to address inequities since I got here. Individually, I try to eliminate those because those inequities are not fair, teachers that have preconceived notions about students. So I place students in classes that have teachers that tend to work well with immigrant students." It is important to take into account that even though Diane and Gail took a firm position in addressing inequities in their school and worked with teachers who shared the same values, it had been a struggle for them

because they worked with school leaders who maintained the status quo. Yet working against the status quo was a challenge. As a result, both of the teachers were silenced, sidelined, and at times reprimanded. Thus, despite the commitment of the teachers to promoting equity, it was difficult for them to move forward because the school leadership was not strong in terms of facilitating a learning environment that promoted equitable outcomes for all students.

Establishing Inclusive Schools

Transformative leadership emphasizes the importance of creating inclusion in schools. Therefore, the literature on transformative leadership recommends that school principals create a culturally inclusive school environment for diverse students, including those from refugee and immigrant backgrounds (Corson, 1998; Dwyer, 1998; Shields, 2003; Theoharis & O'toole, 2011; Theoharis, 2007a). This involves, first, not treating students and parents as homogeneous, but recognizing their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Second, school administrators have the responsibility to create successful learning environments and to focus on connecting the school to the diverse cultural backgrounds of refugee and immigrant students. To address this point, I examined the extent to which school programs, such as leadership, sports, and school organizations, were inclusive. The findings from Hillcrest School showed a very encouraging prospect, in which Somali students were integrated into both academic and nonacademic programs. For instance, Peter, an assistant principal, explained that their approach to creating an inclusive school involved creating a collective vision among the teachers and other school personnel. Through conversations and encouragements, the teachers encouraged students to become involved in school programs. The administrators at Hillcrest have successfully achieved the integration of Somali students into school programs, and as a result, this has contributed to positive interactions as well as students' adjustment to the school. The actions of Hillcrest

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administrators represent transformative work, and this is exactly what the transformative literature recommends. Starratt (1991) discussed ways to create schools that are appropriate for culturally diverse student populations in which students' academic, psychological, and social needs are met. Starratt's notion of an ethic of justice encourages school leaders to promote a socially just school by ensuring that "specific ethical learning activities are structured within curricular and extracurricular programs to encourage discussion of individual choices as well as discussions of school community choices" (p. 193). Administrators at Hillcrest not only created inclusiveness in their academic and nonacademic programs but also provided the students the opportunities and the platform to share their culture and lived experiences.

At Forest High, data from the inclusion of school programs revealed exclusionary practices that have marginalized Somali students in the school. It was apparent from the discussion of inclusion in school programs that the deficit thinking mindset was prevalent among teachers working with Somali students. It was evident that deficit thinking played a role in teachers' attitudes toward the students, and this ultimately contributed to the exclusionary processes that Somali students experienced. Certainly, the lack of leadership to address prejudices contributed to the reasons school programs were not used to assist students in integrating into the school. Programs such sports and leadership could have played a role in promoting the adjustment and integration for students. It is incumbent on the school leadership to really evaluate the impact that their leadership is having on the lives of students.

Attending to the needs of immigrant students involves (a) challenging teachers' deficit thinking through conversations and professional development, and thereby altering their attitudes; (b) including the diverse needs of the children in the school's vision and goals, and communicating the message that it is the responsibility of educators in the entire school and

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community to educate refugee and immigrant students; and (c) creating a belief that refugee and immigrant students can be successful in rigorous classes (instead of tracking children into lower tracked classes), and thereby eradicate segregated programs and create heterogeneous grouping (Coady et al., 2008; Dwyer, 1998). It is clear that despite the school administrators' awareness of the deficit thinking held by the teachers, they have failed to facilitate a dialogue on this contentious issue. Thus, one of the ways the deficit thinking could be challenged would be not only by evaluating the values and ideologies held by both the administrators and teachers, but also by questioning the entire purpose of what it means to be a teacher, an educator, or an administrator. For a genuine integration of Somali students to occur, it is imperative that the school leadership at Forest High examine issues that have been buried under the carpet, issues that include power relations, racism, and knowledge people of color.

To create an inclusive school, there is need to facilitate dialogue. Administrators and teachers at Forest High would have to engage in a genuine dialogue. There is a need to challenge the preconceived assumptions, values, and ideologies that are prevalent in the school. To create a school that welcomes diversity, in which the administrators and teachers are open to understanding ways to promote the adjustment of Somali students, a genuine dialogue would have to take place. Bakhtin (1984), Shields (2004), and Shields and Edwards (2005) have shown that dialogue is the vehicle for building meaningful relationships among diverse members of the school and community. Shields and Edwards (2005) recommended the use of a carnival as a catalyst to "recreate and rejuvenate dialogue" (p. 141). In addition, they indicated that dialogue can be used not only to build relationships, but also to diminish certain organizational factors that have perpetuated inequities and hindered a healthy learning environment. Also, Palmer (1998) wrote, "The growth of any craft depends on shared practice and honest dialogue among the

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people who do it" (p.144). Hence, the starting point for creating an inclusive school that attends to the needs of refugees and immigrant students is through dialogue. Otherwise, there would be no other way out. Through dialogue, school visions that represent the collective interests of the entire community could emerge, and, ultimately, an education viable for educating culturally and linguistically diverse students could be created.

Similarly, transformative leadership theory suggests the notion that care must permeate the leadership practice of school administrators. Leaders must embed *care* in their leadership practices. Furman (2002) created a new leadership theory that focuses on the moral purpose of leadership, highlighting what leadership ought to be. She asserted that individuals in education must lead for the ethic of building caring environments that include socially just classrooms and democratic communities within the schools. Leading with the ethic of care involves school leaders modeling care in their leadership practices and also encouraging teachers to care (Noddings, 2002). The school leadership at Hillcrest modeled care in their leadership practice and thus engaged in transformative leadership. In fact, so that Somali students would become part of the culture of the building, the administrators genuinely valued them and emphasized the notion of caring. Even when they were hiring teachers, one of the elements they looked for in teachers was *care*, which is about building and maintaining positive relationships with the students as well supporting them. Hillcrest administrators achieved the creation of a learning environment that was founded on the values of a family atmosphere and connectedness, in which the teachers nurture and care for the students. Indeed, one can argue that the administrators' leadership does meet the criteria for transformative leadership (Shields, 2009).

In addition, even though the majority of the students were black (African Americans and Somalis), Alex, the principal, and Peter, the assistant principal, regarded the students and their families as being different because of their difference in language, values, aspirations, and needs. To attend to the needs of the students, they regarded their school as what Shields (2003) refers to as

> Communities of difference—communities in which we value and respect one another as we learn how to live and work together. These schools are communities in which all students, regardless of home situations or backgrounds, are expected to learn and are helped to achieve high standards. They are communities in which difference is neither feared nor excluded but included, understood, and respected. (p. xii)

Through dialogue that was open and frank, Hillcrest administrators reduced the stereotypes against Somali students by providing cultural sensitivity training, in which Somali community leaders were invited to provide workshops to the teachers about Somali culture and values as well as the expectations the Somali parents had for their children and the school. Additionally, the administrators created a school culture that was built on mutual respect. The principal and the assistant principals created a culture in which they developed strong positive relationships and an understanding of students' lived experiences. Respecting, valuing, acknowledging, and knowing personally the students and their families were part of the culture the administrators established. I confirm, based on the evidence from the data, that the administrators from Hillcrest school engaged in transformative work, and I take the position that they implemented the ideas of transformative leadership in their school. However, even though none of the administrators said that their leadership approach was informed by transformative leadership, their work was reflective of transformative leadership. This may have something to do with the fact that they were committed to advancing social justice; hence, one can argue that social justice and transformative leadership are inseparable. That is, transformative leadership demands that school

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administrators engage in social justice work (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman & Starratt, 2005; Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Riehl, 2000; Shields, 2003; Theoharis & O'toole, 2011). I maintain that one cannot be described as a transformative leader if one does not commit to social justice work. Thus, transformative leadership and social justice are intertwined. Again, this finding was based on both the evidence available at Hillcrest High School and its absence from Forest High School.

Leadership Values

A discussion of the values, ideologies, and the beliefs that have informed administrators' leadership approach was vital as a way to understand the extent to which transformative leadership values informed administrators' work with Somali students. Table 7 provides a comparison of the difference in leadership beliefs among the Hillcrest and Forest high administrators.

Table 7. Leaders' Beliefs

Hillcrest High	Forest High
Students expected to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens, and active members of the community	Students expected to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens
Leadership engaged in respect, openness to learning the other cultures, public service, dialogue, relationship building, community, empathy or care, social justice, and accountability	
Social justice, equity, advocacy, dialogue, care, and inclusiveness	Teachers' needs supported and facilitated so that student learning and instruction was improved
Collective vision Transformative and Democratic leadership Collaborative approaches to issues Cultural awareness and affirming diversity The notion of community emphasized	Transactional and Some transformational leadership Leadership as involving advocacy, and listening or paying attention to the needs of the students.

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At Forest High, principal William emphasized that students should become lifelong learners and be responsible citizens. Ensuring a safe environment for the students and helping students move forward was the main vision of his leadership. Sarah, on the other hand, held values of supporting and facilitating teachers' needs so that students' learning and instruction were improved. Sarah's leadership was influenced by the values of transformational leadership. Brandon described his leadership as involving caring, advocacy, and listening or paying attention to the needs of the students. However, he was overwhelmed with the managerial aspects of his job, and he claimed that he lacked the time to implement his vision. Jerome shared the notion of empowering people and involving them in the decision-making process. In this school, there were some elements of transformational leadership, such as instructional supervision and empowering the teachers (Fullan, 1996; Harris, 2001; Leithwood & Janzi, 1999). However, it is important to note there was little evidence suggesting that the overall vision of the school represented the needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students. I looked for elements representing transformative leadership, which included dialogue, cultural awareness, affirming diversity, social justice, equity, care, inclusion, power, and how it played out in relationships and the community (Shields, 2003). Nevertheless, I could not find those elements in the administrators' leadership values.

Hence, the lack of leadership, collective vision, collegiality and positive relationship were evident from the testimony of Diane, who discussed the school climate: "It is a very toxic building! It is not a healthy building! I'm talking about teachers and administrators… People have a difficult time getting along! We have a culture in this building that is not of a mutual respect anyway." This suggests that tension existed between some of the teachers who want to see a change in the school and those who wanted to maintain the status quo. There also appeared

to be a power struggle between the principal and the teachers, as well as among the teachers. Certain staff members, such as guidance counselor Diane, wanted a more democratic school in which there was a collective vision for the ways teaching and learning were conducted. According to Quantz et al. (1991), "Transformative leaders must be willing to use the authority of democracy if they are to achieve transformation. Transformative leadership does not imply the diminishing of power, but the diminishing of undemocratic power relationships" (p. 102).

To meet the needs of Somali students, there is a need for William, the principal, to change the traditional approach to leadership and involve the teachers in the decision-making process. Certainly, the administrators did not exhibit the values of transformative leadership and thereby could not be regarded as engaging in transformative leadership. However, for a starting point, there is a need for reflection on ways to build positive relationships and promote a collective vision for the entire school community.

In contrast, the leadership philosophies of Hillcrest administrators were shaped by the values of respect, openness to learning the other cultures, public service, dialogue, relationship building, community, empathy or care, social justice, and accountability. These were indeed some of the values that transformative leadership seeks to advance. For instance, Astin and Astin (2000) noted,

> We believe that the values and ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; to encourage respect for difference and diversity; to strengthen democracy, civic life, and civic responsibility; and to promote cultural enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honestly; the advancement of knowledge, and personal freedom coupled with responsibility. (p. 6)

Thus, it is necessary for administrators working with ethnically and linguistically diverse students to adhere to such values. Hence, I argue that the leadership approaches of administrators implementing social justice were informed by the values of transformative leadership. Peter

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elaborated that doing social justice work with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds had become a lifelong practice for him. As he described it, "It is a ministry for me." As the findings show, administrators' transformative work can also be seen in their emphasis on the local community.

Transformative leadership gives high priority to the notion of the community in that it urges school leaders to build partnerships based on the principle of reciprocity with the community. Through the linkages with the community, the schools gain resources while at the same time contributing back to the community. Ladson-Billings (1994) introduced the idea of transforming the school curriculum into what she described as "culturally relevant." She recommended that educators and teachers adopt and implement culturally relevant knowledge and teaching. The notion of culturally relevant teaching focuses on the teacher facilitating knowledge and preparing students to be critical thinkers, thereby supporting them in identifying relationships among "community, state, and globe" (p. 49). This means not only teaching students knowledge that would be relevant to their lives but also teaching them civic duties as well as how to be concerned global citizens about global issues that transcend borders such as their environment. I did observe that the students at Hillcrest were provided platforms, such as an international club, which permitted the students to engage in global projects. In addition, it was impressive how the administrators focused on the local community not just in terms of having partnerships with different agencies that provided resources to the school but also in terms of giving back to the community. For instance, Nora, one of the school guidance counselors, shared their involvement with the community and said, "They go out, and the basis of it is community—civic. Community service—this past winter, as a matter of fact, we did our annual holiday at the Senior Citizens' Building, where we actually go and do a craft with them and talk with them."

They also collected children's books and donated them to the Somali community. In addition, like Alex and Peter, the work of Susan, an assistant principal, was devoted to doing social justice work. For example, she raised money to buy food for needy families. Susan shared that she made sure to instill in her students the values of giving back to the community. The work of the administrators can be characterized as promoting social change not only in their school but also in their community. Certainly, they have taken a holistic approach that is oriented toward social justice and transformative leadership work. Nevertheless, when they described their leadership, they used phrases such as *social justice*, *equity*, *advocacy*, *dialogue*, *care*, and *inclusiveness*. These are the core values that transformative leadership promotes (Shields, 2009). I conclude, based on the transformative leadership literature and the findings from Hillcrest High, that socially just administrators are informed by the values of transformative leadership (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman & Starratt, 2002; Marshall & Olivia, 2006; Shields, 2009). In the following diagram (Figure 2) I show certain values that have informed the work of Hillcrest school administrators as well as how those values shaped their leadership approach. This diagram also depicts the importance of creating a strong link between the school and the community. As I have shown elsewhere, the administrators were successful in building a relationship with the community in which the school was situated.

Dialogue, Equity, Advocacy, Social Justice, Community Service, Care,

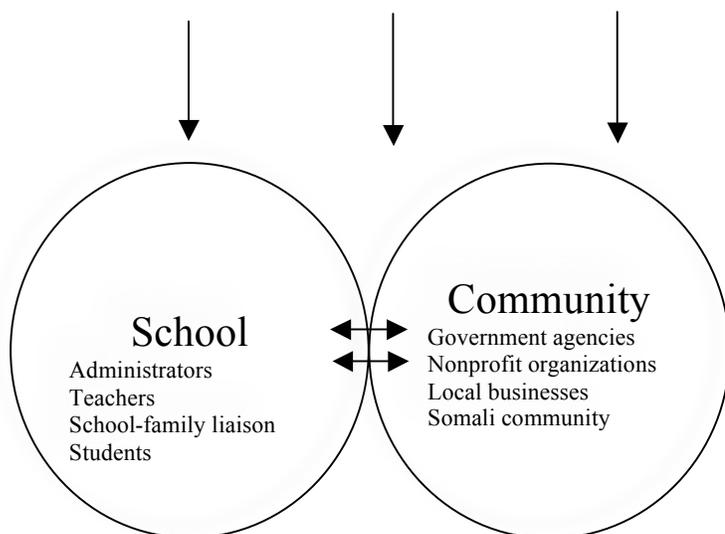Respect for Difference, Empowerment, Inclusiveness

School
Administrators
Teachers
School-family liaison
Students

Community
Government agencies
Nonprofit organizations
Local businesses
Somali community

Figure 2. Values that have informed Hillcrest Administrators' Leadership

Recommendations for Administrators

School administrators understood the ever-persistent challenges involved in educating multiethnic students, including Somali immigrant students. However, promoting deep, equitable changes would require administrators to be oriented in transformative leadership and the social justice paradigm. This study provides the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1

Professional development is imperative as a method to orient administrators and the teachers toward diversity and how to work with immigrant students. Some uncaring teachers who referred to Somali students as "foreigners"—even though the majority of the Somali students were either U.S. citizens or permanent residents—ought to be oriented toward multicultural education and the values of diversity. The notion of deficit-based thinking has to be

addressed and eliminated through professional development. It was very disturbing that these

deficit-based constructions contributed to Somali students' lack of integration in school and to

their educational under achievement. Most notably, the deficit thinking approach stems from the

belief that the mainstream or European American culture and ways of being, thinking, and

communicating are considered "normal" (Howard, 2010). Consequently, Somali students'

deviations from the mainstream forms of verbal and cognitive processes were viewed as

dysfunctional, pathological, or inferior. As a result, Somali students who struggled with the

English language were seen as special education students who were cognitively and linguistically

deficient. To adequately address the educational needs of Somali immigrants and other culturally

and linguistically diverse students, teachers and administrators must be trained in diversity and

social justice. The lesson to be learned from this study is that teachers and administrators need

professional development and ongoing support that focuses on the goal of attending to the needs

of refugee and immigrant students. In partnership with policy makers, school districts would

have to provide ongoing support and training to teachers and administrators working with

refugee students. Theoharis and O'toole (2011) conducted a study that examined the leadership

needed to establish socially just or equitable schools for immigrant students. Two elementary

administrators who participated in this study carried out reforms that contributed to the inclusion

of English language learners within the regular or general education classrooms. The authors

found that through agency and an understanding of the needs of the ESL students, the

administrators established a vision that focused on attending to these students' needs, and, as a

result, achieved their full inclusion in mainstream classes. Also, sustained professional

development enabled administrators to carry out reforms that contributed to the inclusion of ESL

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students in their school. Indeed, transformative, inclusive, and caring leadership and commitment to equity can contribute to the academic achievement of refugee students.

Recommendation 2

It is imperative that school administrators create a set of goals to formalize partnerships with Somali families and community organizations. A strong linkage between the school and the Somali families is vital. A strong partnership could play a role in changing the school into a democratic school that celebrates diversity. This study suggests that administrators need to establish genuine partnerships with Somali parents and the community. It is important to validate students' mother tongue, which opens the door to hearing the voices of the Somali immigrant parents. Encouraging Somali parents to become involved in the school and site council is vital. For examples, Bolman and Deal (2010) showed that, structurally in organizations, there must be a good fit between the organizational structure and members of the organization (people) and their goals. The school as an organization was not compatible with immigrant students and their families. Therefore, to create a more positive fit between the school and the immigrant students, administrators ought to begin a conversation on changing school structures to address the educational needs of ethnically and linguistically diverse students. The research recommends that to enhance school–family partnerships, school principals must also attend to the needs of the parents by providing English language classes, offering full-time daycare, creating a site for parents at the school, and hiring parents as teacher aides (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Gitlin et al., 2003). Providing such services not only enhances the school–family partnership, but also contributes to the advancement of social justice. Certainly, such programs for the Somali parents are greatly needed in schools.

Recommendation 3

School programs, both academic and nonacademic (leadership, student organizations, and sports should be more inclusive. A need exists to establish mentoring programs for Somali students in schools. This is imperative because the students need positive role models. It is vital to establish partnerships with local universities and recruit Somali students attending colleges as well as other professionals. Meeting Somali students that attend nearby colleges and universities could be advantageous for the students because the mentors could spend some quality time with the students and provide positive guidance. In addition, after-school programs must be linked to schools so that students can gain access to tutoring. As this study showed, among students and parents from immigrant families, there was an enormous need for an after-school program so that students that needed academic support would have access to the program. After-school programs must be linked to the school so that the students could get assistance and academic support services from teachers with whom they are familiar and who understand their needs.

Recommendation 4

It is also critical to address the needs of students suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. Administrators and policy makers must pay attention to the issue of posttraumatic stress disorder, from which some students who grew up as refugees suffer. It is vital for them to work with other agencies and social services to create a counseling site in the high schools so that students would have access to counseling while they were in school. For this to happen, the administrators need to take a more activist role in promoting mental health for their students. This is not an easy task, but it is a necessary one if the children are to adjust well to school and succeed. Attending to the academic and the psychological needs of the children would also require the administrators to communicate to the parents the importance of providing counseling

to some of the children who have witnessed the civil war in Somalia. Somali culture regards anyone who attends counseling as mentally ill; there is stigma attached to seeking psychological treatment or counseling. Therefore, the school principals must work with community leaders and explain to the parents the importance of seeking counseling for children in need of psychological services. Research shows that immigrant and refugee children who have witnessed violence tend to have behavioral problems and engage in fights at school. Children suffering from the traumas of war also experience psychological effects on "emotion, behavior, thoughts, memory, learning ability, perceptions, and understanding" (Machel, 2001, p. 80). Therefore, if the Somali refugee and immigrant students are to be adequately educated, addressing language proficiency is not enough. There must be a holistic approach to addressing the needs of Somali and other immigrant students. There are those who contend that school principals should focus on instructional supervision and ensure the curriculum is delivered accordingly. I believe that adequately ensuring successful student learning and teaching first requires an understanding of the factors that influence student learning. Without addressing those factors, it would be unlikely for students to act normally and focus on learning.

Implications Related to Policy and Leadership Practice

This study provides neither a framework nor a blueprint for the utility of transformative leadership. Rather, the findings from Hillcrest School showed us that when administrators possess the values of transformative leadership and engage in transformative work, it can contribute to equitable change in schools and make a difference in the academic achievement of refugee and immigrant students.

First, so that transformative leadership can create equitable and inclusive schools, the *social* and *cultural knowledge frameworks* that perpetuate inequities must be deconstructed

(Shields, 2010). Hillcrest School administrators deconstructed the deficits and stereotypes that contributed to the exclusion of Somali students and inequities toward them. The integration and adjustment of Somali students at Hillcrest School was achieved through (a) administrators' collaborative approach toward working with the teachers and the families; (b) their work on mitigating the impact of poverty on student learning; (c) the provision of support services to Somali students; and (d) the linkages the administrators created between the school and community, which enabled them to change the school. Thus, it is quite apparent from this study that the administrators at Hillcrest School showed the leadership necessary for the success of students from immigrant and other ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The main implication of this study is that it provides educators and policy makers with an understanding of the importance of social justice and the critical role of transformative leadership in the successful integration of Somalis and other immigrants and, consequently, in their academic achievement.

Second, the implication for theory and practice involves the importance of creating a linkage between theory and practice to ensure that transformative leadership and social justice theories inform administrators' professional practice. Palmer (1998), an educational sociologist, stated, "The world of education as we know it is filled with broken paradoxes—and with the lifeless results. . . . We separate theory from practice. Result: theories that have little do with life and practice that is uninformed by understanding" (p. 67). The utility of transformative or social justice leadership theories in K-12 schools would need to be promoted by providing more administrators the opportunity to learn more about theories that could inform their ways of working with students from diverse backgrounds. Perhaps universities could play a role in educating the needs of immigrant students to pre-service teachers and students in educational administration aspiring to become school administrators. They should be required to learn how

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transformative leadership theory could inform their work. I recommend that transformative

leadership theory be embedded in educational administration programs because as schools

become more diverse, transformative leadership could orient administrators to a social justice

framework that could assist them in developing ways to work with students from diverse

backgrounds.

Similarly, a related implication is that educational administration and teacher training

programs need to develop ways to encourage educators to genuinely examine their values and

stance on educating students of color. Howard (2010) wrote that

> critical self-reflection on race and culture within a diverse cultural context requires
> educational practitioners and researchers to engage in one of the more difficult processes
> for all individuals: honest self-assessment, critique and evaluation of one's own thoughts,
> behaviors, cultural patterns, methods of expression, and cultural knowledge and ways of
> being. (p. 114)

Clearly, the implication here is that administrators and teachers should examine their own

prejudices and biases that they bring to their schools. As Palmer (1998) noted, "we teach who we

are. . . . Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or

worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way

of being together" (p. 2). It is imperative to consider Palmer's statement to eliminate deficit

thinking and turn schools into leaning environments that are socially just. It then will be essential

to examine the values and ideologies that shape administrators and teachers inwardly. Hence,

transformative leadership theory can play a role in engaging the inwardness of educators and

teachers by creating a space for openness, evaluation of values, and reflection.

Recommendations for Further Research

Even though this study shows that some administrators have engaged in transformative

leadership work, we need to conduct further research to examine whether the utility of

transformative leadership theory holds true for other types of schools and students in the United States. Comparative studies of different schools with different immigrant students could enhance our knowledge base with respect to how school administrators address the needs of these students.

Also, future studies are needed to explore teachers' awareness of social justice and transformative leadership. It is important to investigate the extent to which teachers' philosophies of education or their values are oriented toward transformative leadership. Other studies that examine urban and rural administrators' understanding of social justice and transformative leadership are also needed.

Because this study focused on school administrators, my research on parents' experiences with the school was somewhat limited. Further research is needed that delves into the relationship between schools and the families.

Concluding Thoughts and Summary of the Study

As an educator who came from a middle class family, I am committed to advancing the values of social justice. I loathe injustice and oppression, and my commitment to social justice was shaped by the tyranny that I experienced at a young age in seventh grade in Somalia. Middle school students were expected to learn about Communism and the late Siad Barre's kacaan revolution. Not memorizing and knowing the purpose of the revolution was seen as political dissent, which warranted corporal punishment, such as painful spanking, in school. I despised memorizing the propaganda saying positive things about Siad Barre. I dared to say negative things about the regime; I felt that by being defiant, I freed myself from internalizing the propaganda of the dictator. I was fortunate that before my situation reached expulsion from

school, my parents decided to move to Kenya. I also was fortunate that I never experienced the civil war and the horrendous human rights violations, which have continued to the present.

When I moved to the United States to begin my graduate studies, I had the assumption that there was no oppression in the United States. I assumed that Somali immigrant students in the United States would be educated in a democratic country, where they would at least be able to enjoy the freedoms that this country offers, as well as the opportunities. Indeed, some have benefited and achieved upward mobility. Unfortunately, I learned that there is another type of oppression against disadvantaged groups in the United States—that people from low socioeconomic groups and people of color experience marginalization and racism, not to mention Islamophobia and the religious profiling of Muslims. The oppression of inequity and racism is prevalent in schools. For this reason, I sought to understand the fate of Somali students in the United States: What are their experiences like with the administrators and teachers? How do administrators work with Somali students and their families?

Hence, I undertook this study wondering if the values of transformative leadership were practiced by school administrators. I conducted these exploratory case studies to examine leadership paradigms that informed the ways school administrators worked with Somali immigrant students. I believe that education is the last best hope for Somali immigrant youth because most of them experienced a prolonged civil war and horrendous conditions in the refugee camps. Regardless of the hardships and challenges that Somali youth endured, these students can still lead a better life and become productive members of society in the United States. For this to happen, school administrators must play a key role in reaching out to Somali youth and integrating them into the school. We must not underestimate the role administrators who are knowledgeable about transformative educational leadership play in promoting

adjustment and integrating Somali youth into the school. This study showed that even in a school with few resources, transformative educational leaders could make it possible to eliminate the deficit thinking and marginalization of Somali students and create supportive school structures and a school culture that contributed to the educational success of the students.

Indeed, it is the collective responsibility of policy makers and administrators to end the ghettoization and marginalization of Somali immigrant youth. I say this because the last thing we want to see is more young Somali boys carrying American passports being recruited, indoctrinated, and radicalized by Alshabab to fight the civil war in Somalia or being sent back to the United States to engage in terrorist activities and take the lives of innocent people. This study clearly has demonstrated that much work remains to be done by all school administrators, educators, and policy makers in which the needs of Somali immigrants must be understood and attended to. Somali immigrant students need an understanding of their lived experiences, care, mentoring, and support services that enable them to integrate into school without having to compromise their Islamic identity.

To adequately meet the educational needs of Somali immigrant students and create socially just schools, the school administrators must (a) transcend the technical bureaucratic managerial leadership style and reflect on the values that shape their leadership, (b) ask themselves what impact their leadership is having on the lives of students, (c) examine the extent to which students from diverse backgrounds (ethnicities, languages, and socioeconomic statuses) are provided adequate education that is culturally relevant and that at the same time meets the educational needs of every student. Likewise, the notion of *empathy* or *care* must be embedded in school administrators' approach to working with students. The research consistently suggests that in schools that effectively educate ethnically diverse students, the school leaders lead by

caring and foster a climate of caring and of justice. In other words, it is imperative to lead with an "ethic of caring" and to promote an environment embedded in social justice and a democratic learning community within the schools (Furman, 2000). Indeed, the Somali and other immigrant students need teachers and administrators that show them compassion.

In short, to provide an adequate education that attends to the needs of Somali immigrant students requires that school administrators engage in transformative leadership and that in the schools, they build the capacity to promote the adjustment and integration of Somali students. To promote deep and equitable change, transformative leadership theory can assist administrators to take a multifaceted approach, in which they link the school to the community, and to promote the values of inclusion, equity, community, respect, and social justice. I hope that this study has contributed to our understanding of educational leaders' work with Somali immigrant students, as well as the potential of transformative leadership to contribute to socially just school leadership that promotes the integration and adjustment of Somali and other immigrant students alike.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide for School Administrators

Information on Participant

Number of years served as a principal/ assistant principal or dean of students_____
Number of years being a principal/ assistant principal or dean of students at current
school_____
Racial or ethnic identity _____
Educational degrees and credentials_____

What are educational leaders' beliefs?

1) Tell me about your school (demographics, various socio-economic and racial/ethnic religious groups that make up this school?

2) What is your leadership philosophy and a little bit about your leadership style?

3) How do you describe yourself as a leader?

4) As an Educational leader, what is your major goal and what are you trying to accomplish (short/long term goals)?

5) Does the mission statement of your school reflect your leadership practices?

6) Are there any specific theories that help you inform your leadership practices?

7) Your school is diverse- that you have students that are ethnically and linguistically diverse, in what ways do you create a learning environment that attends to the needs of culturally diverse students?

Equity

8) I would like to ask you something about equity in your school. In what ways can you as an educational leader address barriers to equity, access and opportunity for Somali students?

9) How do you work with teachers to promote equitable educational outcomes?

10) Are there any challenges that prevent you from engaging in transformative work that may contribute to a learning environment that is equitable, culturally inclusive and socially just for Somali immigrant students?

11) What does it mean to be an educational leader who promotes change that attends to the needs of Somali immigrant students in this school?

12) How do you promote change that addresses equity in your school?

13) What makes difficult to bring change into your school (District, state or other actors)?

Working with Somali students
What are educational leaders' beliefs about Somali immigrant students and their families?

14) With respect to working with Somali immigrant students, tell me about specific problem that you faced as a principal. What did you do? What would you have done differently?

15) With respect to diversity, what changes have you made or plan to make in the school?

16) Do you feel that the teachers are prepared to work in a culturally diverse school?

17) How do you work with Somali parents and families?

What kinds of accommodations (supports, programs and environments) do school leaders promote?

18) What type of programs have you created for Somali immigrant students? Do the students attend those programs?

19) Does your school have partnerships with other organizations such as the Somali community center and other social service agencies?

20) What are the goals identified in school improvement plan for improving the academic performance of Somali immigrant students?

21) What do you think is the most effective way to attend to the educational needs of Somali immigrant/ refugee students whose education has been interrupted by the civil war?

Appendix B: Interview Guide for teachers

1) What do think are barriers to Somali students' success in school?

2) With respect to working with Somali immigrant students, tell me about specific problem that you faced as a teacher. What did you do? What would you have done differently?

3) What do you think is the most appropriate way to ensure successful integration of Somali immigrant students to school?

4) What do you think is the most effective way to attend to the educational needs of Somali immigrant/ refugee students whose education has been interrupted by the civil war?

5) How do you work with Somali parents and families?

6) Who supports you as you work with Somali immigrant students?

7) What is your perspective about the school leadership?

Appendix C: Interview Guide for school/community liaison

1) What type of relationship do you think exists between the school and Somali families?

2) What can the school do to build positive relationships with the Somali immigrant families and the community?

3) What do think are barriers to student success in school?

4) What can the school do to reduce those barriers and in turn help young Somali immigrant succeed in school?

5) What is your perspective about the school leadership?

6) What is your perspective about the school leadership?

7) What would you like the school leadership to address or change in how they work with Somali immigrant students?

Appendix D: Interview questions for Guidance counselors

1) Are there any Somali students there are experiencing academic challenges in school?

2) What do you think are barriers to the success of Somali immigrant students?

3) How do you support students that face academic challenges?

4) How do you promote an awareness about pathways to careers?

5) What types of courses do the Somali students enroll? Career tech courses or course that would prepare them for colleges?

6) In what ways does your school reduce barriers to equity, access and opportunity to postsecondary education?