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Collective Social Capital Within a Performance-Based Management System

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

COLLECTIVE SOCIAL CAPITAL WITHIN
A PERFORMANCE-BASED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
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BY

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THESIS
COLLECTIVE SOCIAL CAPITAL WITHIN
A PERFORMANCE-BASED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Statement of Problem

Accountability measures have placed increased pressure on the role of the educator with respect to improving and sustaining student academic achievement. Therefore, the methods of educator evaluation have morphed into elaborate and more rigorous systems of accountability. As American schools struggle to perform well in the local and global arenas, changes in systems of educator evaluation reflect the influence of human capital management systems. Education is becoming increasingly influenced by “market rationale and business practices” (Coupal, 2004, p. 592). Since educators have traditionally been key players in student achievement, their role is being further defined through the development of performance-based management systems (PBMSs).

The United States Department of Education’s (DOE) office of Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality (AITQ) has sought a way to approach student achievement through the use of this type of management system. PBMSs are being implemented through the attainment of a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant from the office of AITQ by various local education agencies (LEAs) throughout the country.

It is through this bureaucratic path of the nation’s education system numerous states and school districts have been able to navigate. PBMSs are now springing up

throughout the country. They bear the name *Professional Education Personnel Evaluation* in Alabama, *Recognizing Educators Advancing Chicago Students* in Illinois, and *Rewarding Excellence in Instruction and Leadership* in Arizona. These types of educator PBMSs function because of the desire “to develop systems of instructional supervision and to create cultures of instructional improvement that would . . . raise standards of teaching and learning and to provide the assistance to teachers to meet those standards” (Carnoy, Gove, & Marshall, 2007, p. 152). The goal is for educators to improve their instructional capacity while simultaneously improving students’ test scores through a culture of professional management.

The efforts to improve an educator’s capacity through PBMSs occur within the context of an LEA. A professional context is developed among the educators within an LEA. As they individually and collectively work towards implementing the goals of a particular PBMS, the newly framed educator networks may be able to foster a form of collective social capital that could benefit all members of the LEA. Collective social capital is “a unifying construct that can help redirect organizational emphasis from individual to long-term collective contributions [for] organizational success” (Kapucu, 2011, p. 32). Thus, a community of educators is potentially able to establish tightly-knit relationships that rely on trust in order to attain the professional goals of improved instructional quality and increased student achievement. These relationships are seen as professionally valuable for a learning environment because of the information-sharing that occurs between members of the network (Coleman, 1988). There seems to be a growing interdependence between those participating in PBMSs, which may be a type of collective social capital. This type of capital is held in mutual shares through the

implementation of a PBMS, which may offer many types of benefits for the professional learning community in schools.

The goal of this study would be to determine if collective social capital is generated by a PBMS. Through the use of a sociological case study, the methods of document analysis and interviews will be conducted to determine the extent of collective social capital within the PBMS implemented by the Maricopa County Education Service Agency (MCESA) within a school district in Phoenix, Arizona. The results will help to understand, as Putnam (2000) describes, the “external effects of [collective] social capital” (p. 21). This is an important distinction to make because a greater prevalence of PBMSs exist within educational systems, and the study will help inform all members of LEAs how to maximize the positive benefits of PBMSs within educational settings.

Literature Review

The relationship between educator effectiveness and student achievement has increasingly become an important concept in today’s educational environment. Coleman et al. (1966) demonstrated that educator quality has the potential to impact student achievement. With the quality of an educator being “the most important school variable influencing student achievement” (OECD, 2011, p. 7), it is the natural progression for LEAs to maximize educator effectiveness in order to positively impact student achievement. Consequently, it is largely viewed as an industry-wide norm to improve educator quality while educators are working in the field. Even new educators will be inculcated with on-the-job professional development. Since the success of an educator has implications that extend far and wide, the role of educator is both the learned and learning. LEAs are attempting to focus on “the building of professional capacity to

achieve an alignment of curriculum pedagogy and resources with the mix of learning requirements at the school level” (Caldwell, 2008, p. 249). Foremost are the students in the classroom. LEAs present the concern that if they “neglect performance assessment and professional learning ... mediocre and poor teachers will continue to underteach [students]” (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012, p. 81), and scores on high-stakes assessments will be an ensign under which schools will have to function. Reputation and standing are motivation for LEAs to seek methods to ensure quality professional and academic performance of a school.

Measures of instructional improvement have utilized the increased coordination between educator accountability and organizational structure through the development of PBMSs in order to evaluate the effectiveness of educators. Schools are challenged to ensure school-wide professional quality because they “have been demanded to demonstrate performance” (Kim, 2010, p. 75). Management systems within American LEAs have become more heavily influenced by market ideology (Breidlid, 2007). They adjust the educator salary structure to reflect the changes in the professional evaluation system and implement “human capital strategies ... to ensure that high-need schools are able to attract and retain effective educators” (USDOE, 2012a p. 11). Educational systems have long been marked as aligning with the capitalist methods of establishing control by developing employee standards and protocols for educators (Bidwell & Windham, 1980).

Educational policy reform at the national and state level has turned to improving instructional quality through the implementation of management systems that seek to promote connectivity among educators in an effort to maximize educator productivity.

School performance propagates that “outcome is owned collectively” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 500). Therefore, educator capacity-building is sought to be achieved through collective practices. These efforts are predicated on the fact that increased educator effectiveness will yield increased student achievement.

The social capital that exists within the professional community of an LEA is relied upon for the collective contributions made by and for the community. The networks found within professional communities are encouraged to be interdependent. LEAs “view student performance as a collective effort across the school rather than as a solo endeavor by individual teachers within the school” (Leana & Pil, 2006, p. 355). Educators are urged to invest in themselves and each other. Hargreaves (2001) makes the observation that “in schools, as trust and networking build social capital, it is easier for teachers to share professional practice and innovate and thus to improve teaching” (p. 499). LEAs strive to promote opportunities for colleagues to dialogue and learn from one another. Methods such as “team-based professional development, common planning time for teachers, cross-grade teams, and collective accountability measures” (Leana & Pil, 2006, p. 355) are employed.

PBMSs seek to be a teaching tool for the educator. The educator evaluations are organized and implemented in order to include “time and professional development resources necessary to support teacher learning” (Donaldson & Donaldson, 2012, p. 80). However, although an educator is evaluated individually, the change brought on by the evaluation is to be experienced collectively. As these kinds of networks of learning communities continue to grow and develop within LEAs that implement PBMSs, a residual social environment develops between educators. This social structure fostered

among the educators is becoming more organized. Although increased connectivity is promoted by the LEA, one is left asking how the educators respond. Is this professional relationship developed by the collective body of educators at a particular school implementing a PBMS able to be described as collective social capital?

Social capital is defined as the “accumulation of culture, social relationships, money, labor, access, and . . . power” (Weiston-Serdan, 2009, p. 397). It describes the connectivity found with a social structure which “facilitates certain actions” (Coleman, 1988, p. S98) by both individual and corporate actors. Social capital exists in the relationships between these various types of actors, and it is upon these close ties between the actors which enable collective activity to occur (Coleman, 1988). It is maintained in various formal and informal ways, lasting in duration for equally varying lengths. These forms may be networked for both private and public purposes, meeting to serve both personal and public good (Putnam, 2000). Coleman (1988) demonstrates the wholesale diamond market as relying on social capital; the “close ties . . . provide the insurance that is necessary to facilitate the transactions in the market” (p. S99). Putnam (2000) also describes that all forms of social capital will not lead to positive outcomes to be experienced by all. One example is the way terrorists rely on the social capital within networked communities in order to achieve “malevolent, antisocial purposes” (Putnam, 2000, p. 22).

Several characteristics of social capital have significance in collective social capital. Collective social capital requires the existence of social networks (Putnam, 2000). These networks are the social contacts or relations that are formed between individuals. Throughout the network, there is a sense of commonality. For example, all of the

members of a network may belong to the same yoga studio or be members of the same labor union. Educators implementing the same PBMS are networked through their participation in this system. Each educator's experience with the PBMS will be nuanced to their professional expertise. However, it is intended to parallel their colleagues in form and function.

This is facilitated by the aforementioned network being closed, such that all members are intimate at differing levels, yet they all co-exist within the network. There are varying levels of participation in a PBMS: educator, evaluator, administrator, or academic coach. Although they have their individual roles and some are in authority over others, they all work collectively within the closed system of PBMS. Collective social capital relies upon "trustworthiness of the social environment ... and the actual extent of obligations held" (Coleman, 1988, S102). The connections found within the network provide "a framework for others to be aware and reflective as individuals within a larger group" (Martucci, Goodykoontz, Selmer, & Morris, 2010, p. 149). The individuals are united through their awareness of their participation in the network and the participation of other members.

Due to the trust found in the network, the members are able to extend reciprocity throughout the network, and professional give and take between colleagues may abound. This is the exchange benefit found within members of the network: "I'll do this for you now, in the expectation that you (or perhaps someone else) will return the favor" (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). It does not require that the same people repay the benefit to one another. Rather, it is understood that someone in the network will *settle the tab*. Educators experience reciprocity amongst their grade-level team, across academic

content areas, or even through inter-campus networks. As educators simultaneously implement a PBMS within the same LEA, especially when there is an emphasis towards collective professional development, reciprocity is found to be the bedrock of the educator's collective social capital within this network.

Collective social capital expresses itself in social relations in two unique ways: bonding and bridging (Putnam, 2000). Groups that are homogenous in nature participate in bonding through the characteristics which they share. These connections are “good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity” (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Educators who are a part of the PBMS network may participate in bonding activities, as they share the mutual experiences of the PBMS, i.e., evaluations and professional development. These experiences have the potential to knit the network even tighter, and a more cohesive network may allow collective social capital to be more fully realized. Bridging involves diverse social groups being networked through similar actions or purposes. It can “generate broader identities and reciprocity” (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). The professional relationships experienced out of the network may be able to help build the quality of professional development within the network. Bridging and bonding may be valuable assets of collective social capital developed by PBMSs.

The collective social capital found within a group of educators has the potential to positively impact educational policy. Because a group is networked, collective problems may be readily discussed and resolved. A community may be well-served by the collective social capital that is developed and nurtured because it generates collective results, in addition to individual benefits. Collective social capital is experienced as a “circular [process] with each act building on the last and fostering future growth”

(Kapucu, 2011, p. 29). Resources are able to be centralized in order “to produce different system-level behavior or, in other cases, different outcomes for individuals” (Coleman, 1988, p. S101). Educational systems may greatly benefit from environments that foster collective social capital, either organized in formal ways by an LEA or informally by educator networks.

LEAs are seeking ways to invest in the preparation and support of educators. This is evident by the “focus on teacher human capital [often] dominates the policy discourse” (Leana & Pil, 2006, p. 360). Although LEAs do not directly develop policy that governs pre-service educators, they support these measures, and, once credentialed and employed, educators are governed by the LEA’s policy to professionally develop the faculty. LEAs want to avoid educators singularly “producing what accountability policy dictates” (Kim, 2010, p. 77), so they endeavor to foster quality methods of professional growth that are vast and effective by design. What is meant to foster a supportive professional environment often becomes no more than what “Foucault (1977) [views] ... as assessment and documentation for discipline and inspection” (Kim, 2010, p. 73). The challenge would seem to be to develop a professional development system that encourages the creation of collective social capital among educators, which simultaneously results in quality instruction, thereby improving a student’s academic experience.

The implementation of PBMSs within high-need schools begins at the national level, and then they are transferred to the state and local education systems. High-need schools are defined as being “a high-poverty school or a persistently lowest-achieving school” (USDOE, 2012a, p. 20). This system of evaluation is implemented by a grant

from the TIF. The DOE has promoted a specific system of educator evaluation for these educational environments throughout the country in order to improve educator quality. This evaluation method endeavors to improve instructional quality and increasing student academic achievement through the implementation of PBMSs in grant-applying LEAs.

One such grant was awarded to the MCESA. This county educational agency lies within south-central Arizona. The TIF grant was sought because MCESA identified a disparity between academic performance at the state and national level. At the state level, the majority of students within Maricopa County either met or exceeded in the areas of reading, math, and science on the state assessment Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2011). However, their 2009 performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress demonstrated that 24 percent of students were proficient or advanced in reading, 28 percent were proficient or advanced in mathematics, and 21 percent were solely proficient in science (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2011). Therefore, in an effort to increase student achievement, MCESA sought a TIF grant to implement a PBMS that aligns professional development with student academic performance in order to build the local capacity of educators. The grant awarded the MCESA \$51.5 million which allowed seven school districts to implement the PBMS within 45 of their high-need schools. First implemented in 2010, the MCESA anticipates the PBMS, under the auspice of the grant, to culminate in 2015 (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2011).

The AITQ requires the projects funded by TIF to “consider gains in student academic achievement as well as classroom evaluations conducted multiple times during each school year ... [while providing] educators with incentives” (USDOE, 2012b). In

order to comply with this mandate, the MCESA created the management system Rewarding Excellence in Instruction and Leadership (REIL) to be implemented within the county. The five major areas of focus of REIL are “rigorous, fair, and transparent educator evaluations; targeted professional learning; tools for measuring student success; establishment of multiple career pathways; and sustainable, differential, performance-based compensation” (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012). The MCESA began training the implementing LEAs administration and leadership in the school year 2010-2011. Educator training took place the following school year, 2011-2012, with full implementation taking place in the 2012-2013 school year.

Research Question

How does the implementation of Rewarding Excellence in Instruction and Leadership, a performance-based management system, by the Maricopa County Education Service Agency (MCESA) within high-need local education agencies (LEAs) foster and/or hinder collective social capital among educators? What measures of collective social capital are promoted by the United States Department of Education’s (DOE) office of Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality through their Teacher Incentive Fund grant? What action is being achieved by educators as they implement REIL?

Methodology

In order to address the social nature of the research question, the research design utilized a sociological case study. This type of case study probes “the structure, development, interaction, and collective behavior of organized groups of individuals” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 32). This design helped address the notion of collective

social capital experienced within an LEA. Specifically, it was able to determine characteristics of collective social capital generated as a result of professional development and colleague interaction.

The study made use of both document analysis and interview, in order to better understand the potential of REIL to foster collective social capital. The document analysis was conducted of the REIL implementation document *Learning Observation Instrument*, the inter-state document *InTASC: Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue*, and the *Application for New Grants Under the Teacher Incentive Program*. The goal was to determine how the three documents align with regards to promoting collective social capital.

The interviews were conducted one-on-one with the researcher. The goal was to interview four to six educators who were in the process of implementing REIL within the same implementation cycle and similar high-need schools in the LEA. The educators worked at one of the high-need school districts in Phoenix, Arizona. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, and the researcher utilized selective transcription of their responses.

In order to investigate collective social capital, the areas of focus were the educator's role in the professional learning community on the campus and the professional relationships the educator had within the learning environment. The goal was to determine how connected the educator was with other members of the learning environment.

Data Analysis

The data collected portrays the macro policy landscape while honing in on the micro policy implementation locale. The document analysis helped determine what ways collective social capital was fostered at the LEA level and which aspects of the policy promoted collective social capital. The interviews provided the implementation perspective. Educators implementing REIL informed the study about the characteristics of collective social capital experienced. The two forms of data generated served as a checks and balances system for a PBMS. The policy was devised at the national level by the DOE, yet it was implemented at the state level by the MCESA within various local LEAs. Therefore, the ways the implementation of REIL have enabled the development of collective social capital were determined.

Limitations

The study focused on the collective social capital generated by educators as a result of the implementation of REIL. Therefore, the component of a PBMS which includes principals was not directly examined. Rather, the efforts made to incorporate principals as a part of the system were addressed from the perspective of their role of the implementer. This is seen as a limitation because the implementation efforts made by principals may be affected by a principal's desire to be compensated for their performance. However, principals were not part of the participant pool.

The study sought to make generalizations about the collective social capital generated as a result of a state-level policy. Therefore, the collective social capital experienced by educators within the context of an educational environment includes that experienced solely by educators.

Findings

Evidence of collective social capital among educators is demonstrated by the methods utilized while implementing REIL during the 2012-2013 school year. Three main themes surfaced from the educators interviewed. The first being the work of the principal to support a collaborative school culture within the campus. The second is the trust developed among educators, and the last theme is the collective action of educators as a result of the REIL evaluations.

Interview

Collaborative school culture. The TIF application grant intends collaboration to be foremost exemplified by the school leadership. The principal is intended to be the main promoter of collaboration amongst the educators. The TIF document states one factor of a principal's evaluation is his/her "practice in establishing a collaborative school culture focused on continuous improvement" (USDOE, 2012a, p. 25). With the driving force behind improving educator quality being school improvement, the principal's ability to equip, train, and support educators working together towards the common goal remains a significant aspect of a school's culture. The implementing educators interviewed attest to this principal-led collaboration.

The participants described the professional development principal's organized and instituted. Educator D experienced professional development that was organized by the principal and driven by low REIL scores and "the areas where teachers were weak" (Educator D, personal communication, July 15, 2014). Educator B also grew through the professional development organized by his principal, which focused on research-based methods to improve instructional quality (Educator B, personal communication, May 6,

2014). Trainings were also organized to address the instructional process and diverse student population. At one school site, Educator A worked towards the meeting the needs of English Language Learners in her professional development (Educator A, personal communication, March 1, 2014). The educators unilaterally experienced their principals supporting the LEA's efforts towards collaboration at the district level, as well. They participated in collaborating with grade-levels across the district and in REIL professional development. They were strategically supported by their respective principals to grow as educators within the collaborative environment created through professional development on campuses and throughout the district.

The collaborative school culture was further developed by principals in the ways they supported grade-level planning time. Educator B worked with a principal who "was adamant that [teachers] work together and work through any difficulties that [they] had ... because [the principal] thought the long-term benefits would be there" (personal communication, May 6, 201). At another school site, grade-level planning took place when "students had Special [Area Classes]" (Educator D, personal communication, July 15, 2014). The educators described incidences of meeting before, during, and after the instructional day to accomplish this grade-level expectation. Educator D shared "I think it is important to collaborate with what we are [all] doing and what really works best [for the students]" (Educator D, personal communication, July 15, 2014).

Educators also met together in order to create summative and formative assessments aligned with the instructional standards and discuss how the data informed instruction. Educator A described how her team administered teacher-created assessments in Math and Science (personal communication, March 1, 2014). Once the assessment was

created, the instructional plan was elaborated through an extensive analysis called *Task Analysis*, in which the educators methodically delineate the steps needed for the students to acquire the new content. As the *Task Analysis* was implemented and the assessment(s) administered within each separate classroom, the educators reconvened to review the student data and the next step of instruction and/or the steps to reteach the student population identified as not having mastered the skill by the data. Some of the educators interviewed found it difficult to maintain this level of shared responsibility, so the grade-level collaboration would wax and wane throughout the school year. The norm within REIL-implementing schools was that teachers would persevere with grade-level teams, even if they were not always cohesive or innately collaborative in order to achieve team goals.

Trusting colleagues. The adhesion of a collaborative school culture seemed to be the trust existing in grade-level relationships that existed among colleagues, as observed within the interviews. The presence or absence of trust both impacted colleague relationships. Educator A shared “I think you create the trust when you spend time together more” (personal communication, March 1, 2014). She described how the collaboration for instructional planning was more effective when trust preceded one’s professional credentials. She shared an incident in which her professional training and experience—a graduate degree in Reading instruction and years spent as a Reading Specialist—did not satisfy the grade-level team’s confidence in her ability to plan Reading instruction. She believed it to be because “they didn’t trust [her]” (personal communication, March 1, 2014). As time progressed, trust was developed through shared experiences of daily tasks, and she was found to have an equal standing among the grade-

level team.

At another campus, the presence of trust enhanced the collective work environment. Educator B describes an incident where a member of his team displayed a negative attitude towards the work being done, and the colleague would continually complain throughout team meeting sessions (personal communication, May 6, 2014). Based upon the trust and previous training on inter-personal relationships, Educator B was able to directly address the complaining colleague one-on-one to ask her to “tone that out and ... get back to [our objective]” (personal communication May 6, 2014). Although this was not an easy conversation to have, the end goal was reached: the complaining stopped in grade-level planning meetings. In another incident, Educator B also approached another team-member encouraging her to share her input by saying “if we all three work together, then we are going to make some [positive] things happen” (personal communication May 6, 2014). The educator attributed the success of the confrontation to the trust existing amongst the colleagues. This grade-level worked through their differences and successfully moved forward on a foundation of trust.

Another element of trust was displayed with regard to the REIL evaluation process. The participants were found to be transparent with their colleagues regarding their evaluation scores. This information-sharing happened at grade-level teams and with colleagues at different grade levels that was more than merely commiserating. The norm was to share one’s scores with other educators to either receive ideas from other educators in order to improve scores.

Mentors were also utilized to encourage one another through the process, particularly when they received low scores, such a zero (Educator A, personal

communication March 1, 2014). Educator B sought ways to improve a low score by seeking out campus leadership (Educator B, personal communication, May 6, 2014). Trusted colleagues were seen as a resource from whom an educator was able to dialogue for improvement of personal and collective success.

Collective action. The consensus among the participants was PMBSs' evaluations were an unrealistic way to be evaluated. Educators believed the lesson preparation involved for the REIL evaluations could not be replicated for every taught lesson because it took anywhere from six to eight hours for one hour-long observed lesson (Educator C, personal communication, May 10, 2014). Educator B found the REIL system's expectations and requirements to be "too much work" (personal communication, May 6, 2014). It was also observed that the evaluation system was not authentic because "most [teachers] just feel this is just something [they] have to perform to" (Educator A, personal communication March 1, 2014).

Prior to the REIL system being implemented, teachers had two formal evaluations. Due to the amount of work required and the increase in number of evaluations, from two to five, the negative outcomes of the new performance evaluation system appear to have made the educators in the school district uncomfortable in such a way that they were moved to collective action.

The participants relayed an incident that took place at one of the schools in the district. The teachers at this school boycotted their mandatory fifth evaluation of the school year (Educator A, personal communication, March 1, 2014; Educator B, personal communication, May 6, 2014; Educator C, personal communication, May 10, 2014; Educator D, personal communication, July 15, 2014). While not a district wide

movement, the effort hoped to enact change throughout the district with respect to the number of evaluations. As a result, the minimum evaluation requirement was changed to three, with a fourth and fifth evaluation left optional. Teachers were united by REIL out of frustration in order to enact a positive change for their collective work environment.

Another agent of change among the educators was the local chapter of the public education labor union, Isaac District Education Association (IDEA). One interviewee shared how closely IDEA and the district administrative team worked in order to strike a balance between the PBMS and the quickly unraveling teacher morale (Educator B, personal communication, May 6, 2014). There seemed to be a partnership which valued educator opinion for the success of the teacher and student experience that continued into the following school year. The goal was for this partnership to stay communicative so the educator voice would not be left unheard.

Policy Analysis

MCESA was awarded the TIF grant in order to implement the REIL performance-based evaluation system. This system involved the use of InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue (InTASC) for the development of the MCESA's Learning Observation Instrument (LOI). The LOI was utilized by the Isaac School District as the driving force when implementing their PBMS. The policy analysis included the application for the TIF grant; the resource for development of the LEA's policy: InTASC; and the LEA's document: LOI. The purpose of the analysis was to determine what evidence of collective social capital were promoted by the policy in order to implement a PBMS. Three phrases were found to be common throughout each document that related to the nature of collective social capital among educators:

additional responsibilities and leadership roles, professional development, and collaborative school culture. The definition and explanation of the discourse within each document is elaborated.

Phrase I. The first phrase *additional responsibilities and leadership roles*, has eight occurrences within the TIF grant; five within InTASC; and three within the LOI. This phrase refers to the tasks or assignments an educator assumes above and beyond the duties of a classroom educator. It is described in the document as meaningful school-based responsibilities that teachers may voluntarily accept to strengthen instruction or instructional leadership in a systemic way, such as additional responsibilities related to lesson study, professional development, and peer evaluation, and may also include career ladder positions (USDOE, 2012a, p. 20). It further describes how a cadre of educators should be developed in order to “lead other teachers” (USDOE, 2012a, p. 13). Within the document, it is clarified that there will monies and compensation available for “effective educators who take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles” (USDOE, 2012a, p. 19). These responsibilities and roles directly benefit the educator and indirectly benefit the LEA.

The InTASC document describes *additional responsibilities and leadership roles* from an interconnectedness perspective within the LEA. It is defined as:

a willingness to take on the mantle of leadership in the classroom and among colleagues without a formal title, a recognition of when to lead and when it is appropriate to allow others to lead, knowledge of when and how to marshal a variety of stakeholders to work toward a common cause, an ability to regularly garner resources, both human and other, for the betterment of the students and the school (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 22).

The leadership roles were observed as being “implicit as teachers participate in the new

collaborative culture” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 5). The educator was not intended to be an island, rather he/she was to “work with and share responsibility with colleagues, administrators, and school leaders” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 5). This type of leadership role for an educator was considered a novel approach and having increased expectations within the implementation of a PMBS.

The document with direct influence upon an educator’s evaluations within the PBMS was the Learning Observation Instrument (LOI), since it contained the rubrics for evaluations. This document strove to ensure educators sought “appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession” (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012, p. 12). It did this by rewarding those educators with increased performance scores, which could yield greater performance pay. Teachers who were able to “contribute to the knowledge and skills of others ... and lead professional learning activities” (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012, p. 12) were found to score well within the PMBS evaluation. “Leadership roles at the district, state, or national level and advocate[ing] for learners, the school, the community, and the profession” (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012, p. 13) were also rewarded within the PMBS. The LOI highly valued educators who assumed additional responsibilities and leadership roles as far and wide as their influence reached.

Phrase II. The second phrase observed in the TIF, InTASC, and LOI documents is *professional development*. There were 30 occurrences of this phrase within all three documents. The TIF application described a high-quality professional development

system as one which will “use disaggregated information generated by the proposed educator evaluation systems to identify the professional development needs of individual educators and schools” (USDOE, 2012a, p. 26). The TIF grant application twice delineated that an awarded school would require “educator evaluation data to inform a variety of human capital decisions, such as ... professional development” (USDOE, 2012a p. 3, 11). On-site professional development for educators was described as using information provided by the PBMS’s design in order to ensure meaningful professional development (USDOE, 2012a). Professional development was a priority for the TIF grant recipients since funds received were able to be used to “support the costs of providing ... professional development” (USDOE, 2012a, p. 4). The professional development was seen as an integral part of school improvement and funds were to be allocated to provide for it (USDOE, 2012a). The TIF grant described that compensation was to be given to educators who actively sought professional development (USDOE, 2012a).

InTASC describes professional development as being “ongoing” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 6) and “meaningful and appropriate” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 18). The role of teacher in professional development is seen as initiator in that “the teacher takes initiatives to grow and develop with colleagues through interactions that enhance practice and support student learning” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 19). Furthermore, professional development is seen as meeting two objectives “professional growth and the larger organizational learning priorities for school improvement” (Council of Chief State School Officers 2011, p. 22). The LOI deems an educator effective as they seek “ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice” (Council

of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 12). The highest performance score is given for educators who “lead professional learning activities” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 12). Professional development was valued as being educator-driven and educator-led.

Phrase III. The last phrase observed in all three documents was *collaborative school culture*, and it was the most prolific of the policy analysis, with a total of 37 occurrences. In the TIF application, it is described within the context of the principal evaluations. As previously discussed, a principal was to be evaluated in their ability to foster “a collaborative school culture focused on continuous improvement (USDOE, 2012a, p. 25).

This phrase is observed within the InTASC document with the highest frequency: 32 occurrences. A collaborative school culture is described as positively impacting the quality of instruction. “When teachers collectively engage in participatory decision-making, ... they are able to deliver rigorous and relevant learning for all students and personalize learning for all individual students” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 4). This culture of improvement “includes participating actively as a team member in decision-making processes that include building a shared vision and supportive culture” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 5). The environment is interconnected such that “teachers are expected to work and share responsibility with colleagues, administrators, and school leaders” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 5). The teacher is not expected to work independently, rather he/she is expected to “collaborate with learners, colleagues, school leaders, families, members of the learners communities, and community organizations” (Council of Chief State School

Officers, 2011, p. 8, 9a, 9b, 12, 19). This interdependent culture is highly valued within the climate of school improvement.

The LOI utilizes similar, almost verbatim, collaborative phraseology as InTASC. For example, they score an educator as effective for “seek[ing] appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession” (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012, p. 12). An educator is expected to collaborate with colleagues “on an ongoing basis in giving and receiving feedback on instruction, examining student work, analyzing evidence of instructional effectiveness, and sharing responsibility for student learning” (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012, p. 12). This document also emphasizes an educator’s performance is effective when he/she “engages collaboratively in the school-wide effort to build a shared vision and supportive culture, identify common goals, and monitor and evaluate progress toward those goals” (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012, p. 13). It was anticipated that the effective educator help establish and maintain the school culture.

Discussion

An educational setting is a microcosm full of life. Not only are the separate entities of student, teacher, and principal pulsing with existence but a vibrant collective culture also exists. As Putnam (2000) describes social capital as having “both an individual and a collective aspect” (p. 20), those who participate in an educational setting contribute to both the individual and collective. The PMBS places a new emphasis upon the collective entity within the school culture that priorities the *We* over the *I* in hopes of

creating a new collaborative school environment.

Due to the years of an under-performing status, the long-term goal within the school district of study was school improvement. Therefore, the collaboration was intended as a style of interacting and relying on colleagues for the purpose of increasing student achievement in an environment in which there was “embedded professional learning where teachers engage in collective inquiry” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 5). It was no longer intended for REIL implementing educators to be passive members of the school improvement culture. Rather, the research indicates that educators were relied upon as agents of change. This type of collaborative school culture cultivated within the PBMS exemplifies collective social capital in the increased incidences of colleagues exchanging dialogue, the content of the colleague exchange, the role of the evaluation rubric, and the role of the educator as teacher-leader.

The Colleague Exchange—The Quantity of Communicating

The backbone of a collaborative school culture is open communication between the educators. The research demonstrates that educators were expected to meet at weekly planning sessions. The setting was a classroom, devoid of students, which turned into a meeting space. Educators met during planning sessions with the presence of the leadership: the administration, an instructional coach, or a grade-level representative. It was at these meetings that instructional plans and assessments were devised and data was discussed. These incidences of communicating were expected to occur—for better or worse—to engage colleagues in dialogue.

Meeting was not a haphazard activity. There were meetings scheduled weekly and goals were established. Many times, educators would run out of time, so they reconvened

after-school or the following day. The time spent communicating was seen as an investment into the collective, in the hopes of developing “dense networks of social interaction” (Putnam, 2000, p. 21). This effort was to ensure multiple meaningful encounters with colleagues were had, whereby meaningful refers to the subject of improving student achievement.

The PMBS held educators accountable to professional expectations of “*actively* engag[ing] with grade level or subject area colleagues...on an *ongoing* basis” [emphasis added] (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012, p. 12). Educators share with colleagues many times throughout a school day to seek answers or input about administrative tasks or logistical campus issues. However, the type of communication intended within the PMBS’s collaborative school culture involved more instances of communicating about delivering quality instruction that yields overall school improvement. The very nature of education involves the verbal exchange of concepts and thoughts. This aspect of the profession is being heavily relied upon within the development of the collaborative school culture as the PMBS is implemented.

The colleague exchange reflects the bridging characteristic of collective social capital. This was developed within the increased incidences of communication. Participants describe their school culture becoming more unified through an open and inviting dialogue. Colleagues within or across grade levels were invited to share aspects of the profession with each other at weekly and monthly meetings. In this instance, the communication experienced by colleagues is an intentional device of the PBMS to promote school improvement. The more educators have the opportunity to converse, then, in theory, the more educators will be able to positively impact education. It is the

colleague within the same building, teaching the same curriculum and servicing students of similar student populations, who is able to provide an idea or suggestion that can impart the most change. Potential exchanges might be: “I tried activity X with my students. Why not try it with yours,” “When we read this story, we did Y to improve comprehension,” or “My students’ scores improved because we used Z to exemplify the concept.” Using the talent within the school and the on-job-training through professional development, educators are expected to tap into their greatest and most accessible resource: one another.

Another aspect of social capital that develops when colleagues had increased communication with each other is bonding. In contrast to bridging, bonding involves individuals with similar experiences or identities becoming more cohesive through shared action (Putnam, 2000). Educators being evaluated through the same PBMS have the following in common. They taught in the same school district which means they utilize the same curriculum, district assessments, school calendar, district trainings; were evaluated using the same performance-based rubric: LOI; participated in similar training; had similar evaluators; attended the same meetings; implemented the same district policies, i.e., emergency preparedness; and utilized the same schedule for the school day. The longer the colleagues are a part of the local education agency the more shared experiences they have.

The educators who participated in the same PBMS form a group identity which seems to unite them. This type of bonding environment further builds the collectivity amongst educators. For example, the educators interviewed discussed how they increased the amount of time reflecting on the quality of their instruction since implementing the

PBMS. Therefore, a general sense of appreciating the opportunity to meta-cognitively reflect on the instructional process existed. At the same time, the educators also shared the common frustration of being overworked, as a result of the requirements of the PBMS. The increase of communicating between colleagues developed both the bridging and bonding nature of social capital that increases the shared identity among the educators within the same educational setting.

The Colleague Exchange—The Quality of Communication

The role of the principal. As there were higher incidences of colleague communications, the PBMS aimed to ensure the quality of communication. The interviews demonstrate the effort principals spent improving the quality of communication among educators. A method employed by principals to contribute to this quality was the allocation of resources. The participants discussed the professional development and time allotted for planning provided by the principal. Along with these, the educators shared how principals also gave the expectation that colleagues were to be persistent in working together. At this point, the *We* was seen as the means to meeting campus goals of increased student achievement.

Another resource a principal had at their disposal was the campus leadership. This would consist of, at a minimum, an assistant principal and an instructional coach, and they lead professional trainings for educators. The whole body of campus leadership was employed to positively impact educator capacity. The unity at the top is important to consider because collective social capital is at its best as Garmston (2007) states “when leaders successfully promote high expectations, a spirit of inquiry, and an unwavering focus on learning for both students and adults” (Martucci et al., 2010, p. 149). The

leadership did what it could to maximize student achievement.

Principals sought to improve the quality of educator communications by making use of their fiscal resources by hiring consultants. The principal selected consultants that would instruct educators on content applicable to the needs of the campus. Participants describe various topics of trainings, such as writing and lesson planning. Then, educators, individually and collectively, were held accountable to utilize the strategies or new content learned wherever applicable in and for the classroom. For example, newly learned strategies on writing would need to be evidenced in lesson plans or visible during evaluations. The goal was to further develop the capacity of the educator through consultant-led trainings.

The last resource, a principal's authority, was a method of educator accountability embedded within the PBMS. A principal would share the expectation for a grade-level to hold weekly meetings in order to plan together, and the participants would meet with their colleagues. The goal was the educators would rely upon their capacity to have quality interactions with colleagues. The assumption was that all educators were invested in the success of their students and the campus as a whole. However, the quality of the relationship was forced; more robotic, less organic. Nonetheless, educators had to persevere with quality colleague exchanges for the good of the *We* as enforced by the principal.

The resources of the principal require a brief foray about the leadership. As stated in the documents delineating the PBMS, the efforts to develop a collaborative school culture is the direct responsibility of the principal. Principals, as observed through the lens of the educators, appeared to have developed this culture in their own unique

leadership style. While all educators describe the expectations to have stretched them professionally, they regarded their principal with respect. The educators viewed their principals as less dogmatic and more democratic implementers of the PBMS. The belief was the principal desired what was best for the student, although not always easy for the educator.

The role of the evaluation rubric. The quality of the colleague's communication was further developed through the evaluation rubrics within the LOI: *Learning Community Rubric* and *Professional Responsibilities Rubric*. An educator received highest scores through the efforts made to reach out to their colleagues, fellow implementers of the PBMS. The colleague assemblages indirectly impacted the quality of instruction, yet directly impacted the outcome of educator evaluation scores. This exchange of expertise amongst colleagues yielded discussions and reflections that involved a more in-depth analysis than previously exhibited of one's instruction. As the educators described, they would share their REIL evaluation scores with colleagues in the hope of yielding a higher score. In the process, discussions would be had that related to the profession in a way that had not previously occurred. The educators relied upon the knowledge and ability of the collective to improve the quality of the individual.

The educator as teacher-leader. The PBMS envisions the educator as a teacher-leader. The educator is one who receives knowledge and professional development, and in turn, he/she is expected to use the investment into his/her expertise to propel others within the LEA towards professional growth. Through the PBMS, the success of the educational institution "would be not only top-down and vertical in character, but also bottom-up, as well as horizontal, linking school in reciprocally

accountable ways to their communities” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 202). The teacher-leader role was a process, and each passing year brought new roles and responsibilities for the respective educators. Their influence was to become wider with time.

The PMBS policy documents describe teacher-leader role as a three-pronged connection: to those on the campus, to the students’ sphere, and to the world at-large. The campus consisted of colleagues, administrators, and students, and the students’ sphere consisted of the students’ families or those directly involved in the decision-making on behalf of the student. The world at-large represented the neighboring community, local and national professional organizations, and governing bodies. The educator is intended to be well-positioned amongst all who have the potential to positively influence the quality of instruction.

The first connection point for the effective educator involves the place with the most direct influence. The classroom and campus are where he/she spends most of his/her working hours, and it is within this sphere in which the three policies delineate how the leadership roles are to be established in order to maximize effectiveness. All three documents, TIF, InTASC, and LOI, suggest an informal leadership role the educator initiates “to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession” (Maricopa County Education Service Agency, 2012, p. 12). The role is considered a shared leadership experience in which one is led and leads others. The participants shared their formal leadership roles were grade level representative, lead teacher, after-school coordinator, English Language Learner coordinator, Technology coordinator, Professional Learning Community member, and teacher union representative. Some of these provided additional compensation. The informal leadership roles mentioned were mentoring colleagues,

writers of lesson plans and assessments, and student data analyzers.

The students' respective spheres were the second connection point made by the educators. The participants described instances of connecting to this sphere in ways, such as curriculum nights or utilizing parent volunteers. Those in authority over the students, families and educator, were able to visibly unite forces in the presence of the student. The educators who made these connections were able to develop the positive effects of social capital, such as "mutual support, cooperation, trust, institutional effectiveness" (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). These school-home connections allowed for increased ease of communication and alignment of academic expectations and needs. The educators intentionally sought relationships with students' families for the purpose of student success.

Connecting with the community was the last connection made by teacher-leaders. The research indicates how participants networked with the local chapter of the National Education Association to bring about positive change to their professional experience. Strained by five teacher evaluations and organized by their campus culture, educators were able to decrease the number of educator evaluations by boycotting the fifth teacher evaluation. As a result of their action, the required evaluations were reduced from five to three, and the additional evaluations became optional. This collective action of one group of educators at one campus was able to influence change at all campuses within the school district.

Although at different campuses, an educator network developed within the school district that was bound by the similar frustration levels of the PBMS. The participants shared the collective experience of the PBMS being too extensive for it to be a long-term

commitment of their professional growth. The formal bond of fellow educators developed into an informal bond of discontented educators. They became a network that was able to “make things happen in the [educational] community” (Putnam, 2000, p. 93).

Individually, they might have been merely one unhappy educator; collectively, they fused into a body that was able to influence change. The change the PMBS was intended to influence was with regards to their instructional quality. However, the quality of their collaborative nature was able to generate an improvement for the well-being of all educators. The network valued a non-overworked educator as a more effective educator, and they were able to utilize their collective social capital for the betterment of the profession within the sphere of community.

Conclusion

The themes reoccurring in the policy analysis – professional development, additional responsibilities and leadership roles, and collaborative school culture – coexist in relationship to one another as the PBMS is implemented within the LEA in which the research was conducted. All the individuals that participate within the LEA function as agents of the collaborative school culture, i.e., educators, school leadership, students. They work to carry out the mission of the LEA, and through their actions they produce a school culture.

The research identified that the PBMS purposes to make this a collaborative culture whereby the primary focus is increased student achievement and that these two educator actions, professional development and additional responsibilities and leadership roles, occur on-the-job. This goal is met through actions in which the educator further develops their professional skill and expertise through the new responsibilities and roles

attained within the new culture.

As the agents of the collaborative school culture work towards the mission of the LEA, trust, bridging, and bonding are equally needed in order for the culture to function effectively. They frame the collaborative process in a way that supports and sustains the progress towards the collective goal of increased student achievement. Putnam (2000) observes that “when there is a high level of trust among teachers, parents, and principals, these key players are more committed to the central tenets of school improvement” (p. 305). The research demonstrated that educators would delay the individual preference in hopes of attaining the collective goal. The trust supports a collaborative school culture that emphasizes the *We* over the *I*.

The collaborative school culture was further aided by bridging of the members of the LEA. The members of the LEA are diverse agents of change; they are educators, parents, students and community members. Some are considered the producers and others the consumers within the LEA. The collaborative school culture is supported by a heterogeneous group of actors uniting around a common goal. This is further exemplified through the community partnerships. These entities are often for-profit organizations that partner with schools to promote social responsibility. The diverse groups work alongside one another in order to positively affect the school culture.

In contrast to bridging, bonding involves the members of the LEA identifying themselves as a homogenous unit. The collaborative school culture is supported by the collective identity that developed around the mission of the LEA. Each participant had an individual role and a collective one. They held diverse titles as they bridged with one another, but when they bonded they became actors within the collaborative school culture

striving toward a common goal.

The collaborative school culture employs the characteristics of social capital in order to function. Trust, bridging, and bonding hem in the new culture that is formed, and they simultaneously enable the culture's mission of increased student achievement to be attained through the two main channels of change: professional development and additional responsibilities and leadership roles. While these two methods are not unique in and of themselves, yet since they are the work of a collaborative school culture, their function is different than when they exist in the absence of this culture. Because educators are working within an environment that encourages the reliance upon social capital characteristics, trust, bridging, and bonding, it is anticipated that educators take the initiative in the two methods. Their increased knowledge and skill qualify them to assume positions that they value as essential for increased student achievement. Their school leadership is able to trust that what they produce will be worthwhile because they are operating under the expectations of the collaborative school culture. The *We* is valued over the *I*.

This is not to say that it is a perfect school culture. Inefficiencies and shortcomings exist. However, the collaborative school culture will allow "implementation muddling" to be seen as a starting point from which an educator within the culture may grow. It becomes part of the professional development experience, and it will further prepare an educator for future responsibilities and roles.

The collaborative school culture is one in which many participant and many benefit. Each member has a vested interest, and the PBMS hopes to reward all who are part of the culture, individually and collectively. Some members (the educators) have the

opportunity to receive salary benefits, and others (the students) may receive better assessment scores. Collectively, the LEA is able to be labeled a highly performing educational institution. When the culture is observed through a social capital lens, this academic achievement is not just a label but an opportunity. Individuals who invest in a collective that purposes to enact a positive difference for all may seem inconceivable, yet that does not stop the *We* from trying.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study addresses only one LEA, although similar PBMSs were implemented in Alabama and Illinois. A way to observe if collective social capital is fostered within PBMSs in other LEAs would be to conduct a policy analysis of documents surrounding the implementation of the TIF grant within these LEAs and interview educators who are participate in the PBMS within those environments. Probing the implementation experience of the TIF grant within diverse LEAs would help to determine if a PBMS within an educational setting is one in which characteristics of collective social capital are likely to exist.

Another avenue of research would be to interview the principals who are directly responsible, according to the TIF grant, for developing the collaborative school culture. Their preparation and experience in growing this culture would add a more balanced perspective of the discussion of collective social capital within the confines of PBMS in an educational environment.

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