Unfolding the Logic of a 21st Century Learning Center: Program Evaluation

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UNFOLDING THE LOGIC OF A 21ST CENTURY LEARNING CENTER:
A PROGRAM EVALUATION

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Presented to
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The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership, Special Education Administration

By
Monica Renee Manns
March 20, 2019
UNFOLDING THE LOGIC OF A 21ST CENTURY LEARNING CENTER:
A PROGRAM EVALUATION

By

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. First and foremost, to my husband, Jimmy, whose support was unwavering even when my own motivation waned. Jimmy is a remarkable and successful professional in his own right. As busy as he always was, he often rearranged his priorities so I could tend to my studies. His countless sacrifices allows me to pursue endeavors that feel good and engage in small but meaningful efforts that I pray will have a lasting impact and make a difference in this world. Jimmy—you let me dream and be a do-gooder and for that, your understanding, and so much more, I am eternally grateful. I owe you and love you beyond words. You are my heart and soul.

My children have been patient as I pursued one degree after another, and I am thankful. I trust that my doctoral work did not take me away from any milestones in your lives. Thank you for your words of encouragement and emotional support when it was needed the most. I pray that my pursuits will play a role in making your educational journeys seem accomplishable. Both my mother, Carolyn Manns and grandmother, Elizabeth Manns Casey accepted their angel wings before I completed this dissertation. The two were my biggest cheerleaders. I started this journey for my mom who died too soon. My mother epitomized the phrase “ride-or-die,” before the phrase was popular. She would follow me to the end of the world and back—never complaining, never faulting, never criticizing, just supporting and loving. Unbeknownst to many, she had mental health and learning disabilities. One specialist said that her reading disability was the most significant they and their colleagues had ever seen. Yet she did not let it or anything else stop her. Her life’s struggle with these disabilities inspired my life’s mission—to help enrich the lives of those who struggle with differing abilities and life situations.
My life’s work is to help remove obstacles and barriers that intrude upon their success. My mother set a strong example. Mom—I miss you so much! My grandmother was my compass. It would only take a few words, maybe even just a stern look from her and my behavior was corrected, my ship was righted and my path seemed clear. While she was not one to mince words, everyone knew that family meant everything to her. She made sure that we all knew that we were loved and valued. And oh, how she made me feel loved—so loved! I always felt she loved me just a little more than the other grandchildren or even her children. But maybe that was her super-power—making everyone feel special like they were her favorite. She fed my voracious appetite for knowledge and allowed me to read even though I was brought along to help her do her job—cleaning homes. So, she and my mother are the ones that my husband should blame for the piles and piles of books in every nook and cranny in the house. She never received a high school diploma and I prayed that she could walk the stage with me and receive my doctorate degree in her honor, but God had other plans. Grandma—this degree is for you. I love you! Finally, I am so undeserving to stand on the shoulders of the amazing, beautiful, black women that came before me. I dedicate this to you! My mother, grandmothers, mother-in-law, aunts, great-aunts, cousins, and friends. To my “belief and principle” mentors—Bell Hooks, Shirley Chisholm, Zora Neale Hurston, Angela Davis, Nikki Giovani, Audre Lourdes, and Maya Angelou. To my “confidence and attitude” mentors—Oprah Winfrey and Michelle Obama. Thank you, ladies, for establishing my nucleus. Your words, actions, love and support, remind us all to remain steadfast and committed to becoming who we want to be, without forgetting who we are. Black Girls Rock!
# Table of Contents

**DEDICATION**........................................................................................................................................ iii

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**.............................................................................................................................. xi

**LIST OF TABLES**.................................................................................................................................... xiii

**LIST OF FIGURES**................................................................................................................................... xiv

**ABSTRACT**............................................................................................................................................... xv

**CHAPTER 1: Introduction**......................................................................................................................... 1

  Program Description..................................................................................................................................... 4

  Priorities....................................................................................................................................................... 5

  Needs Assessment....................................................................................................................................... 6

  Purpose of the Evaluation.............................................................................................................................. 6

  Identified Values for the Program Evaluation............................................................................................. 7

  Meaningful Process for the Program Evaluation......................................................................................... 8

  Design and Analysis Approach for the Program Evaluation ...................................................................... 8

  Relevant Information to be Acquired from the Program Evaluation ......................................................... 10

  Evaluation Questions................................................................................................................................. 11

  Definition of Terms.................................................................................................................................... 12

**CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature**........................................................................................................... 14

  Foundational Elements................................................................................................................................. 14

  Lead Agency............................................................................................................................................... 16

  Governance Structure................................................................................................................................. 17

  Needs Assessment...................................................................................................................................... 18

  Goal Identification.................................................................................................................................... 19
Funding ......................................................................................................................... 20

Program Components of Community Schools .......................................................... 21

Integrated Student and Family Supports ................................................................. 21

  Emotional wellness ................................................................................................. 22

  Health wellness ..................................................................................................... 23

  Family support services ....................................................................................... 24

Expanded Learning Time .......................................................................................... 24

  Instruction .............................................................................................................. 25

    High expectations ............................................................................................... 25

    Meaning learning ................................................................................................ 26

Remediation ............................................................................................................. 26

  Overlearning ......................................................................................................... 27

  Individualized tutoring ......................................................................................... 27

Sufficient resources and opportunities .................................................................... 28

  Funding .................................................................................................................. 28

  Programming ......................................................................................................... 29

Enrichment activities ............................................................................................... 29

Family and Community Engagement ..................................................................... 30

  Parenting education .............................................................................................. 31

  Communication ..................................................................................................... 31

  Engagement .......................................................................................................... 32

  At-home learning .................................................................................................. 33

  Decision-making opportunities ............................................................................ 33
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community collaboration</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse partnerships</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive data processing</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 3: Methodology</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Change</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Questions</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Model</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Paradigm</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Evaluation Standards</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluators Role</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stake’s 12 Prominent Events</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Data</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio recording</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant stipend</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document review</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstructured Observations</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstructured Interviews</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-checking</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Confidence: Credibility and Trustworthiness .................................................. 55
Data Triangulation (Validity) ........................................................................... 55
Member Checking (Transferability) ................................................................. 55
External Audit (Dependability) ........................................................................ 56
Ethical Considerations ...................................................................................... 57
Institutional Review Board .............................................................................. 57
Program Evaluation Standards ....................................................................... 57
Data Analysis Process ....................................................................................... 59
Cycle One ......................................................................................................... 60
Cycle Two ......................................................................................................... 63
Cycle Three ....................................................................................................... 64
Limitations and Delimitations .......................................................................... 65

CHAPTER 4: Findings and Analysis ................................................................. 67
Cycle One ......................................................................................................... 69
  Initial coding .................................................................................................. 69
  Conceptual coding ......................................................................................... 75
Cycle Two ......................................................................................................... 77
  Impact ........................................................................................................... 78
    Theory-research link ................................................................................. 78
    Impact Statement ..................................................................................... 79
Outputs .............................................................................................................. 80
  Evaluation mechanisms ................................................................................. 81
Activities .......................................................................................................... 83
Activity attributes ................................................................. 84
Casual links ........................................................................ 87
New teacher empowerment ................................................. 88
Extended learning ................................................................ 89
Family engagement ................................................................ 91
Input ...................................................................................... 92
Cycle Three ........................................................................... 94
Individual member checking ............................................... 95
  Goal one - individual ............................................................ 95
  Goal two - individual ........................................................... 97
  Goal three - individual ......................................................... 101
Group member checking ...................................................... 102
  Goal one - group ................................................................. 104
  Goal two - group ................................................................. 105
  Goal three - group ............................................................... 106
  Goal four - group ................................................................. 109

CHAPTER 5: Model Narrative, Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion .... 112
Pedagogy Identification .......................................................... 113
Model Narrative .................................................................. 122
Interpretation of Findings ..................................................... 126
  Recognized Resource Assumptions ..................................... 126
  School and district support ................................................ 126
  Funding .............................................................................. 127
Parents and students ........................................... 127
Volunteers .......................................................... 128
Paid staff ............................................................ 128

Site coordinator .................................................... 129
Omitted but Vital Resources .................................... 132
Lead Agency .......................................................... 132
Community ........................................................... 133

Lack of Rational for Chosen Activities ....................... 134
Suggestions to Improve Practice ................................ 135
Blended Staff .......................................................... 135
Professional Learning Communities .......................... 136
Needs Assessment ................................................... 137
Evaluation ............................................................. 138

Conclusion ............................................................. 139
Efforts to Minimize Bias ............................................. 141
Limitations of the Study ............................................. 141

Recommendations for Future Research ..................... 142
Appendix A: Figures 1, 2 and 4 ...................................... 143
Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocols ........ 146
Appendix C: Consent for Participation in Research Interview ........................................... 148
Appendix D: Identification of Final Category Codes ..................................................... 151
Appendix E: If-Then Causal Link Statements ................ 152
References .............................................................. 154
Acknowledgments

Throughout this process I felt discouraged and wanted to quit many times. But as it comes to an end I feel that this journey was well worth the effort. I want to acknowledge and thank all of those who supported me and helped me through the process of writing my dissertation. I must first start by giving thanks to God. No earthly person could match the undying love and support that She/He has given me. Lord you stood by me in the late evening and early morning hours, making sure that I never felt alone in this process of stretching my physical and mental abilities to earn this doctorate. You ensured that through all of the sacrifices of time and tough choices that I endured, that no one in my family suffered or went without. I love you for that, and for all the other things yet to come. I am so grateful that You are an ever-present influence in my life.

I would like to thank my dissertation team—Dr. McLaughlin, Dr. Grant, and Dr. Haskins. March is the month that celebrates the empowerment of women and having an all-female dissertation team seems appropriate. During my tenure in the program they have provided guidance and been a wonderful source for my personal and professional growth. It has been truly inspiring to be surrounded by such intelligent and motivating women that pushed me out of my comfort zone of professional practitioner to doctoral student. I particularly want to thank Dr. McLaughlin who served as my dissertation chair. She was magnanimous with both her time and wisdom as the dissertation process unfolded. Throughout this very arduous process, she provided guidance and support when I felt that the task was too large to accomplish.

I want to thank the parents, teachers, community members and others who generously shared their time and perspectives for this program study. I am grateful for the
substantial contributions of time and energy made by each of you. Your honesty and willingness to share your experiences exceeded my expectations. Your hospitality was second to none as you allowed me to question you without end. This work could not have been completed without your participation. Thank you!

The support of HEF and its chair was integral to this study. Thanks for generously sharing your time and expertise with me during this dissertation process.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank my family and friends that are too numerous to name for being so wonderful, caring, and supportive. I have been blessed with friends and family that truly love and understand me. Your strength and persistence motivated me in times of triumph and struggle and I appreciate you more than words could ever express.

I am truly humble and grateful to those that have paved the way for me and my desire is to do the same for others. I leave you with this inspiring quote:

“To really change the world, we have to help people change the way they see things. Global betterment is a mental process, not one that requires huge sums of money or a high level of authority. Change has to be psychological. So if you want to see real change, stay persistent in educating humanity on how similar we all are than different. Don't only strive to be the change you want to see in the world, but also help all those around you see the world through commonalities of the heart so that they would want to change with you. This is how humanity will evolve to become better. This is how you can change the world. The language of the heart is mankind's main common language.”

— Suzy Kassem, Rise Up and Salute the Sun: The Writings of Suzy Kassem
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Selected Interview Quotes: Excerpts that support the identified outputs</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Examples of Responses and Supports for the Pedagogy of Confidence Operational Practices</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Community Learning Centers as a Response to Brofenbrenner’s Ecological</td>
<td>Appendix A - 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Logic Model</td>
<td>Appendix A - 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Three Cycle Constant Comparative Process</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Draft Logic Model for Focus Group</td>
<td>Appendix A - 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Visual of how the evaluation work to respond to the JSCCE standards within Stakes’ 12 Prominent Events</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

Community Learning Centers (CLC) provide extended learning opportunities for students and families that live in fiscally under-resourced communities. These centers provide opportunities for academic enrichment. This includes an array of additional services, programs, and activities. The programs should be designed to reinforce and complement the academic program of participating students and provide the families of students with opportunities for dynamic and meaningful engagement in the education of the child. Significant research has been done on the effectiveness of community learning centers but little research has been conducted on the formative process for establishing programming for a community learning center.

This formative evaluation provided key stakeholders a unique insight into the program. To accomplish this, the evaluator used Robert E. Stake’s Responsive Evaluation Approach to design a constant-comparative qualitative program evaluation. The evaluation engaged in an analysis that identified the perceived program components. Insight from the analysis will be used to formulate a Theory of Change for the CLC. The Theory of Change process pivots upon identifying the essential program components and establishing the sufficient conditions required to bring about a given long term outcome. The formulation of a Theory of Change will assist with establishing programming, resource building (i.e., grant, monetary solicitation), external program collaborations and potential expansion.
UNFOLDING THE LOGIC OF A 21ST CENTURY LEARNING CENTER:

A PROGRAM EVALUATION
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

America promotes the idea of equality as one of its foundational principles. In many ways, the nation lives up to this idea but not within the educational system. Arne Duncan, past United States Secretary of Education, referenced education as “the ultimate equalizer” (Arne Duncan, 2009). Duncan’s statement is a recognition that every student deserves equitable access to opportunities for educational success. There is a misconception that equality and equity mean the same thing. These two words are similar but different. Equality is making sure all students have equal access to the resources necessary for high-quality education; whereas, equity requires an understanding that some students may need more support due to their socio-economic circumstances (Adelman & Taylor, 1999; Noguera, 2003; Payne, 2008; Rothstein, 2004).

In 2015, more than 6.5 million children were identified as living in extreme poverty, defined as an annual household income of less than $12,129 for a family of four (Children’s Defense Fund, 2016). Unfortunately, in many poverty-stricken communities, there are significant barriers to accessing opportunities that enhance students’ academic achievement, social-emotional growth, and that provide extra-curricular enrichment activities. Research provides empirical evidence of the adverse social and environmental effects of poverty on children to include: infant mortality, delayed growth and development, chronic health concerns, compromised mental and behavioral health,
reduced relational development, and encumbered cognitive acuity (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Early & Vonk, 2001; Lawson & Barkdull, 2001).

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model provides a socio-ecological rationale for how human beings are both a product and producer of the specific environments in which they live. In other words, human beings develop according to their environment, but they also play an important role in their own development. Issues within the home and family as well as the broader community need to be taken into account before any attempts are made to find ways in which to solve the present issues. To counter the ill effects of poverty, social scientists started the movement for schools and social services to jointly work together and provide a continuum of wrap-around services within the school building (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a) that collaboratively, and comprehensively engages humans, financial, and social resources to respond to their diverse needs (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a; Valli, Stefanski, & Jacobson, 2014). The enhanced ideology is known as the Full-Service Community Schools paradigm. The programs that embrace this paradigm are called Community Learning Centers and are a response to Brofenbrenner’s Ecological Model. A visual depiction is provided in Figure 1 located in Appendix A. Researchers, and social scientist recommend that schools using this paradigm not only provide opportunities for academic development and social services, but also provide recreational activities (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013; Samberg & Sheeran, 2000). The FSCS paradigm is increasingly being embraced by schools serving low-income families with the goal that the services they provide will support students’ academic achievement by mitigating the impact of poverty
(Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017b). An example of a school that is adopting the Full-Service Community Schools paradigm is an Elementary school.

The President of the District’s Education Fund (personal communication, December 13, 2017), identified that the Elementary is one of 72 schools located in the district. He further stated that Elementary school has the highest economic deprivation rate in the district (100%) and the attendance zone includes neighborhoods with 100% poverty in households with children under age 5. With 10.8% unemployment in this area, 43.9% of students live in poverty, with 36.1% living below 200% of the poverty rate. The average family income is $21,358, well below the $24,600 federal poverty line. The elementary school is one of only two schools in the county that have consistently been denied accreditation by the Virginia Department of Education due to low achievement scores.

Program Description

The adoption of the Full-Service Community School paradigm was spearheaded by Education Fund, the non-profit arm of the school district. Education Fund has its own governing body, separate from the district school structure but work closely with the district’s Superintendent and school board. The President of the District’s Education Fund (personal communication, December 13, 2017) explained that the nonprofit supported the school district by providing grant funds for innovative programming in the school, but due to the diverse needs of the system, they had begun to diversify the types of support they provided. An example of this is their role as lead agency for the Elementary school. Due to persistent issues at the designated elementary school, it was decided—with support from the past Superintendent and current school board—the
Education Fund would serve as the primary administrator for the adoption of a Full-Service Community Schools paradigm for a low-performing elementary school within their district. The Full-Service Community School paradigm is a framework that brings organizations and community resources together in order to have a positive impact on students, parents, and academic outcomes. The adoption of the Full-Service Community Schools paradigm required the identification of a lead agency, and the past Superintendent and current school board agreed that Education Fund should serve as the lead agency.

The President of the Education Fund (personal communication, December 13, 2017) stated that the goal was to use the framework to build program that included academic support, enhanced programming, and community resources. Education Fund agreed to lead the charge and took on the responsibility as the lead agency. The lead agency is usually an institution or organization that has agreed to make a long-term commitment to the school and the surrounding community, with the singular goal of supporting programs that mitigate the issues identified within the needs assessment (Dryfoos, Quinn, & Barkin, 2005).

Priorities

The President of the Education Fund (personal communication, December 13, 2017) provided the initial needs assessment conducted in 2015-2016. He explained that as a result of the needs assessment, five programming priorities were identified:

1. Quality education—After school homework assistance; science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) camps; book clubs; performing arts enrichment; cultural experiences; recreational activities; and summer camps;
2. You development—Leadership and service learning opportunities, and mentoring initiatives with community partners;

3. Family support—Parenting classes, social services including health screenings, mental health counseling, and housing;

4. Family engagement—Game nights featuring STEM content, family recreation, technology training, movie nights, and literacy events;

5. Community development—Job training, career fairs, General Education Degree (GED) and English is a Second Language (ESL) classes, and networking events in the community.

**Needs Assessment**

The President of the Education Fund (personal communication, December 13, 2017) explained that this assessment also identified current resources that could be accessed within the community. A local recreation center had an array of recreational and wellness programs to serve community constituents, some of which were free. The local Social Services Center assisted community members with access state supported programs for food and housing. The County Library offered literacy programming for preschoolers through adults. All three of these facilities are within two miles of each other. However, for many parents, economic hardships, working multiple jobs, and the lack of reliable transportation continued to prevent them from taking full advantage of these programs and facilities.

**Purpose of the Evaluation**

The President of the Education Fund (personal communication, December 13, 2017) informed the evaluator that during the 2017-2018 school year; Education Fund was
awarded a 21st century learning grant through the U. S. Department of Education to expand the extended learning program for a high-need elementary school. The federal funding source for 21st Century grants is directed to states based on each state’s share of Title I funding for low-income students. The grant dollars are then redistributed to local school districts; therefore, they are effectively pass through grant funds. During a meeting between the President of the Education Fund and the 21st century learning grant auditor, they expressed interest in funding additional extended learning programs, and providing funding for additional parent education programming. The extended learning program is one component of a Community Learning Center designed that seeks to embody the Full-Service Community School paradigm. The President of the Education Fund (personal communication, December 13, 2017) expressed reservations about an expansion until they had perfected the program design used at Elementary school. He originally asked the evaluator to design a program evaluation that would identify the current logic model for the Community Learning Community.

**Identified Values for the Program Evaluation**

In a later discussion, it was determined that the program evaluation should have a constructivist paradigm. The President of the Education Fund wanted program stakeholders to provide knowledge for the construction of the logic model. It was important to him that the program evaluation process was designed with a stakeholder participation orientation. It was determined that an illustrated logic model and accompanying narrative would be provided at the end of the program evaluation process.
Meaningful Processes for the Program Evaluation

During the negotiation of purpose, it was determined that the program evaluation should be designed to gather enough evidence towards the creation a visual logic model that identifies the perceived program elements within the Community Learning Center. A Logic Model graphically depicts the shared relationships among the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact for your program. The model can communicate various components of a program, distinguish operations within the program, identify the placement of activities, and display how these align with associated goals (Community Toolbox, 2018).

Design and Analysis Approach for the Program Evaluation

Based on discussions with the dissertation team, and the president of the lead agency, it was determined that the responsive evaluation approach would be an appropriate method. The responsive evaluation approach was designed to focus on the determination of activities and elements found within the phenomenon (Stake, 2000). The responsive evaluation approach was derived from the naturalistic paradigm and concentrates on examining the process rather than determining the predefined outcomes of a process (Stake, 2004). Guba (1978) stated that the primary purpose of evaluation should be “to respond to audience requirements for information, particularly in terms of the value perspectives held by each audience” (p. 34). Stake (2004) further elaborated that a responsive evaluation requires orienting to the experience of the program by paying attention to “program action, program uniqueness, and to the cultural plurality of the people” engaged with the program (p. 86).
Responsive evaluation approach is grounded in the social constructivist perspective for knowledge acquisition. In this perspective, human beings are considered as active interpreters of their world. The responsive evaluation approach allows the flexibility for an evaluator to construct knowledge about program activities as requested; as well as inform concerns, that may arise, of other stakeholders (Stake, 2000). The responsive evaluation approach was derived from the naturalistic paradigm and concentrates on examining the process rather than determining the predefined outcomes of a process (Stake, 2004). Guba (1978) stated that the primary purpose of evaluation should be “to respond to audience requirements for information, particularly in terms of the value perspectives held by each audience” (p. 34). Stake (2004) further elaborated that a responsive evaluation requires orienting to the experience of the program by paying attention to “program action, program uniqueness, and to the cultural plurality of the people” engaged with the program (p. 86).

As the evaluator continued to negotiate understanding about the program design it was clear, from the questions asked by the President of Education Fund, that he not only wanted information about the logic of the program elements but hoped to receive insight into the assumptions held by the stakeholders about program elements. The request for insight into the assumption of stakeholders required the evaluator to revise their questions and modify the intent of their analysis. The ability to make modifications, in response to the needs of the stakeholder, is allowable within the responsive evaluation approach therefore the evaluator expanded from only determining the elements of a logic model to assessing potential assumptions and orientations within the context of the phenomenon. A process that allowed for the determination of program context was the Theory of Change.
Relevant Information to be Acquired from the Program Evaluation

Taplin and Clark (2012) identified that the Theory of Change articulates programs assumptions by identifying the “conditions they believe have to unfold for those goals to be met” (p. 1). The Theory of Change idea was put forward to the President of the Education Fund and he expressed that he wanted the evaluator to not only construct the logic model, but also provide insight into program assumption, that could later be used to develop an actual Theory of Change for the program. The Center for the Theory of Change (2018) states four key assumptions, within the change process of a program, should be informed when crafting a Theory of Change for a program:
1. assertions about the connections between long term, intermediate and early outcomes on the map;
2. substantiation for the claim that all of the important preconditions for success have been identified;
3. justifications supporting the links between program activities and the outcomes they are expected to produce.
4. outlines of the contextual or environmental factors that will support or hinder progress toward the realization of outcomes in the pathway of change is often an additional important factor in illustrating the complete theory of change.

To support the added request for insight into assumptions about the program elements the evaluation questions were revised to allow for insight into process, and orientation, of the program. The rationales and assumptions should be premised on research, “strengthening the plausibility of the theory and the likelihood that its stated goals can be achieved” (Taplin & Clark, 2012, p. 1). The analysis incorporated the
backwards mapping process into the program evaluation design. The Theory of Change approach recommends backward mapping to build a framework that tells a complete story of the program (Center for the Theory of Change, 2018; Taplin & Clark, 2012). Using the backwards mapping process provided insight into findings about driving assumptions of the program.

**Evaluation Questions**

The purpose of the program evaluation was to identify elements of a logic model and establish the Theory of Change currently undergirding the Full-Service Community Schools program design at Elementary school. The questions guiding this evaluation were:

1. What are the program stakeholders' perception of the impact of the community learning center located at the Elementary school?

2. What are the program stakeholders' perception of the outputs process orientation for the community learning center located at the Elementary school?

3. What are the activities and links identified by program stakeholders for the community learning center located at the Elementary school?

4. What are the program stakeholders' perception of the inputs identified to support program implementation of the community learning center at Elementary school?

The first question was developed in response to the Theory of Change. The Casey Foundation recommended an approach that requires thinking backwards from longer to

---

1 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
2 Outcomes
3 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
4 Service utilization and evaluation mechanisms
5 Interventions & Strategies
6 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
7 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
8 Resources
the intermediate to the early term change (Organizational Research Services, 2004).

Therefore, the evaluation had to first establish the impact of the program. Establishing the program impact explains the cause for the desired change and connects the steps on the “pathway of change.” As this was a constructivist approach, it was determined that the best way to establish program impact was to first establish what the stakeholders perceived as the need for the program. Establishing the program need explains the cause for the desired change. The second question informed the outcomes needed to bring about the impact. The third question provided an opportunity to identify the program activities and determine if there were supporting beliefs that link program activities and the outcomes that they are expected to produce. The fourth and final question informed the contextual or environmental factors needed to support or hinder progress toward the realization of the program’s theory of change.

**Definition of Terms**

**Community Learning Centers.** Community learning center located within a school district, nonprofit or faith-based organization that offers academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities to school age students and their families during non-school hours. The centers are administered through state agencies.

**Academic Achievement.** Refers to the success of students in learning and mastering the school subjects that they study as measured by tests of knowledge and skills (Community Tool Box, 2018; Ward, Stoker, & Murray-Ward, 1996)

**Activities.** Activities, also known as interventions, determines what the resources will do to direct the course of change within the phenomenon (Community Tool Box, 2018).
**Community Engagement.** The word “community” signifies the community members, which include students and their family members, as well as people and organizations located within the neighborhood of the school. The engagement is the building of power to promote community revitalization and school reform (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2002).

**Input.** Inputs are known as the identification preconditions and resources needed to conduct the effort or initiative; they also include constraints on the program, such as regulations or funding gaps, which are barriers to your objectives (Community Tool Box, 2018).

**Logic Model.** A Logic Model is a visual diagram that frames an understanding of how your program will work by illustrating key program elements (Community Tool Box, 2018)

**Outcome.** Outcome is the evidence, to include the evaluation mechanisms that assess if the activities performed as planned (Community Tool Box, 2018).

**Output.** Outputs are the identified changes that are expected to come about as a direct or indirect effect of the activities (Community Tool Box, 2018).

**Stakeholders.** “All individuals, groups, or organizations that are directly influenced by actions others take to solve the problem. Each has a unique appreciation of the problem” (Gray, 1989, p. 5).

**Theory of Change.** The theory of change, has multiple definitions, but for this research it is the comprehensive description about the assumptions of a program to include the how and why a desired change is expected to happen (Funnell & Rogers, 2011).
CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

In support of program replication, the lead agency asked that the evaluator conduct a formative evaluation that provided recommendations for aligning their current Theory of Change (i.e., program design) with best practices for Community Learning Centers that serve students in poverty. The review of literature provides background knowledge and insight into best practices. The first section outlines the foundational elements for implementing a Full-Service Community School program, also known as Community Learning Centers. The second section, program components, provides an overview of best practices and research to consider when determining which programming components best serve students in high-poverty communities.

Foundational Elements

An analysis of the literature on schools implementing the Full-Service Community School paradigm indicated features that differentiated them from other initiatives designed to support the academic achievement of students in poverty (Conwill, 2003; Dryfoos, 1995, 2005). The first element is the establishment of partnership agreements between the school, public service providers, and programs that promote a range of youth development activities. The second element is the expectation that the school opens their doors to students, and families, most of the week, all year long. The third element requires parental participation.
Maier, Daniel, Oakes, and Lam (2017) recently published a report, *Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of The Evidence That Further Outlines This Paradigm*. Maier et al. (2017) identified sufficient evidence to determine four pillars needed to successfully implement a Community Learning Center. The authors suggest that the following pillars will allow students to “succeed academically and prepare for full and productive lives” (p. vi). These pillars include:

- Integrated student support, with connections on and off campus to make sure students get the extra support they need;
- Expanded learning time and opportunities, such as longer school days, Saturday programs, and after-school programs;
- Engagement of families and communities in meaningful and diverse ways; and
- Collaboration in how the (programs) are run and practices that take place in schools; for example, teacher learning communities (Maier et al., 2017, p. v)

Work cited in the report found positive results in statewide evaluations of Community Learning Center programs, which is another name for Full-Service Community School. Students enrolled in the high school component of California’s Community Learning Center program received higher English language arts and math evaluation scores as well as outperformed their non-participating peers in the English language arts and math portions of their high school exit examinations (J. Huang, Chen, & Wang, 2012). Another research study found that students who regularly attended Washington State’s Community Learning Center saw increases in their reading and math achievement and the study determined that participants overall Grade Point Average was positively
impacted in comparison to students enrolled in the program (Naftzger, Vinson, Liu, Zhu, & Foley, 2014).

Most Community Learning Centers within the Full-Service Community School paradigm have the capacity to mitigate issues of poverty, in partnerships with other community agencies. They can provide integrated supports that focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement (Calfee, Wittwer, Meredith, 1998; Children’s Aid Society, 2011; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, 2017b). To embark on crafting and implementing a Community Learning Center requires the (a) identification of a lead agency, (b) formation of a governance structure; (c) completion of a needs assessment; (d) goal identification; and (e) securement of funding (Calfee et al., 1998; Children’s Aid Society, 2011).

**Lead Agency**

Lead agencies are identified entities that work with schools to implement the Full-Service Community School paradigm. They establish and maintain direct links to the communities they serve. These agencies are expected to secure or provide funding to help pay the salary of the Resource Coordinator as well as to develop and support the governance structure of the Full-Service Community School (Dryfoos et al., 2005). Research suggests that the Full-Service Community School paradigm entails the identification of a lead agency to oversee the program design, implementation, and evaluation. The lead agency is usually an institution or organization that has agreed to make a long-term commitment to the school and the surrounding community, with the
singular goal of supporting programs that mitigate the issues identified within the needs assessment (Dryfoos et al., 2005; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017b).

Another important role of the lead agency is to identify and support the community school coordinator, often referred to as the site-coordinator. The community school coordinator serves as the point-person for community-based partnerships within and outside the school. The lead agency not only identifies the community school coordinator but serves as their employer; they provide oversight, development, and evaluations of performance. Community Schools in Action, one of the oldest implementing organizations of the Full-Service Community School paradigm, found that the community school coordinator needed not only to have a commitment to the community school they served, but also needed to have skills in “budget development, money management, supervision, organization, and time management” (Dryfoos et al., 2005, p. 29). It is recommended that the school community coordinator have a master’s level degree in the area of social work or a related field as they are expected to facilitate effective communication and collaboration between all entities within the Community Learning Center governance structure.

**Governance Structure**

Most often schools implementing the Full-Service Community School paradigm engage in a governance model that emphasizes input from site-based stakeholders (Calfee et al., 1998). The governance should include representatives from the site-based leadership team, including families, students, community partners, unions, neighboring community residents, the principal, community school coordinator, teachers, and other school personnel and community partners (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a).
This model is premised on the belief that site-based stakeholders who interact daily with students and families “should have the most influence on initiating, developing, evaluating, and sustaining the program” (Calfee et al., 1998, p. 29). They should be an intricate part of designing and desegregating the data from the needs assessment because this information should drive the development of the program model (Children’s Aid Society, 2011).

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**Needs Assessment**

A community school model should be based on each school/community’s needs. To set the stage, it is important to determine the needs of the students and the community; this information is then used to identify the goals for programming (e.g., what components of a community school are needed) and to assess opportunities for school-
community partnerships. A needs assessment should be conducted to provide an understanding of the (a) student needs; (b) parent needs (focused on students; focused on parents); and (c) teacher needs (focused on the instructional needs of students) within the identified school community (Children’s Aid Society, 2011; Dryfoos, 1994; Dryfoos et al., 2005) providing a contextual understanding of the students’ home and community.

The needs assessment involves multiple kinds of data including, but not limited to, student data, community data, and community resource assessments. Student data assesses standardized academic achievement, attendance, course completion, graduation, school health needs, and so forth. Community data assesses socio-economic factors, health status, transportation, crime rates, food accessibility. Community resource assessments provide macro-mapping for available resources (i.e., healthcare, employment, transportation) within the community (Children’s Aid Society, 2011; Dryfoos, 1994; Dryfoos et al., 2005; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017b). Community school leaders use this data to establish goals in support of student and

**Goal Identification**

The assessment should provide data for the identification of program goals and growth indicators. The program goals for Full-Service Community School schools using the paradigm are primarily focused on goals that will increase academic performance, and lessen the barriers, for students’ academic achievement (Children’s Aid Society, 2011; Dryfoos et al., 2005; Min, Anderson, & Chen, 2017). Following goal identification, progress indicators must be established to ensure that there is progressive movement towards the goal. These progress indicators should align with identified strategies. This
information should be found and narrated by a Theory of Change model. This model would explain how the program will systematically work to meet the indicated goals.

**Funding**

Funding, or lack thereof, is the most widely cited challenge in the implementation of a Full-Service Community School model. Full-Service Community School crosses multiple fiscal years, which requires the identification of diverse funding streams for programmatic service delivery. A Community Learning Center requires money and human capital. In-kind funding occurs due to the relationship of the program existing within the confines of the school building. For example, activities affiliated with the Community Learning Center program are not charged for use of school space or utilities. Federal funds, or an allocation of local district dollars to support programming for this paradigm are focused on providing students with academic instruction and parents with opportunities to support their child’s academic achievement.

Lead agencies with the support of school districts can apply for the federal competitive 21st Century after-school grant. This grant is typically awarded for the duration of three to five years and the grantees must serve public-school students in high-poverty schools. Awards are contingent upon satisfactory progress toward goals. Grant and donations are never guaranteed. The Full-Service Community School paradigm recommends the inclusion of enrichment opportunities for students. This requires lead agencies to generate private funding. In some instances, Community Learning Center programs engage in creative fundraising efforts, in-kind donations, school store merchandise sales, and other community fundraising efforts. Leveraging these relationships is often a key element to supporting expanded services.
Program Components of Community Schools

This chapter closely explores the four pillars identified by Maier and colleagues (2017): integrated student support; expanded learning time and opportunities; engagement of families in diverse ways; and community collaboration. The identified four pillars support actions in alignment with principles known to guide school transformation: (a) pursue equity; (b) invest in a whole child approach to education; (c) build on community strengths; (d) use data and community wisdom to guide partnerships, programs, and progress; (e) commit to interdependence and shared accountability; (f) invest in building trusting relationships; and (g) foster a learning organization (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017b). Both promote the significance of programming, academic and non-academic, as well as emphasize the importance of building strong connections between students and families.

Integrated Student and Family Supports

The first pillar is premised on the belief that academic achievement alone will not yield the necessary results to impact the economic, social, and emotional well-being of students and their families and move them out of poverty. Maier et al. (2017) found that the schools effectively implementing the Full-Service Community School paradigm include wrap-around supports—emotional, physical, psychological, and academic supports. The research discovered that while providing wraparound services did not have any significant impact on the collective good of the family it did positively support students’ school engagement and academic achievement. They found there was a decrease in grade retention, dropout rates, behavioral problems, and chronic absenteeism, along with a significant increase in attendance rates and mathematics scores (Maier et al.,
2017). The report noted that it was important that services were comprehensive but tailored to the individual needs of the student (Maier et al., 2017). The wrap-around services include but are not limited to programming for social emotional development, emotional wellness, and health wellness.

**Emotional wellness.** Emotional/mental wellness is the development of skills that assist students with recognizing, accepting, and effectively coping with a variety of emotions in a developmentally appropriate manner. Students in poverty often lack the chronic inability to self-regulate negative emotions such as sadness and fear, which plays a pivotal role in the genesis of clinical depression, anxiety disorders, and other mental disorders (Davidson, Putnam, & Larson, 2000) which researchers attribute to neurological deficits (D. C. Jackson, Malmstadt, Larson, & Davidson, 2000). The regulation of emotions involves the interplay between modes of information processing: automatic, reflexive, bottom-up and effortful, symbolic, and top-down processes (Clark & Beck, 2010). Promising research has begun to show that the brain can be retrained (neuroplasticity) with the use of self-regulation training (Keynan et al., 2016) and meditation (Fox et al., 2014). Therefore, programming that includes intentional instruction in self-regulation and meditation may assist with mitigating inappropriate emotional responses in students.

Research has shown that individualized counseling or programs with a strong intentional focus on improving social and personal skills were found to improve students’ self-esteem and self-confidence (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007), and assists them with regulating their negative emotional states (Wright et al., 2008). For example, group programs explicitly teach individuals to refocus, engage in explicit evaluation, and
provide them with strategies for cognitively processing their emotional experiences. This assists with replacing a person’s dysfunctional manner of thinking (Wright et al., 2008).

Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen, and Pollitt (2013) outlined best practices for improving school safety, school climate, and mental health outcomes for children and youth. They concluded that best practices must include effective collaboration with community mental health partners. They recommended that all persons delivering mental and behavioral health services in the schools should receive district-led training on these standards, to include an understanding of policies and procedures for crisis intervention, mental health services, and key differences between working as a mental health provider in a school versus in the community. This training was perceived to improve the consistency of service delivery and enhanced the relationships among all stakeholders in the partnership (Cowan et al., 2013).

Health wellness. Results from studies conducted on Community Learning Center in Oregon, California, and Ohio found schools and districts with strong health partnerships reflecting community schools’ strategies have shown improvements in attendance, academic performance, and increased access to mental, dental, vision, and health supports for their students (Maier et al., 2017). Experts exist both in schools and in the community for health and wellness, but it is important to engage local experts to assist with the identification and evaluation of available resources and best practices for meeting the needs of students, and families within the community (Roche & Strobach, 2016).
**Family support services.** Families as well as students may need to access these integrated support services. Addressing the basic needs of families allows them to be able to direct their full attention to their child's academic activities without the fear of not being able to access the things they need. Schools have collaborated with community agencies to provide families with medical assistance, family counseling, legal support concerning custody or guardianship issues, and financial services (Stillwell & Ferguson, 2004). It is found to be beneficial when the school is the hub for support services and has the information needed to link families with their needs, but in some instances, the schools have health facilities on-site and families are able to access medical and dental care (Maier et al., 2017). This is particularly important in communities without public transportation because families with limited resources do not have transportation to go to healthcare clinics, and school sites are more accessible.

**Expanded Learning Time**

The second pillar is to provide expanded learning opportunities for students. Expanded learning opportunities are considered the heart of the Full-Service Community School paradigm and include after-school as well as summer programming. A survey of schools using the community and school approach within the Full-Service Community School paradigm found that after-school programming was offered in 90% of the responding schools and summer programming was offered in 65% of responding schools (Maier et al., 2017). The positive impact of after-school programming is potentially the reason that it is implemented in most Full-Service Community School. Research found that consistent participation in a high-quality after-school program over several years can help close the achievement gap between children from low-income families and children
from high-income families in mathematics (Vandell, 2013). The most effective schools support the engagement of students by providing strong instruction that sees students as independent learners, sets high expectations, and have sufficient resources and opportunities for meaningful learning. These schools intentionally plan academic and enrichment activities that emphasize real-world learning and promote community problem solving (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Maier et al., 2017).

**Instruction.** The instruction should promote student centered learning that is responsive to the voice and interests of students (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, 2017b). The curriculum used during school hours, and those in extended learning programs should be meaningful, engaging, and motivational for students. All learning should include a focus on real world issues with opportunities to engage in problem solving for the issues within the community context (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, 2017b; Maier et al., 2017). Many of the students enrolled in Community Learning Center programs have academic deficits; therefore, it is important that extended learning opportunities focus on supporting their areas of weakness. Studies have also concluded that extended learning programs with a focus on remediating achievement deficits have a positive impact on student achievement (McCombs et al., 2011; Terzian, Moore, & Hamilton, 2009) with research finding that the most significant impact occurs during individualized and small group instruction (Kindron & Lindsay, 2014).

**High expectations.** Research has shown that when staff model positive behavior, actively promote student skills, provide meaningful feedback, and establish high expectations, students are more successful, motivated and feel encouraged to learn (Blank et al., 2003; Center on Education Policy, 2012; Maier et al., 2017). Teachers set the tone
for creating a positive or a negative classroom climate. If the teacher is not excited about teaching, students notice that and are not excited about learning. Lumsden (1994) argued, "To a very large degree, students expect to learn if their teachers expect them to learn" (p. 2). Teachers must believe in what they are teaching, and that must be conveyed to students if the teacher wants to maximize student learning. It is believed that staff attitude also has a direct impact on students’ self-esteem. Maslow (1943) believed that self-esteem is of the utmost importance for children and adolescents; it precedes real self-esteem or dignity. Self-esteem includes confidence, achievement, respect of others, and a need to be a unique individual.

**Meaningful learning.** Maier et al. (2017) highly recommended the inclusion of real-world learning lessons in the curriculum. Research has demonstrated that students engaged in experiential learning opportunities demonstrated skill and knowledge acquisition (Blank et al., 2003). When teachers promote complex thinking types such as creative thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills, students demonstrate high performance levels (Blank et al., 2003). Extended learning programs should provide students an opportunity to remediate past information and acquire new knowledge through their participation in academic and/or leisure activities (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, 2017b).

**Remediation.** There is significant evidence that the repetitive nature of remediation prevents achievement loss. This may be attributed to repetition strengthening the neural pathways, and the brain becoming more proficiently wired allowing a student to master a skill (Krafnick, Flowers, Napoliello, & Eden, 2011). Research has shown that the sustained instruction supports skill mastery and allows for information automaticity.
(Blachman et al., 2004). Information automaticity occurs when the student can accurately apply a skill without significant thought. For example, studying the time's tables countless time, makes the network stronger, the same as muscles becoming stronger when they are exercised, and allows a child to develop the ability to automatically regurgitate the multiplication table. When remediating, it is also good to engage in the practices like overlearning information.

**Overlearning.** Overlearning is an instructional repetition strategy that requires students to rehearse skills even when there is no identified need for improvement. Students are expected to practice the skill at the same level of difficulty past mastery. Recent research has shown that overlearning stabilizes the learning state in humans by changing their neurochemical processing. It serves to hyper-stabilize and protect mastered skills from being diminished by the intake of new learning (Shibata et al., 2017). This is important because studies have found that learning new information immediately after mastery of skill can both destabilize prior learning as well as disrupt subsequent new learning (Shibata et al., 2017). Overlearning should not be attributed to Homework Help activities because it is not the same. Homework Help is defined as the completion of an assignment with support.

**Individualized tutoring.** Research shows that individualized tutoring supports students’ achievement. A randomized study identified the significance of the impact. Little, Wimer, and Weiss (2008) conducted a randomized controlled trial that consisted of 2,718 boys in Grades 9 and 10 from a dozen public high schools in some of the poorest areas of Chicago; they were assessed to determine if individualized tutoring had a positive impact on student achievement. The study used the Match Corps model, which
consists of identifying new college graduates and providing them with 100 hours of training on strategies for tutoring and parental communication. For the study, Match tutors were matched with students that had low grades and standardized math scores. The results found that participating students achieved higher math grades, fewer math failures, and even fewer failures in non-math courses (Little et al., 2008).

**Sufficient resources and opportunities.** Persistent gaps in resources and opportunities between students from low income families and other more financially secure students are well documented. Students deserve a high-quality education and the opportunity to chase their ambitions. Research has persistently found that an increasing number of students, particularly students of color, find themselves in under-resourced schools with inexperienced instructors, limited course options, scarcer instructional resources and inadequate coursework (Conwill, 2003; Dryfoos, 2005; Little et al., 2008). In a report titled, *Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources to Support Student Success*, researchers found community schools sought to provide resources and opportunities for students and families, but this required access to funding and programming (Blank, Jacobson, Melaville, & Pearson, 2010).

**Funding.** Recent research has found that school districts with the highest rates of poverty receive about $1,000 less per student in state and local funding than those with the lowest rates of poverty (The Education Trust, 2018); subsequently, most school districts who would most benefit from the FSCS paradigm do not have the funds to support implementation. The researchers found that school districts are often only able to provide seed money and depend on support from public and private agencies (Blank et al., 2010; Calfee et al., 1998). In most instances community groups and school
foundations provide additional support to broaden programming (Blank et al., 2010). Funding for program diversification primarily comes from private, faith-based, and grants derived from community-based organizations (Blank et al., 2010).

**Programming.** Resources in the community schools profiled in the study found that funded activities are strategically designed to build academic capacity (Blank et al., 2010; Blank et al., 2003). Approximately 57% of the reviewed programs were found to support “academic enrichment and after-school activities, early childhood education, service learning and civic engagement, life skills, and sports and recreation” (Blank et al., 2010, p. 7). Programs on the Full-Service Community School continuum not only assist schools in meeting their core instructional mission but provides programming to strengthen the well-being of students, families, and neighborhoods (Blank et al., 2010; Calfee et al., 1998).

**Enrichment activities.** The use of enrichment activities found in after-school programs in some instances have a greater impact on student outcomes than the academic programming (Eccles & Templeton, 2002). These nonacademic programs yielded increases in students’ academic achievement, school engagement, and high school graduation rates. They also saw decreases in problem behaviors, particularly those related to violence and bullying, and decreases in school dropout rates (Eccles & Templeton, 2002). The researchers attributed the students’ success to enhanced social supports, caring relationships with adults, and leadership opportunities to name of few.

There is significant evidence to suggest that involvement in extracurricular activities is associated with school engagement and achievement (Blank et al., 2003; Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsey, 1999; Gerber, 1996; Jordan & Nettles, 1999;
Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). In a study of 35 recommended elementary and middle school
after-school programs, the researchers attributed positive academic outcomes as well as
social and behavioral outcomes on recreational (exercise) and enrichment activities that
included high-quality arts programming (Reisner et al., 2007). Birmingham, Pechman,
Russell, and Mielke (2005) examined the shared features of high-quality programs and
concluded that programs offering a broad array of enrichment activities were impactful
because they provided students the opportunity to experience something different and to
master a new skill, such as dancing or art.

**Family and Community Engagement**

The third pillar, family and community engagement, is defined as culturally and
linguistically responsive activities designed to enhance student learning by empowering
the adults and community members affiliated with students enrolled in the Community
Learning Center program (Melnick, Cook-Harvey, & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In the
report, *Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of*
*The Evidence*, similar characteristics between Community Learning Center and high-
quality schools included providing students which fostering strong ties among families
and community members. They found that strong connections between schools and out of
school time programs, along with strong community collaboration, were crucial to the
success of the initiative (Maier et al., 2017). Additionally, Community Learning Centers
should provide supports that enhance parental involvement. There are numerous
standards designed to support this initiative.

Dr. Joyce Epstein (2001) compiled research on the best practice standards for
family involvement programs. This research resulted in the identification of Epstein's
Framework of Six Types of Involvement for Parents. The framework recommends that programming focus on six areas: parenting education, communication, engagement, at-home learning, decision-making opportunities, and community collaboration (Epstein, 2001). To implement Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement requires program designers to have an understanding of the families they seek to support (Epstein et al., 2002). To build family-school connections Community Learning Center staff must intentionally engage and seek understanding about the students and families they support. It is important to design a program that recognizes parents as partners and collaborators

**Parenting education.** The first area identified was parenting education. Family learning series could include instruction on health and safety, nutrition, self-regulation - discipline, school readiness (Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000; Epstein, 1987; Ferguson, 2004) as well as a discussion on postsecondary opportunities (Duncan, 2002; Wherry, 2002). It was also recommended that leadership training be provided for parents to support the development of their voice in the school and the decision-making structures within the Community Learning Center context (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, 2017b). Barriers to involvement are often primarily attributed to limited resources, but also can originate from the negative beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes towards families (Liontos, 1992).

**Communication.** The second area is communication between home and school. Engagement should allow for culturally and linguistically appropriate communication to occur between school and families (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a). The establishment of regular and meaningful communication between the home and school ensures that families are informed about school programs and children’s progress. Often
school staff do not effectively communicate with their parents’ because there is a mismatch between the communication styles of families, guardians and school staff, this is primarily due to their cultural and language differences (Caplan, 2000). Studies conducted on the best forms of communication and engagements with parents in support for school improvement, included phone calls home, face-to-face meetings, and teacher-parent partnerships (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2012; Maier et al., 2017). It is suggested that to increase access and to improve student outcomes of children in underserved communities, it is important to streamline communication, ensure visibility, provide resources via communication and/or websites, host informational meetings, and create policies to match the language needs of diverse communities (Maier et al., 2017).

**Engagement.** The third area is the engagement of family with in-school activities such as volunteering. Family members should be identified to serve as volunteers in the classroom and to help with field trips (Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000; Epstein, 1987; Ferguson, 2004). In some instances, providing monetary support may be necessary for their attendance, because many parents work hourly jobs and they cannot afford to take-off. There may be a lack of transportation and child care that also keeps families from participating (Caplan, 2000). Research has shown engagement with the schools supports improved communication between school and families, development of reading habits, increased student motivation, reduction in behavioral problems, and improvement of social-emotional factors (Castro et al., 2015; Niehaus & Addelson, 2014). Research found that parents who were engaged in their school had students who showed gains in English language development and math scores, and these students demonstrated a better overall attitude about their school (Castrechini & London, 2012). These positive
outcomes occurred regardless of students’ ethnic or racial background or socioeconomic status; students were found to make gains when schools involved families (Caplan, 2000; Funkhouse & Gonzalez, 1997; Henderson, 1987).

**At-home learning.** The fourth area is at-home learning activities. The intentional training of family members on home-based learning activities empowers parents (Caplan, 2000; Epstein, 1987; Ferguson, 2004). These learning opportunities should be conducted in an accessible manner that does not demean the participants and should be intentionally designed to make sure parents see themselves as partners and collaborators. As partners and collaborators, parents can provide information and serve as invaluable funds of knowledge to assist leadership and counter potential barriers to student and family engagement (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a). In some instances, the parent may not have the academic acuity for the assignment, but training can be provided on how to provide helpful feedback and support. Research has shown that poorly educated families can support learning by engaging their children in conversation about school, monitoring homework, prioritizing knowledge acquisition and distinctly articulating the importance of education for their future success (Caplan, 2000; Melnick et al., 2017). Researchers analyzed 37 family engagement studies and they found that attendance and participation in school activities, while important, have substantially less impact than parental expectations for their children (Castro et al., 2015).

**Decision-making opportunities.** The fifth area is to provide families with decision-making opportunities. Families should view themselves as partners in the decision-making process on educational decisions that have an impact on their child (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, 2017b). Researchers identified that the most
successful type of parental involvement programs identified to promote academic gains were ones that emphasized a teacher-parent partnership. These programs did not use a “one and done” workshop model, but promoted the idea of parents and teachers collaborating to develop “common strategies, rules, guidelines, and expectations to support the student” (Maier et al., 2017, p. 57) and hold participatory roles in parent-teacher-student organizations, advisory councils, and school committees (Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000; Epstein, 1987).

Community collaboration. Community collaboration requires the formation of connections with local agencies, businesses, religious organizations, cultural groups, and community organizations with the common goal that everyone needs to share responsibility for students’ future success (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a). This participation is not only to advocate for their support with activities or programming in the school, but also to provide instruction on how to engage in efforts to address issues of concern within the community as they apply to the short- and long-term benefit of students (Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000; Epstein, 1987). For example, schools can set up programs with local merchants to offer discounts that families can earn through their involvement with the school (Duncan, 2002). Educational scholars have identified three features that promote and sustain healthy school community partnerships - shared vision, diverse partnerships, and inclusive data processing (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010). Collaboration is the sole focus of the fourth pillar.

Collaboration

Collaboration with individuals, educational authorities, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, community networks, and business groups provide strategic
alliances that collectively have the ability to achieve a common vision. Establishing a shared vision between schools, community partners, and parents minimizes the activation of competing agendas. To do this, it is important to engage with three theoretical ideas. The first theoretical idea is "negotiated order." Negotiated order is the act of establishing the rules of engagement, both dependence and interdependence, that exist between the organizations (Goodlad, 1984; Gray, 1989). The second theoretical idea is to seek understanding of the factors that facilitate or limit collaboration. O'Looney (1995) provided a useful organizer that suggests that factors are related to environmental, organizational, and personnel contexts. The last theoretical idea is to establish a clear and complete understanding of the programs’ structural and interpersonal components (Gray, 1989; Tjosvold, 1986). In doing so, it is important that it is compiled and documented. This can and should occur within the context of a memorandum between the lead agency and collaborating community partners. Within the collaboration process there are two areas that need to be considered—diverse partnerships and the use of inclusive data processing.

**Diverse partnerships.** Often Full-Service Community School programs have inter-organizational clauses that require collaborations to provide nutrition services, medical care, student leisure activities, in-service professional learning for program staff, school teachers, and parents. These inter-agency collaborations allow for an increase in resources, funding, and knowledge (Mattesich & Monsey, 1992). There is a benefit for bringing in a range of partners to support the entirety of the program to include, but not limited to, philanthropic organizations that provide additional funding sources, higher educational institutions for expertise, professional development and program volunteers,
and businesses for resources and mentorships. To do this effectively it may require that you engage in inclusive data processing.

**Inclusive data processing.** Inclusive data processing expects the school, and collaborator, to collaboratively work to form an alignment between the vision, goals, indicators, programming components and evaluation mechanism that assess the outputs and inform the impact. In addition, it also expects the collaborations themselves to be considered during the analysis process. For example, a research study was conducted on an aggression management curriculum in an afterschool program. The school health staff collaborated with community health coalition to implement an aggression management curriculum in an elementary afterschool program (Staeker et al., 2015). The program did not have strong statistical results, but the researchers felt the partnership between the school health/social services staff and the community mental health coalition expanded everyone's knowledge base and garnered a greater appreciation for each other’s scope of practice as well as provided the school with insight into evidence-based violence prevention programming. Based on this these findings a programmatic expectation was put in place for the school health staff and community health coalition to partner and determine a more effective approach (Staeker et al., 2015).
CHAPTER 3
Methodology

The research-based practices outlined in Chapter 2 provide a foundation for constructing a Full-Service Community School program guided by an informed theory of change. An effective program has the potential to provide equitable opportunities for students in support of academic and social-emotional growth. The importance of equitable opportunities for students in poverty drives the need for research. However, the implementation of reliable processes drives the need for effective program evaluation. This chapter will outline the methodology used for the program evaluation.

The program evaluation was formative in nature. The goal was to establish foundational information that would be used to do a number of things: refine the programming and support the creation of a summative evaluation process for the Community Learning Center program that serves students and families attending elementary school. The lead stakeholder for the program was Education Fund. The Education Fund, is the non-profit arm of the school district, this institution has their own governing body, separate from the district school structure, and their primary mission is to raise funds in support of instructional programming within the district. As discussed in Chapter 1, the purpose of the program evaluation was to establish the Theory of Change that will serve to guide the Full-Service Community Schools program at Elementary.
Theory of Change

The Theory of Change is a process that seeks to not only identity the parts of the program but also inform the processes (Organizational Research Services, 2004). To inform the process it requires entities to define all the necessary and sufficient conditions required to bring about the long-term outcomes. For this evaluation, the focus was on establishing the components and crafting an illustrated program design. In most instances, there was significant specificity in the design but due to the constructivist nature high levels of specificity some areas were not determined. The other goal of this evaluation was to provide insight into the how and why a desired change is expected to happen within the context of the inter-related components. This information will inform the Theory of Change pathway establishment process.

Evaluation Questions

The questions guiding the program evaluation were built to determine Yin’s (2014) “how” and “why” question foundation:

1. What are the program stakeholders’ perception of the impact of the community learning center located at Elementary?
2. What are the program stakeholders’ perception of the outputs process orientation for the community learning center located at Elementary?
3. What are the activities and links identified by program stakeholders for the community learning center located at Elementary?

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9 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
10 Outcomes
11 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
12 Service utilization and evaluation mechanisms
13 Interventions & Strategies
14 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
4. What are the program stakeholders' perception of the inputs identified to support program implementation of the community learning center at Elementary?

The first question was developed in response to the Theory of Change. The Casey Foundation recommended an approach that requires thinking backwards from longer to the intermediate to the early term change (Organizational Research Services, 2004). Therefore, the evaluation had to first establish the impact of the program. Establishing the program impact explains the cause for the desired change and connects the steps on the “pathway of change.” As this was a constructivist approach, it was determined that program impact would be established through the identification of program needs instead of using the identified program priorities. The constructed program needs will provide insight into the perceived desired change—impact. The second question informs the outcomes needed to bring about the impact. The third question creates an opportunity to identify the program activities and determine if there are supporting links between program activities and the outcomes, they are expected to produce. The fourth and final question informs the contextual or environmental factors needed to support or hinder progress toward the realization of the program’s Theory of Change.

**Evaluation Model**

Program evaluations are the collection of information about program elements and outcome with the purpose of improving program effectiveness, informing program decisions, and making judgments on a program’s value and worth as a means for determining their future (Patton, 1987). It is a relatively new discipline. Mertens and Wilson (2012) explain that program evaluations are a “relatively young discipline” built

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15 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
16 Resources
upon various other disciplines and research methodologies (p. v). Evaluation is similar to traditional academic research, but it is inherently tied to politics because the information is often used to specifically drive policy and programming. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1999) held that “effective program evaluation is a systematic way to improve and account for public health actions by involving procedures that are useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate” (p. 1).

This study focused on a formative evaluation as requested of the District Foundation that served as the lead agency for the Community Learning Center program. The insight from this evaluation will be used to drive future policy and provide awareness into processes that support program effectiveness. According to Patton (1987, 2015), a formative evaluation goal is to improve program function, while a summative evaluation should determine if the desired outcomes were achieved and can be attributed to the revised program.

**Evaluation Paradigm**

The program evaluation was designed using the responsive evaluation approach found within the constructivist branch of qualitative inquiry. The constructivist approach was non-traditional and premised on the belief that everything in the world was a construct, and an evaluator or researcher should seek to understand the identified phenomenon. In the case of this program evaluation, the evaluation was limited to one case study. The case study sought to understand the Theory of Change for a Full-Service Community School supporting elementary students, and parents, who lived in the community. The Theory of Change will be presented using a visual diagram, a logic
model (Figure 2 in Appendix A) and a narrative explanation to depict the relationships between initiative strategies and intended results.

The responsive evaluation approach was chosen because it was premised on responding to the authentic needs of the stakeholders. Abma and Stake (2001) discussed responsive evaluation within the context of ethical “terms of endearment” (p. 14). The “terms of endearment” was the focus of agreements, negotiated meanings, and not the taken-for-granted stances of all participants and stakeholders involved in the evaluation. Guba and Lincoln (1981) explained that a responsive evaluation was “an emergent form of evaluation that takes as its organizer the concerns and issues of stake holding audiences” (p. 23) involved in the evaluation. As the purpose of the evaluation was to identify program elements and determine the perceived theory of change, participants consisted of stakeholders that were both benefactors and beneficiaries of the program.

**Case Studies**

The case study approach was adopted for three primary reasons. First, case study designs are highly supported by the responsive evaluation approach. Stake (2005) pointed out that case study research is a concentrated enquiry into a single case and advocates the selection of atypical cases. Atypical cases are not satisfactorily explained, because they have the ability to extend, reformulate and challenge theory, providing insight into social reality. Second, the Full-Service Community School program that was evaluated was singularly designed to meet the needs of the students and school community. Therefore, the Theory of Change was expected to differ, depending on the needs of the students and community. Yin (2003, 2016) identified five reasons for using a single case study and one reason was that it was best used to analyze atypical cases where the objective was to
capture commonplace situations that may not be replicable. Third, a case study enabled triangulation of data by using three methods of data collection: document review, interviewing and observation.

**Program Evaluation Standards**

The design and data collection procedures were developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations (Yarborough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011) and described by Mertens & Wilson (2012). These standards were developed with input from the American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Council on Measurement in Education along with 12 other organizations that focus on education and are interested in ensuring the authenticity of program evaluations. The standards are met to promote feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and meta-evaluation for evaluation of education and related programs.

**Research Design**

The lead stakeholders expressed a desire to evaluate if their program theory was responsive to the five identified program priorities. They requested that close consideration be given to their collaborating partners. Therefore, they wanted the evaluator to determine the “merit” of the design. Upon additional conversation with the lead stakeholders, it was clear that they were unable to clearly explain their Theory of Change which limited their ability to determine program “merit”. The nature of this evaluation is formative because it seeks to define the program processes in support of program improvement. The lead stakeholder and evaluator recognized that measuring program outcomes was futile without determining how the processes and attributes of the
program impact the outcome. An evaluation to determine the Theory of Change requires the evaluator to seek program context. The evaluator wanted to use this information to refine current programming, assess future program needs, and produce evaluations focused on program effectiveness. In addition, there were considerations for program expansion and future policy that could be influenced by insight from this evaluation.

**Evaluator’s Role**

During the initial meeting with the president of the Education Fund a negotiated purpose was identified. When the evaluator and key stakeholder identified the evaluation questions, there was significant reflection on what relevant information was needed for the program to prosper. The evaluator, with input from the president of the Education Fund, designed a process that was inclusive of participating stakeholders. To ensure that the design took into consideration the values of the stakeholders, additional insight was given by the Education Fund specialist who provided direct oversight of the program. The evaluator believed it important to obtain input. However, because the program evaluation was engaged in a qualitative study using a constant comparative analysis process, and the onboarding questions were carefully tailored, the evaluator did not want to taint the process. To do this, the evaluator chose the Robert Stake’s responsive evaluation and case study approach.

During the negotiating process, it was determined that an identification of the core program components being implemented was needed. The stakeholders did not want to engage in a quantitative study because they hoped to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, it was determined that in addition to evaluating the core program elements, the evaluator would seek insight into the program’s Theory of
Change. The evaluator made sure that focus was maintained not only on the identification of program components, but that knowledge about the rationale for the Theory of Change that acted as drivers for the identified logic components, was gathered.

Stake (1975) identified 12 prominent events that undergird the responsive evaluation approach: (1) dialogue with stakeholders to determine focus; (2) identify program scope; (3) provide an overview of program activities; (4) discover program purpose and concerns; (5) conceptualize issues; (6) identify data needs, issues; (7) select observers, judges, instruments; (8) observe antecedents, transactions, and outcomes; (9) theme information; (10) confirm, validate, attempt to disconfirm; (11) format for audience use; and (12) assemble formal reports. Stake (2004) believed that responsive evaluation plans should not be divided into phases because observation and feedback continue and were an essential function from the beginning to the end of the program evaluation process (Stake, 2004). Evaluators were expected to be in a continuous state of formulation and reformulation as they experienced and learned additional information from stakeholders. Therefore, the design was not divided into the 12 phases, but each of the 12 prominent events were discussed in the findings section of the paper. An overview of how the evaluator addressed each of the 12 prominent events is set forth below.

**Stake’s 12 Prominent Events**

For the study, prominent events one\textsuperscript{17} and two\textsuperscript{18} were completed by the evaluator during the initial negotiations with Education Funds president. To address prominent events three\textsuperscript{19} and four\textsuperscript{20} the evaluator engaged in a three-cycle constant comparative

\textsuperscript{17} Talk with Stakeholders to Determine Focus.  
\textsuperscript{18} Identify the program scope.  
\textsuperscript{19} Provide an Overview of Program activities.  
\textsuperscript{20} Discover program purpose and concern.
analysis. Figure 3 provides an overview of the three-cycle constant comparative process designed in response to Stake’s 12 prominent events. A more in-depth overview is provided in the remainder of this section.

Figure 3. An overview of the three-cycle constant comparative process used to conceptualize the programs logic model. Each box provides an overview of the data collection and analysis process. The process is based on Robert Stake’s 12 Prominent Events.

During the first cycle the evaluator conducted interviews and coded the findings. The stakeholders were interviewed in two rounds. The first round of interviews included stakeholders determined as the least knowledgeable about the Theory of Change design. The second round of interviews consisted of stakeholders identified as the most knowledgeable about the program design. Interviewing the least influential stakeholders

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21 School principal, parents, and teachers.
22 Site coordinator & HEF coordinator.
allowed the evaluator to grow an understanding of the program without front-loading their knowledge base.

The conceptualization of the program began during event five\textsuperscript{23}. During event five the evaluator interviewed stakeholders and analyzed the information to establish program elements, derive perceived placement of elements on the logic model and to begin gathering insight into the theoretical context of the program. During event, six\textsuperscript{24} limitations were discerned. Using the determined limitations, the evaluator identified areas of weakness in the findings. During event seven\textsuperscript{25} the evaluator identified the areas of concerns and established parameters and protocols for strengthening the analysis. This included an identification of the most appropriate methods that addressed the weakness, establishing a feasible data collection method and putting in place parameters for judgment. The evaluator collected data using the document review and observation method.

Responsive evaluations are more participatory in nature and it was the evaluator's responsibility to ensure that the program design elicited information from diverse constituencies and different stakeholders (Stake, 1975). Facilitating the established parameters and protocols was all a part of event eight\textsuperscript{26}. The information derived from event eight was analyzed and themed during event nine\textsuperscript{27}. The evaluator themed the information into an illustrated draft logic model (Figure 4 in Appendix A) as well as a list of causal if-then link statements. The causal if-then link statements were designed to highlight potential beliefs of the program beyond the determination of program elements.

\textsuperscript{23} Conceptualize Issues.
\textsuperscript{24} Identify data needs and issues.
\textsuperscript{25} Select Observers, Judges and Instruments.
\textsuperscript{26} Observe antecedents, transactions and outcomes.
\textsuperscript{27} Theme information.
During event 10\textsuperscript{28} the evaluator needed to further assess the quality of the findings. To do this, the evaluator engaged in two forms of member checking—individual and group. Prior to both, the evaluator established a feasible data collection method and put in place parameters for judgment. Next the evaluator met one-on-one with key stakeholders and shared the category codes and the casual if-then link statements. The participants were given an opportunity to answer specific questions as well as provide additional insight into the illustrated and casual if-then link statements. Revisions were made based on insight from the individual member check process. Following the individual member checks, the evaluator engaged focus groups for a second member check.

The second member check consisted of a group of stakeholders that were both beneficiaries and benefactors of the program. Parameters and judgments were set for the member check prior to the group meeting. The stakeholders were given a visual model and a list of category codes with definitions that were used to create the illustrated model. In addition, the focus group was provided with the revised causal if-then link statements. The creation of both responded to event 11.\textsuperscript{29} The stakeholders engaged in a number of activities designed to validate, confirm or disconfirm findings from the analysis. The evaluator chose to engage in two member checks, because the evaluator wanted to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings as well as ensure a high level of inclusivity among stakeholders who participated in the program evaluation. In addition, the evaluator wanted to provide an opportunity for other program stakeholders to have a voice. Stake (2004) asserts that program evaluations should be responsive, inclusive, and

\textsuperscript{28} Confirm, validate and attempt to disconfirm.

\textsuperscript{29} Format for audience.
authentically participatory (Stake, 2004). Based on feedback, revisions were made, and a narrative of the illustrated logic model and the causal if-then links are provided in Chapter 5. Event 12 is not included in this paper. The evaluator plans to create a formalized report, develop a presentation on the findings, and provide recommendations. The final report and recommendations will be provided to the President of the Education Fund and the President of the Board of Directors for the Education Fund.

Participants

To ensure appropriate participants, the program evaluation used purposeful sampling. Creswell (2013) explained that purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to achieve representativeness of the context and to capture heterogeneity of the population—both important considerations for the evaluation. Purposeful sampling allows the evaluator to actively identify participants with the most information from each stakeholder group. The participants/stakeholders were those individuals known to have a significant amount of insight (Devers & Frankel, 2000). The stakeholder's groups that were included in the interviews consisted of Program Leadership, Site-Based Leadership, Participating Parents, Program Teachers, and Community-Based partner(s). They were listed from the most to the least knowledgeable.

The program evaluation was designed with the expectation that one person would be interviewed from each stakeholder group. A total of 10 people participated in a structured interview. Charmaz (2014) determined that the collection of small samples for qualitative data could be impactful if the researcher (evaluator) conducted quality interviews and engaged in-depth analysis of the information. Charmaz (2014) also stated that it required the selection of appropriate participants (Bryant, 2003; Glaser, 1978;

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30 Assemble formal reports.
incorporated the use of expert sampling and convenience sampling that allowed a researcher (evaluator) to have appropriate participants and diverse perspectives.

Expert sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique used to glean knowledge from individuals that have particular expertise. Purposive sampling was useful for this study because the researcher was allowed to select “individuals and sites for study because they [could] purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). The President of Education Fund identified three benefactors he believed to be program experts. The designated experts included the Education Fund program coordinator, Education Fund site coordinator, and the Education Fund President.

Convenience sampling was used to identify the beneficiary participants because it allowed for access, which made it easier to collect data (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, allowed the evaluator to identify individuals from stakeholder groups that were accessible and within the proximity of the researcher. The stakeholders that were chosen for convenience included parents who have students enrolled in the Community Learning Center program, Program Teachers and Day-School Staff.

In the original design, the evaluator set forward a goal to try and have diverse representation from the beneficiary participants. The goal for diversity was to ensure that attention was given to a breadth of individuals engaged in the program. Due to the racial demographics of the program participants, there was limited racial and/or ethnic diversity. As a result, all of the parents were of the same racial background—Black.
Financial and religious data were not collected. Most of the teachers were White females. Therefore, the diversity of participants was based on gender and generation. Mothers and one father participated, as well as one male and two female teachers. In addition, there was participation from district support and school-based support staff. Overall the goal of diversity was met.

Expert sampling and convenience sampling were not used for the formation of the focus group. The President of the Education Fund requested that it be an open event. To ensure that the results were reliable and the findings reasonable, the evaluator agreed. The focus group included both direct and indirect beneficiaries. Education Fund Leadership, site coordinator, parents of participating students, program teachers, day school teachers and support staff. Community-based partners and non-participating parents were invited but none attended.

**Sources of Data**

During the data collection phase, the views of program stakeholders affiliated with the program during the 2018-2019 academic year were compiled. The evaluation used a combination of data sources that aligned with the methodological evaluation framework—responsive evaluation and case study. The data sources included: semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, unstructured observations, document reviews, and member checks. The collected data and analysis allowed the evaluator a nuanced appreciation about the attitudes and perspectives held by diverse stakeholders.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

The semi-structured interviews informed events three and four. Patton (1987) defined the interview method as the effort to get into the inner world of a person and to
understand and grasp the events from their perspective. Stake (2004) suggested that stakeholder groups with the least influence be interviewed first. This intentionality ensured that they could formulate their perspective, without the influences of more influential stakeholders (Abma, Baur, & Widdershoven, 2009).

The semi-structured interviews took place face to face. Each interview lasted no longer than one hour. All the participants were (a) informed at the beginning of the interview that participation was voluntary and that they could stop the interview whenever they wished; (b) asked to sign a document granting permission to tape the interview; (c) provided with the steps identified to maintain their privacy; and (d) asked if they granted permission to have the interview taped. The participants who were eligible for the stipend were informed about the stipend. The interview was carried out during a mutually agreed upon time at the school. All follow-up interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewees. The interviews were given an opportunity to review the transcriptions of the interview and allowed to make changes. No participants chose to make changes. Following the two rounds of interviews the evaluator engaged in three unstructured, untapped interviews at the school. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B. Consent for Participation in the Research Interviews can be found in Appendix C.

**Audio recording.** The audio recording of the interviews where digitally transmitted into a cellphone and sent to a company that transcribed the audio recording. The professional organization identified to transcribe the text was asked to number the lines of the text to support the identification of information during analysis and insert notations such as pauses, laughter, or crying. The transcriptions were reviewed and all
mistakes were corrected. In addition, other contextual information that might have affected the participant (e.g., temperature or comfort of the room) was cited in the interview field notes collected by the evaluator. This was important because the evaluator needed to not only listen to what was spoken but also to pay attention to what was not stated. The evaluator believed that this style of observation could provide insight during the data interpretation (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

**Participant stipend.** For the initial interview process, all participating teachers and parents were given $25 Visa cards and an additional $10 Visa card if they participated in a follow-up interview. The $25 amount was purposeful because it was nominal enough that it could not be interpreted to place undue influence on the participants. It was agreed that no monetary compensation would be offered to individuals employed by the Education Fund or the school district. Focus group participants were provided with dinner and additional food to take home for their children or spouses.

**Document Review**

During previous events the evaluator analyzed the findings and began to make theoretical hypothesis. During event ten the primary goal was to assess the quality of findings. This occurred when there was a document review. The parameters, protocols, and judgment were identified during event seven. The actual document reviews took place during event eight.

When conducting the document review, the evaluator reviewed existing documents that were internal to the program. The information found within the documents conveyed meaning (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 291) about the program and
supported the validation of findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the document review should not consist of official papers that were written or recorded for the sole purpose of informing the evaluation. The evaluator reviewed documents from 2018 and 2019 and analyzed lesson plans, newsletters, flyers, sign-in sheets, public reports, and grant information.

**Unstructured Observations**

Another way the evaluator analyzed the findings was in event ten where the evaluator engaged in unstructured observations. Stake (2004) believed that evaluators should write as insiders and engage in experiences that provide a contextual understanding for the reader. He believed that this approach could only be done by directly interacting and observing the environment being evaluated. The parameters, protocols, and judgments were identified during event seven and the unstructured observations took place during event eight. Punch (1998) explained that unstructured observations were a way to recognize the complex behavior of people. The evaluator engaged as an active participant for most of the observations.

**Unstructured Interviews**

Unstructured interviews were used to clarify information for the evaluator. After the unstructured observations, the evaluator had developed enough of an understanding of the phenomenon but still needed to gain clarity about the presenting findings. Patton (2002) described unstructured interviews as a natural extension of participant observation. He recognized that unstructured interviews often occur as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork.
Following the document reviews and observations, the evaluator found it necessary to engage in clarifying conversations with participants. In addition, there were several spontaneous discussions that did not have a pre-determined focus. At the request of the participants the interviews were not taped. The participating interviewees were all individuals who had participated in the structured interviews and signed the participant agreement form. These clarifying and spontaneous conversations provided insight into the program’s operations and aspects of their undergirding belief systems. Information gained from these discussions was documented in the evaluator’s memo notes. If any notes were taken during the unstructured interviews the individuals were given an opportunity to read the written notes.

**Member Checking**

To support the evaluation goal of being responsive, inclusive, and authentically participatory (Stake, 2004) the program evaluation design includes member checking. Two types of member checks were conducted by the evaluator—individual and focus group. Parameters, protocols, and judgments were identified for both forms of member-checking. The findings not only served to validate, confirm, or disconfirm but were designed to engage stakeholders. The focus group provided the evaluator with an opportunity to openly share information, as appropriate, with stakeholders and request feedback (Merriam, 2009). The individual and focus group further contextualized the program.
Confidence: Credibility and Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (2000) used the terms credibility and trustworthiness as measures for the rigor of qualitative research. The researcher should design an evaluation that ensures the quality of the conclusions and answers the question, “Did I get it right?” (Crotty, 1998, p. 134). An evaluator is expected to design an evaluation with parameters in support of credibility. Establishing these parameters for credibility supports the authentication of findings from the evaluation. In addition, parameters are needed for the establishment of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness informs the research process and supports credibility (Saldaña, 2011). The following are elements found within this program evaluation design: data triangulation (validity), member checking (transferability), external audit (dependability), and an analysis narrative (confirmability).

Data Triangulation (Validity)

Data triangulation refers to the collection of multiple types of data as a means for developing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena (Creswell, 2013). It allows the evaluator to compare themes derived from different kinds of data to see whether they corroborate (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Saldaña, 2011; Silverman, 2015). This program evaluation included three data collection methods—interviews, observations, and documents. The use of triangulation assisted with minimizing the risks regarding the limitations and bias of the study and maximizes the validity of the study (Maxwell, 1992; Yin, 2016).

Member Checking (Transferability)

In support of transferability, the evaluator used the member checking strategy (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Saldaña, 2011) during cycle
one and cycle three. In cycle one the evaluator asked participants to review statements or
interview transcriptions to ensure their accuracy (Gall et al., 2007). At two different
points in the program evaluation, the participants’ statements were reviewed. The first
point took place during the interview. The interviewer summarized the participants’
statements throughout the interview and ask them to confirm. The confirmation was to
ensure that what was said accurately depicted the participants’ beliefs. The second time
occurred after the interviews were transcribed and each participant was asked to verify
and confirm the contents of their interviews. The confirmation approach was highly
recommended by evaluators within the constructivist branch, because it ensured
stakeholders’ experiences were not distorted by personal agendas or biases of the
researcher (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). In cycle three the evaluator
first asked individuals to review the analysis for accuracy and later engaged a small focus
group to further validate the analysis.

**External Audit (Dependability)**

To establish dependability, the evaluator had an outside researcher/auditor
carry out an external audit of the findings (Creswell, 2003). Savin-Baden and Major
(2013) identified the importance of having an external auditor review the data analysis
process. A statistics professor audited the data analysis process. The outside auditor was
asked to: (a) check to see if the codes were themed accurately, (b) determine if the codes
were appropriately developed and (c) provide additional insight into the analysis process
to ensure accuracy. The auditor was not familiar with Full Service Community School
programs and only provided feedback on the coding process and contextual framing.
Following the completion of the external audit, the outside auditor wrote a letter affirming support of the analysis.

**Ethical Considerations**

**Institutional Review Board**

Upon defense of the dissertation proposal to a committee comprised of three faculty members, the researcher submitted an application to the College of William and Mary Institutional Review Board (IRB). Permission was also requested from the Director of Research of the school district; although no student data were collected, this is a requirement set forward for all non-school-related research. Informed consent was required from all interviewees. Precautions were taken to ensure that no one could tie comments to a particular interviewee. Personal information about the interviewees was not made public, nor will information about the district or school location, be included on any official documents.

**Program Evaluation Standards**

The program evaluation standards put forward by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations to ensure utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy were referenced throughout the program evaluation design (Mertens & Wilson, 2012; Yarborough et al., 2011). Specific examples of adherence to the program evaluation are provided below along with a visual that details how they were considered during the 12 prominent events. Specific Examples of the adherence to program evaluation standards:

- **Utility**: The evaluator developed a relationship with the on-site CLC staff by visiting the program and explaining the goal of the evaluation prior to beginning the interviews for
the evaluation. The evaluator would have liked to visit more prior to the evaluation but
due to the evaluator’s position in the district there was a concern that excessive,
unscheduled visits, would be misinterpreted. In addition, during the evaluation, the
evaluator would often assist with coordination or clean-up. The evaluator believed that
this set-forward earnest intent because everyone was open and engaging throughout the
process.

• Feasibility: The evaluator allowed the participants to designate time and place for the
  interviews.

• Propriety: The evaluator adhered to all previously-noted ethical guidelines, the evaluator
  also noted the cultural and economic circumstances that were unique to the school.
  These unique features helped to shape the evaluation findings.

• Accuracy: The research reviewed a significant amount of literature and engaged in a
  comprehensive constant comparative analysis process that consisted of interviews,
  document reviews and observations in an effort to provide the sufficient context, which
  is essential to information trustworthiness. The evaluator engaged in ongoing dialogue
  with the stakeholders (per the constructivist paradigm) and made adjustments to the
  evaluation questions based on feedback and findings.

• Meta-evaluation: The study was supervised by an experienced faculty committee that
  ensured the evaluation met the standards of quality.
Figure 5. Outlines the efforts made by the evaluator to honor the program evaluation standards put forward by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluations when developing a constant-comparative analysis process premised on Robert Stake’s 12 prominent events.

Data Analyses Process

During event five the evaluator was expected to analyze the information from the interviews and begin to derive program elements. During the analysis process, raw information was reduced and sifted through to discern the significant from the trivia, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed (Patton, 2015). The responsive evaluation approach required the evaluator to engage in a constant-comparative method (Charmaz, 2014). The constant-comparative analysis method used the Responsive Evaluation Approach model to create a three-cycle analysis process. The evaluator used this method to engage in a continuously growing process—each stage after time is transformed into the next- earlier stages remain in operation simultaneously throughout the analysis, and each provides continuous insight into the identified phenomenon.
Poggenpoel (1998) identified four stages for processing data using a constant-comparative method. The first stage required comparing units that are applicable to each category. The evaluator was expected to separately review the units of information and place them together in a provisional category. The categories were to be both descriptive and explanatory. The second stage involved integrating categories and their properties. The evaluator was expected to compare the units in the identified categories with properties established for the headlining category. The third stage was category delimitation. The number of categories is reduced and the categories embrace more and become more saturated. The fourth stage was writing the construction. A report was written on the results and participants were asked to validate the results. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) summarized, in the constant comparative method, the researcher simultaneously codes and analyses data in order to develop concepts; by continually comparing specific incidents in the data, the researcher refines these concepts, identifies their properties, explores their relationships with one another, and integrates them into a coherent explanatory model. (p. 126)

During the analysis process the evaluator was able to (1) identify categories (2) compare incidents applicable to each category (3) integrate categories and their properties to formulate a hypothesis about a theory (4) delimit the hypothesized theory, and (5) produce a visual theory. The visual theory was the creation of an illustrated logic model.

Cycle One

In cycle one the evaluator focused on the systematic collection of information about the who, what and when of the phenomenon being studied. To analyze and
conceptualize the information, the evaluator had to effectively code the information. Coding was not just labeling, it was linking: “It leads you from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 137). The evaluator was expected to assess the interview text and continually ask questions about the relationship between the presenting codes.

Diverse stakeholders were identified to ensure a broad range of representation. The evaluation design intentionally identified the need to have stakeholders participate who were both providers, and beneficiaries of Community Learning Centers. The stakeholder groups were separated. Stakeholder Group 1 consisted of individuals who were not involved in the program design but were critical stakeholders because they benefitted from the program. This stakeholder group only went through the first two cycles of coding analysis. These stakeholders may not have had intimate knowledge of the program design, but had personal engagement with the phenomenon which provided a distinct perspective on their perception of how the program was designed.

The interviews were analyzed using a seven-step initial coding process. The steps included line-by-line coding, to develop emergent coding. The emergent codes were refined into category codes. The category codes were strengthened by the identification of vivo codes in accordance with their definitions. Vivo coding required the evaluator, or researcher reviewing the text to identify verbatim statements from the interview text, to support the reason for assigning the process code. The delineation of information served as validation for the evaluators’ or researchers’ assertions about the phenomenon (Saldaña, 2016). In addition, the evaluator engaged in conceptual coding.
A conceptual coding process was designed to ensure all of the categories were significant to the point of saturation, appropriately placed on the logic model, and viewed through a broad lens to derive insight into the program's theory of change. The evaluator reviewed the transcripts looking for verbiage, concepts, or beliefs that supported the placement of the category code into a component. Saldaña (2016) stated that an evaluator should initially establish an “inventory of parts” by “arranging the parts appropriately on the floor before assembling” (p. 234).

Following the initial coding process, the evaluator wanted to ensure saturation before engaging in the “substantive element of conceptuality” (Chametzky, 2016, p. 170) that took place in cycle two. Magnitude coding required a supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code to be included with the existing coded datum to “indicate intensity, frequency, direction, or presence of identifiable content” (Saldaña, 2013, pp. 72-73). The spreadsheet denoted the identified codes, along with the number of times they were found in each interview. This information provided insight into the significance of identified processes and allowed the evaluator to refine the number of categories.

The evaluator further used the transcripts to support the identification of process, allowing the evaluator additional insight. It was recommended to “re-examine your raw data several times during your analysis; each time you study it, you do so with a different objective and with a different eye” (Chametzky, 2016, p. 169). All of the information formulated in cycle one was used to drive the analysis in cycle two.
Cycle Two

In cycle two the evaluator incorporated six principles from Stake’s (2004) Responsive Evaluation Approach into the constant comparative process (a) conceptualize issues; (b) identify data needs, issues; (c) select observers, judges, instruments; (d) observe antecedents, transactions, and outcomes; and (e) theme information. A model of the approach is found in Appendix D. The process established by the evaluator included the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, understanding that “coding is usually a mixture of data [summation] and data complication …breaking the data apart in analytically relevant ways in order to lead toward further questions about the data” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, pp. 29-30). Therefore, each logic model component was viewed separately. This allowed the evaluator to establish the additional context for understanding the program's theory of change.

The evaluator reviewed the identified processes and looked for similarities, characteristics, and dimensions of a category that further provided insight into the context of a phenomenon. Hatch (2002) recommended that one think of patterns not just as stable regularities but as varying forms characterized by similarity (things happen the same way); difference (they occur in predictably different ways); frequency (they often occur or seldom); sequence (they happen in a certain order); correspondence (they occur in relation to other activities or events); and causation (one appears to cause another).

During this cycle, there was a strategic reassembling of data. The identified information assisted in describing the phenomenon on a fundamental level.

During this cycle the causal (causation) codes were determined. Causation coding is used to assist with the determination of “motives, belief systems, world views,
processes, recent histories interrelationships, and the complexity of influences and affects” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 188). Causal categories provide context for the creation of a hypothesis. Concept coding, also known as analytic coding requires that the information be viewed from a macro level (Saldaña, 2016, p. 119).

**Cycle Three**

Cycle three addresses the hypothesis and explores the member checking. The hypothesis proposed must allow for “plausible causes of particular outcomes, and probable outcomes from particular causes” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 189). Illustrating the information (data) may be helpful with the identification of a hypothesis. The use of illustration also allows the evaluator to conceptually put forward information identified during the analysis process.

During this cycle, the evaluator used member checking and information derived from the literature research to validate the patterns found within the analysis process. The role of literature reviews was often debated by researchers using constructivist approach (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Historically researchers using the constructivist paradigm believed that literature review should be conducted after data collection because one was not sure about findings since the information was being constructed. On the other hand, current individuals call for the increased integration of concepts from the literature to be a party of the analysis process (Charmaz, 2017). For this program evaluation, the evaluator chose to write an initial literature review focused on best practices for FSCS program serving students in poverty. The rationale was that the information might need to be referenced during the analysis process to assist with clarifying the information derived
from the data. (Charmaz, 2014, 2017) explained that a literature review was helpful because it was critical, reflective and grounded in reflexivity.

To support the evaluation goal of being responsive, inclusive, and authentically participatory (Stake, 2004) the program evaluation design included member checking. Member checking was used not only to validate the findings, but also used to engage stakeholders further in the process of contextualizing the program. Researchers acknowledged that focus groups served many purposes, and one such purpose was to verify data gathered from other methods (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) and transparently share information with stakeholders, requesting their feedback (Merriam, 2009). The presentation consists of information that was formatted into a logic model, including causal statement using an if-then protocol. For example, *if* we implemented (brief strategy description), including the following specific components (program elements), *then* students would (student outcomes) or parents would (adult behaviors). Direct quotations were provided throughout the presentation to authenticate the formation of the if-then statements. A summary of the findings is found in Chapter 4 and the final illustrated model is in Chapter 5.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations are shortcomings, conditions or influences that cannot be controlled by the researcher (Creswell, 2003). An overall limitation of qualitative research is that most of the findings cannot be generalized to the larger population and participants have a tendency to be self-reflective of their shared experience (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Self-selection of information cannot be controlled because it is the nature of self-reporting. Delimitations define the parameters of the investigation (Creswell, 2003) and
include choices that can be controlled by the researcher. They include population/sample, treatment(s), setting, as well as instrumentation. The program evaluation was conducted on only one program, in one setting, and singularly designed. Therefore, the delimitations were few because the program evaluation was primarily under the control of the researcher. Another area that needs to be noted are potential biases. The potential biases are primarily due to the evaluator’s position as a Director within the public school System. The most prevalent bias is confirmatory bias.

Confirmatory bias occurs when a researcher forms a hypothesis or belief and uses respondents’ information to confirm that beliefs are relevant and reliable while not recognizing evidence that did not support the belief (Bell & Mellor, 2009; Trope & Bassok, 1982). The responsive evaluation program evaluation model supports structuring an open and transparent program evaluation design that allows the findings to be examined and evaluated by stakeholders. This program evaluation was designed to continually reevaluate impressions of respondents and to challenge determined assumptions.
CHAPTER 4

Findings and Analysis

The formative program evaluation design was based on Stake’s (1974, 2004) Responsive Evaluation Approach. This chapter provides an overview of the constant comparative method for data collection and analysis used to inform the evaluator’s understanding of the program's theory of change. The goal of the analysis was to identify the logic of the program and provide context for the phenomenon studied. The logic model included the (1) need for the program—problem statement; (2) input—resources required for the maintenance of the program; (3) activities provided by the program to support the change process; (4) pedagogy and strategies that undergird the programming; (5) output—assumptions showing the perceived relationship between initiative strategies and intended results; (6) intermediate results achieved by the program and the evaluation tool; and (7) impact of the program activities.

The program evaluation design was based on Stake’s (2004) Responsive Evaluation Approach which recommended the use of a constant comparative method for data collection and analysis. The process was divided into three cycles. Each cycle is described in this chapter. The first cycle summarizes the coding process used for the stakeholder interviews. The second cycle provides insight into the analysis of the interviews and the rationale for including the other research methods recommended in the responsive evaluation approach. The third cycle is focused on obtaining additional insight into the phenomenon, validating the causal analysis and affirming the model.
The description in cycle one identifies two of the principles from Stake’s Responsive Evaluation Approach—identifying the program scope and summarizing program activities. In this chapter the evaluator engaged in a constant comparative process to establish local concepts, principles, structural and process features for the phenomenon of interest (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In cycle one the evaluator provided a narrative of the coding process for the first and second round of interviews. The first round of interviews consisted of stakeholders with the least knowledge about the Theory of Change design (school staff, parents, program instructors, and teachers). The second round of interviews consisted of stakeholders identified as the most knowledgeable about the program design (site coordinator, Education Fund Program Coordinator, Education Fund President). Throughout this section the evaluator identified whether it was an inductive or deductive coding analysis process. Braun and Clarke (2006) believed that researchers must articulate when they conduct an inductive or deductive thematic analysis. Cycle two provides a constant comparative narrative overviewing the document and observations identified to further establish context for the phenomena. Cycle three includes an overview of the process used to validate the findings from cycle one and cycle two and the identified assumptions.

Throughout the interview process, the evaluator took field notes. The reflective notes consisted of the evaluator's thoughts and feelings about the experience. There were several self-reflections which discussed how the observation of the phenomena may have affected the individuals interviewed. For example, one field note described the interviewee as being “excited, laughing but expressed high levels of genuineness in their responses.” Corresponding field notes stated that the individuals were not only
appreciative of the program but enjoyed that “someone was finally asking their thoughts.” The information from the field notes were referenced throughout the analysis process.

**Cycle One**

The evaluator engaged in an inductive analysis wanting codes of information to emerge, not align, within a preexisting coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis required the evaluator to engage in a seven-step coding process. The seven-step coding process was designed to construct meaning from the transcripts about the program elements within the phenomenon. Below is an overview of the systematic coding process used to analyze the findings.

**Initial coding.** Step one consisted of the evaluator participating in a line-for-line hybrid coding process. The evaluator highlighted words and statements that provided context for the logic model components—need, input, activities, output. Each component was assigned a different color. Phrases were highlighted or underlined in different colors signifying that more than one component was informed. When two or more codes were ascribed to the same passage it was considered simultaneous coding and was necessitated when the “content of the data suggests multiple meanings” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 94).

In step two, the evaluator typed (cut and pasted) the phrases and statements onto coordinating colored sheets of paper or color coordinated post it notes. The statements were cut out and grouped initially by interview question—responses to each interview question. The grouping was done by associating like words and concepts. For example, interviewees were asked, “What type of activities and programming does the Community Learning Center program offer?” All of the responses to this question were reviewed and
grouped. Interviewees A, B, and D all stated examples of field trips their child or student participated in during the last year. Similar field trips were grouped as emergent codes with brief definitions assigned to them on sticky note. The evaluator later refined the grouping and placed them together into an emergent code called field trips. Field trips were later expanded into the category code—new knowledge exposure.

In step three, the evaluator further refined the emergent codes and the category codes using three lenses—familiarity, difference, and convergence. The words and phrases were viewed holistically to assess for additional emergent codes as well as to begin to refine the emergent codes into category codes. All of the emergent codes were spread out on a table, without consideration for their aligning question, and the evaluator began to refine them. When codes are applied, and reapplied to qualitative data, the process permits data to be “segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked to consolidate meaning and explanation” (Grobich, 2007, p. 21). When appropriate, the evaluator grouped emergent codes into categories and wrote the categories on a sheet of paper with notes about the rationale and potential definitions. For example, the following emerging codes were identified: parent learning, parent night, literacy instruction for parents, student learning presentation with parent training, math literacy night, parent-student learning opportunities, and parent instruction. The evaluator grouped them into one category code—parent student connector. At this point the evaluator began to determine potential category codes. Many of the emergent codes where grouped into category codes. In some cases, the emergent codes were used for more than one group. The newly formed category codes were given an accompanying definition. Category codes were added to an excel spreadsheet along with an ancillary description or definition.
In step four, the evaluator read all of the transcripts holistically to assess if there were perspectives, characteristics, or attributes that had not been identified and coded. An example, was how this analysis established additional context for the category code “concern for safety.” During the first two steps of the coding process the evaluator constructed the emergent code “concern for student safety.” The category code was constructed based on words, and phrases, of responses to the question “Why is a Community Learning Center program was needed?” For example, an interviewee stated that “students needed the Community Learning Center program due to community violence” another merely said the word “safety” and did not elaborate. In response to the question, two other interviewees used the word “safety”. The code “concern for student safety” was defined as “concern for the safety of students outside of school.” The holistic analysis provided the evaluator further depicted the interviewees concerns about student safety. When reading the transcripts holistically the evaluator found examples were the interviewees, overtly stated, or inferred that the program was important because it kept students safe by providing a safe place away from “negative influences” and “community violence.” This additional insight caused the evaluator to expand their definition to “the Community Learning Center program was needed to limit student contact to violence and harmful influences within their community.” During the holistic coding process, codes were expanded upon, and further defined. The newly defined category codes were added to an excel spreadsheet along with an ancillary description or definition. The definitions of the category codes were strengthened by research conducted in the fifth step.

During the fifth step, the evaluator identified resources to strengthen, not establish, their rationale for the categorization. During this step, some of the category
codes were further refined based on updated definitions. One of the reference books used by the evaluator was *Visible Learning* by John Hattie (2009). *Visible Learning* is perceived as the definitive book of activities found to influence the learning of students in areas addressed within the full-service school paradigm—student, home, school, curricula, teacher, and teaching strategies. An example of this occurred due to five of the interviewees describing students participating in a broad variety of artistic-minded activities. One interviewee stated, “students are able to participate in all types of fun activities like dance and drama” and another one mentioned how much her child enjoyed “participating in the art class.” The activities were grouped separately and the evaluator specifically defined it as creative opportunities for students to participate in dance, art, and music without science, technology, engineering or math focal point because she did not want the category to be mistaken for science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM) initiatives.

Schools within the district are increasingly focused on “art” as the byproduct of design. Therefore, the evaluator wanted to make sure that the definition addressed a multitude of creative platforms not just limited to design. Originally, it was identified as “creative opportunities,” but the evaluator felt that the label did not adequately describe the category. Subsequently, the evaluator decided to categorize the code simply as “the arts.” Besides provides support to the definitions and additional insights were established. Insight the evaluator found relevant to the construction of the model or could potentially provide insight into the Theory of Change was added to the excel spreadsheets.
The sixth step was to provide supplementary support for the category codes by identifying in vivo codes. In vivo coding is a form of qualitative data analysis that emphasizes the actual words of the participants (Saldaña, 2016). The evaluator reviewed the transcripts and identified verbatim statements to support the identified coded categories. Stern and Porr (2011) stated that when using in vivo terms, verbatim statements were vital because they identified the participants’ “notions, behaviors, gestures, perspectives, attitudes, and so forth” (p. 64). The identification of in vivo code(s) for the established category codes provided additional validation.

During the seventh step, the evaluator requested the auditor validate their coding process. The auditor reviewed the information and made two recommendations. The auditor recommended that the evaluator revise two of the coding categories and strengthen the description of one of rationale for another coding category. An example of a requested revision occurred in the output coding category for extended learning. The evaluator initially defined the “enhanced academic achievement” category code as the extent to which a student is given opportunities to achieve their short or long-term educational goals. When establishing the rationale for this code, two verbatim quotes were identified. The auditor questioned if one of the interviewees were actually referencing a need for school readiness not achievement. The statement by the interviewee was that “kindergateners…haven’t attended pre-k, so there is much more they need to learn.” The auditor recommended that the evaluator identify research that would support the rationale for incorporating, or prove a need for differentiating between, academic achievement and school readiness.
The evaluator identified a technical report on school readiness, developed by the American Academies of Pediatrics, that found children in the United States enter kindergarten needing assistance and support to increase their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth (High et al., 2008). Insight from this report suggested to the evaluator, and auditor, that the statement exceeded the current definition for academic achievement; therefore, an additional output category code was needed. School readiness was determined as a category code but later disqualified because no other interviewees in round one or two identified this as a potential output.

The second round of interviews consisted of stakeholders identified as the most knowledgeable (site coordinator, Education Fund coordinator, Education Fund president) about the program design. Subsequently, the interviews were longer and more detailed. The evaluator engaged in step one of the initial coding process. After the first step, the evaluator reviewed the highlighted information, and determined if it aligned with the predetermined codes located in the Excel spreadsheet. The evaluator found that a significant amount of the information was conceptualized by category codes constructed during the initial analysis process. The information that did not clearly align with the pre-determined codes was analyzed in the remaining six steps of the coding process. Following the analysis additional category codes were constructed. In some cases, the new codes were later determined to be meaningfully similar to the codes from round one, and the evaluator merged the codes as appropriate. To effectively merge the codes, some of the descriptions had to be enhanced. The evaluator asked the auditor to review the augmented descriptions to make sure that they were not overly broad. Following the
The initial coding process the evaluator employed a hybrid conceptual coding procedure. The conceptual coding process is described below.

**Conceptual coding.** The hybrid conceptual coding process required that the evaluator affirm the placement of codes within the logic model and engage in magnitude coding. The hybrid conceptual coding encompassed three steps. First, the evaluator made place cards, for all of the identified categories. The category cards were used to manually group the categories into the identified logic model components. To guide the evaluator through the conceptual coding process the evaluator used the research questions, guiding questions, category definition sheet, interview transcripts, memos, and field notes. The evaluator used the research questions to guide her with the placement of category codes within each element—input, activities, output.

Second, the evaluator read each of the interview transcriptions looking for verbiage, concepts, or beliefs that supported the placement of the category code into a component. Every time the evaluator identified a word or statement that supported the placement of a category on the logic model, it was highlighted and the category was given a mark and classified. In the third step the evaluator assessed the amount of times the category code, within the context of the definition, was identified within the transcripts.

The parameter was set for inclusion in the classification group, if the evaluator could not assess a rationale for the category code placement, in at least four of the interviews. The collection of this information is known as magnitude coding. Magnitude coding is form of coding that “consists of and adds a supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code or sub-code to an existing coded datum…to indicate its intensity,
frequency, direction, presence, or evaluative content” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 72-73). The final codes from the qualitative codebook are found in Appendix D.

Using the transcripts to drive the validation of placement and the identification of process allowed the evaluator additional insight. It was recommended to “re-examine your raw data several times during your analysis; each time you study it, you do so with a different objective and with a different eye” (Chametzky, 2016, p. 169). An example of identifying multiple levels of meaning can be found in this statement by one interviewee in the first round:

Watchdogs has gotten male members of our community, fathers, uncles, and just male community members involved with the schools. We also have programs for parents and learning opportunities like our, fall festivals, that are sponsored by extended day….these integrated activities that involve all members of the family and community.

The statement identified that there were programs identified for adults. It also established that there was a belief that getting family members involved would increase their engagement in the school. This information was noted and used to affirm placement of the category for “adult enrichment programs” in the activity component, but the evaluators supporting memo indicated additional insights:

Interviewee aligns the parent program with extended day instead of identifying it as part of the larger community learning program. The significant area that engaged fathers was the watchdog program, which supports the category identification of safety as a need. It could be suggested that fathers find it essential to ensure that the students have a safe space, and feel obliged to ensure protection. The use of integrated activities opens
up the discussion about who is sponsoring the fall festival—is the day school or community learning center?

The evaluator wanted to ensure saturation before engaging in the “substantive element of conceptuality” (Chametzky, 2016, p. 170) that would take place in cycle two. The in-depth review of the transcripts provided significant insight into the design of the model, as well as insight into the beliefs about the phenomenon. However, additional insight was needed to establish a schematic representation of the rationale for connecting the outcomes to the processes and mechanisms intended to bring about the outcomes. Saldaña (2016) asserted that “motives, belief systems, world views, processes, recent histories interrelationships, and the complexity of influences and affects” (p. 188) were necessary to understand the context of a phenomenon. The final list of category codes is found in Appendix D.

**Cycle Two**

Pursuing additional insight into the phenomenon was the focus of cycle two. The description in cycle two identified how the evaluator incorporated six principles from Robert Stake’s Responsive Evaluation Approach into the constant comparative process: (a) conceptualize issues; (b) identify data needs, issues; (c) select observers, judges, instruments; (d) observe antecedents, transactions, and outcomes; (e) theme information; and (f) confirm, validate, attempt to disconfirm to answers questions formed during cycle one (Stake, 2004). The process established by the evaluator included the simultaneous collection and analysis of data understanding that “coding is usually a mixture of data [summation] and data complication…breaking the data apart in analytically relevant ways in order to lead toward further questions about the data” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996,
Therefore, each logic model component was viewed separately. This allowed the evaluator to establish the additional context for understanding the program's theory of change.

**Impact.** The impact are the changes in program participants’ knowledge, beliefs, and behavior due to their involvement in the program. The outputs were established during the input analysis. The long-term outcome should provide specificity about that the problem and its boundaries (where and for whom) for the purposes of this initiative. Therefore, the following language was established for the category codes identified during the need assessment. The stakeholders were asked what they believed were the expected impacts (outcomes) from the program. The evaluator grouped them into five areas of weakness or concern—improved literacy, academic achievement, improved personal (student) growth, safety, and teacher retention. Next the evaluator used this category coded information to drive the identification of the problem statement. The problem statement is used to establish the conditions that will result from the removal of the problem (Taplin & Clark, 2012). The problem statement had to be determined to support the establishment of a pathway for the theory of change.

**Theory-research link.** The Community Learning Center program was located in a school that had a disproportionate number of families identified with a low socioeconomic status (SES), better known as poverty. The evaluator identified a study that provided a causal link between “student safety” and poverty. Researchers looked at data from 2008 to 2012 and found that persons in poor households at or below the Federal Poverty Level (39.8 per 1,000) had more than double the rate of violent victimization as persons in high-income households (16.9 per 1,000) indicating a link
between poverty and violence (Harrell et al., 2014). Literature identified health and
nutrition, home environment, parental interactions with child, and neighborhood
conditions (Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Pascoe et al., 2016) as mediating variables for the
impact of poverty on a student’s academic achievement.

Researchers of social issues have identified poverty as the systemic handicap for
students’ academic achievement in the 21st century. This is especially the case for those
identified as being a product of multigenerational poverty (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan,
Klebanov, & Sealand, 1993; Sampson, 2008; Sampson, Sharkey & Raudenbush, 2008;
Sharkey, 2008, 2010; Sharkey & Elwert, 2011). The evaluator also identified research
that suggested children from low-SES communities were more likely to have adverse
mental health issues (Winters & Cowie, 2009), low self-efficacy (Conrath, 2001), poor
self-image (Ciaccio, 2000a, 2000b), lack motivation to do well in school (Beegle, 2006),
exhibit lower academic achievement (Herrold & O'Donnell, 2008), and have limited
school readiness (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2008). Further, a link exists between low
teacher retention and high-poverty schools (Dee & Goldhaber, 2017). High-quality,
extended day programs located in full-service schools have the potential to counter the ill
effects of poverty. Research shows that when a full-service school works well, student
achievement increases, attendance rates go up, suspensions drop, and special education
placements decrease (Dryfoos, 1994; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002).

**Impact statement.** Based on the analysis and supporting research the evaluator
derived the following impact statement: Community learning centers are needed to
alleviate the impact of fiscally under-resourced communities (low-SES) on students;
conversely, the impact of programming should be the alleviation of factors that impact
students who attend schools in fiscally under-resourced communities. The impact statement is used to establish the conditions that will result from the removal of the problem (Taplin & Clark, 2012). Following the identification of the problem statement and impact statement, the evaluator had to assess the findings to establish the Theory of Change. To do this, the evaluator followed the recommended Theory of Change backwards mapping process. As such, the next step on the pathway was analyzing information to establish program outputs (Taplin & Clark, 2012).

**Outputs.** The next component on this path was the establishment of outputs for the identified areas of weakness or concern - improved literacy, academic achievement, improved personal (student) growth, and safety. Varying interpretations for output were needed to determine the product of the activity, but within the context of this evaluation, “output” included the articulation of the process-oriented results derived from completing program activities (Community Tool Box, 2018). To properly explain the process orientation, the evaluator reviewed the category codes, transcripts, and other findings to determine if the current codes and transcription provided insight into the desired goals. Most of the insights were derived from the interview question, “Why do you believe the community learning center is needed?” Five potential outputs were identified during this analysis process—improved literacy, improved academic achievement, enhanced parent involvement, student personal growth (exposure), and safety. Next the evaluator needed to establish the evaluation mechanisms that would potentially be used to determine the results of the identified outputs that are found in Table 1. Table 1. Provides examples of interviewee responses that informed the analysis of outputs during Cycle One of the constant-comparative analysis process.
### Selected Interview Quotes: Excerpts Supporting the Identified Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Output</th>
<th>Significant Excerpts from Round One</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved literacy</td>
<td>“They (participating CLC students) showed tremendous growth in reading where other students that did not attend, some of them regressed over the summer by not having that consistent practice. So that is definitely a huge benefit for the students to continue to move forward because a lot of them were already behind. So the summer program and the extended day program helps push them forward and get them where they need to be.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic (support) Achievement</td>
<td>“[participating student] has had issues with um, doing his homework. Never. He's understanding his homework better, coming here for somebody to help him that understands what he's doing for his homework.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Parental Involvement</td>
<td>“we have such a need for parent involvement here in this school? Um, this program, the extended day program has built programs like watchdogs that has gotten male members of our community, fathers, uncles, um, and just male community members involved with the schools.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' Personal Growth (exposure)</td>
<td>“Opportunities are very limited to their neighborhoods at this point and they don’t have a lot of exposure to what else is out there. They take field trips. I’m just have an opportunity to really learn beyond what is taught in the classroom.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>“They're in a safe place and they can get their homework done and they're being cared for by other adults”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Retention</td>
<td>“maybe teachers will stay in the school” because “we are never going to improve with revolving teachers”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation mechanisms.** Evaluation mechanisms measure progress within a specified area. To align an evaluation mechanism, the evaluator engaged in a document review to identify the evaluation mechanisms perceived to measure the areas of weakness, or concern. The evaluator set three parameters for the document review. The first parameter allowed the evaluator to request specific documents from the site coordinator and the president of the Education Fund. The second parameter allowed the Education Fund to include public information (e.g., newsletter, awarded grant proposals, schedule). This information was not allowed in previous document reviews. The third parameter required that the only assessments considered were those that occurred prior to 2019. Eleven documents were reviewed and potential evaluation mechanisms were initially identified for four of the five established outcomes.
Four assessments were identified to evaluate literacy. Teachers are required to give every student at the school, the Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) reading levels. F&P are a system of reading levels designed to support guided reading instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The other identified assessment was Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Reading and Math progress monitoring assessment. The computer adaptive assessment that automatically adjusts to students based on their responses to previous questions. Academic grades in the United States commonly take on the form of five, six, or seven letter grades starting with the letter A. A is normally the highest mark and the grades get progressively lower as you move up the alphabet. All of the same assessments were used to establish improved academic achievement as well as the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment, a formative expectation for student learning and achievement in Grades K-12.

There was only one evaluation mechanism to evaluate enhanced parental involvement—participation sign-in sheets. The document review established the evaluation mechanism: personal growth (discipline referrals, school attendance) and teacher retention (human resources). Teacher attrition data for every school is collected annually by the district’s human resources department. This information, while not publicized, is made available to all district and school leadership. No evaluations were identified to measure safety or feelings of safety. Next the evaluator followed the backwards path to program activities with the goal of connecting the output to the required activities (intervention, strategies) needed to make it happen.
Activities. The identification of activities includes garnering an understanding of the program processes. Using the constant comparative method allowed for the identification of this process because it “combine(d) systematic data collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling in order to generate a theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing” (Conrad, Neumann, Haworth, & Scott, 1993, p. 280). During this cycle, the evaluator formulated theories and made other determinations about the identification of activities within the phenomenon. These individual coded activities were themed. Three activity themes were identified—extended learning, parent engagement, and new teacher empowerment.

- **Extended learning** showcased activities were defined by the evaluator as after school and summer programs that provide students with a safe, enriching place to continue their studies and explore new skills during out-of-school time. The seven activity categories that were grouped into the extended learning theme included: academic remediation, literacy instruction, homework (assessment) support, new knowledge (exposure), student enrichment, fitness, and social-emotional learning.

- **Parent Engagement** showcased activities that were defined by the evaluator as participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. The two activity categories that were grouped into the family engagement theme initially included: student-parent connectors and adult enrichment programs. An additional category was added in a later cycle.

- **New Teacher empowerment** showcased activities that were defined as providing components of culturally responsive instruction, in support of literacy, to day school
teachers new to the teaching profession. The two activity categories that were
grouped into the new teacher empowerment theme included content integration and
equity pedagogy.

The name and definition of this New Teacher theme was changed based on information
from additional analysis, but the identified activity categories stayed the same. To
understand the programming choice and characteristics, the evaluator analyzed the
findings to determine the beliefs present in the theory of change.

*Activity attributes.* The evaluator also designed an analysis for attributes of the
identified activities. The activity attributes identified for analysis included: program-to-
school collaboration, learning should be fun (hands-on), and opportunities for
empowerment. The evaluator chose not to analyze the transcripts for a second time
because earlier findings had already assessed that the characterization of these activities
were significant. However, it was not clear if the actual activities embodied these
attributes. The evaluator took this opportunity to further assess the embodiment of
content integration and equity pedagogy in the lesson and programming found within the
community learning center program. To do this the evaluator engaged in a document
review.

The evaluator set five parameters for the document review (e.g. lesson plans,
activity sheets). The first parameter was confidentiality—that no one would be made
aware of the goal for the document review. The second parameter was a defined
timeframe. It was determined that the document review (e.g. lesson plans, activity sheets)
would be limited to the 2018-2019 school term. The third parameter was limited scope—
that as soon as the evaluator identified four examples of the attributes, she would not look
for anymore. The fourth parameter allowed for a document to embody more than one attribute. The fifth parameter allowed for the evaluator to ask follow-up questions. The document review took place over two days and included over 47 documents. Most of the documents consisted of lesson plans, program schedules, and staff schedules. The document review identified that many lessons embodied the three remaining attributes. Many lessons addressed more than one of the attributes. For instance, there was a lesson that called for students to create a foreign musical instrument. Each student in the class identified a foreign musical instrument, researched both the design and cultural context of the instrument, executed on the design of the instrument using recycled garbage, and learned to play the musical instrument for a parent event. The lesson alone embodied that learning should be fun (hands-on) and provided opportunities for empowerment.

The document review found several other lessons and programming that provided students and parents with an opportunity for empowerment. An example were the flyers about a mothers’ group. The flyer identified speakers and provided information about the topics they planned to discuss. The sign-up sheet showed a limited number of mothers attended. In another instance was the documented meetings between the site coordinator, teachers and district reading specialist. Following the document review, the evaluator engaged in two unstructured interviews with individuals identified as the primary lesson creator, to ask clarifying questions about the documents. A literacy night flyer and sign-in sheets were found within the document review. When the evaluator asked follow-up questions, interviewees explained that the literacy nights provided opportunities to educate parents on how the parent could assist schools with enhancing their student’s literacy abilities. A follow-up question about the collaboration allowed the site
coordinator to identify specific lessons that were designed using information from the collaborative meetings with day school teachers and reading staff.

Interestingly no mention was made of collaborating with the principal. When asked, some stated that the principal did not engage in the coordination of lessons, instead the task as left to the teachers. Based on the document review and the unstructured interviews, the evaluator found that all activity attributes identified for analysis—learning was designed to be fun, provided opportunities for empowerment and promoted collaboration—were significant. Then all three would be referenced in connection with extended learning on the Theory of Change model.

A number of additional follow-up questions were asked that focused on identifying the intentionality of content integration and equity pedagogy in the lesson design. Content integration is limited to the recognition that students need to see representations of themselves within the school. The classroom book list and lessons showed the use of diverse books. When asked follow-up questions there was a recognition that representation was important. Additional questions were asked to assess if the individuals who designed the lessons and chose the programming knowingly engaged in equity pedagogy. Equity pedagogy occurs when strategies, or activities, are intentionally designed to respond to the needs of students from diverse cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and linguistic experiences (Banks, 2006a). In a follow-up conversation, with two of the stakeholders from the second round of interviews, the evaluator asked for a rationale on why many of the lessons included opportunities for students to engage in hands-on activities.
Hands-on activities are known to work well with students of color from historically marginalized communities, particularly boys, and the recognition and intentional use of hands-on activities would be an example of equity pedagogy. Both interviewees were asked in many ways about the rationale for using hands-on instructional practices. The expressed rationale for the use of hands-on activities was to keep students engaged. Neither ascribed to a rationale for using the strategy as a support for the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups.

The evaluator, after a discussion with an auditor, decided that the identification of content integration was justified for inclusion, but it was determined that the equity pedagogy was not included in the theory of change. At this time, the evaluator and auditor, also determined that the model needed to indicate that modality used to theme new teacher empowerment should indicate that the work was primarily done during day school to support urban consultant coaching. Based on the analysis, it was decided that three attributes of equity pedagogy, content integration, and collaboration could be assigned to the new teacher empowerment theme; whereas only content integration could be identified as an attribute for the extended learning programs. To assist with assessing the logic of the path from outcome to activities required the evaluator to craft causal relationships.

**Causal links.** Causal links form the chronological flow of the programs critical theory, showing each the logical relationship to each element. The causal links used for this section are identified in Appendix E.
**New teacher empowerment.** The first causal link is new teacher empowerment. This theme had two activities: participating teachers engaged in urban literacy instructional coaching, and the intentional use of diverse materials that will increase the students’ academic growth. These were measured by F&P scores, student grades, NWEA-MAPS, and SOL scores. Quarterly self-evaluation report cards and discipline reports measure the students’ personal growth. The theoretical construct for this theme is premised on the importance of instituting a culturally responsive education model. This model embodied two of Banks’s (2006a, 2006b) Multicultural Education Components. The first is equity pedagogy. Equity pedagogy is the intentional identification of student supports known to work with specific student groups. Y. Jackson (2011) presents the belief that learning is influenced by culture because of lived experiences. The experiences of the students’ elders all work to create the students’ frames for learning. Therefore, it is important that teachers gain insight into these frames and strategies that are known to support students who learn within a particular frame. The primary stakeholders explained that they intentionally chose to identify an urban literacy consultant coach because many of the new and current teachers do not have sufficient experience working with children who are oriented to an urban context. They explained that the urban literacy consultant had specific expertise for identifying instructional strategies and delivered models that supported students who were from urban communities. Based on field notes the evaluator came to believe that the term *urban* was code word for Black.

The second category code was content integration. Content integration is the intentional inclusion of cultural and racial diversity books and information to empower
students. Culturally competent material supports the engaging and motivating context to teach reading comprehension (Shanahan et al., 2010). This is because students with an urban orientation benefit from seeing the importance, purpose, and benefits of their instruction (Banks, 2001; Shannon, Styers, & Siceloff, 2010). Maier et al. (2017) highly recommended the inclusion of real-world learning lessons in the curriculum. Research has demonstrated that students who engage in experiential learning opportunities demonstrated skill and knowledge acquisition (Blank et al., 2003). When teachers promote complex thinking types such as creative thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills, students demonstrate high performance levels (Blank et al., 2003).

Extended learning programs should provide students an opportunity to remediate past information and acquire new knowledge through their participation in academic and/or leisure activities (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, 2017b).

**Extended learning.** Extended learning showcased activities included seven category codes perceived to contribute towards students’ academic and personal growth. Although research has not found that programming in support of after-school academic tutoring or homework assistance improves a students’ academic performance, there is evidence that shows it prevents a decline (e.g., Morrison, Storino, Robertson, Weissglass, & Dondero, 2000; Tucker et al., 1995). The seven activity categories that were grouped into the extended learning theme include—academic remediation, literacy instruction, homework (assessment) support, new knowledge (exposure), student enrichment, fitness, and social-emotional learning. These category codes were alternatively identified because they holistically represent one causal link as well as inform a secondary causal link. Research supports the inclusion of “academic enrichment and after-school activities,
early childhood education, service learning and civic engagement, life skills, and sports and recreation” (Blank et al., 2010, p. 7).

All of the category codes represent a causal link between participation in the activities and academic achievement. During the document review, the evaluator reviewed numerous lesson plans and found that many included opportunities for overlearning. The key stakeholders coordinated with their day school teachers and were not only remediating information but also teaching overlearning to the point of mastery. In addition, the document showed that there was a significant emphasis on building the students’ vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary has long been recognized as an excellent predictor of both later reading comprehension (Davis, 1972; Thorndike, 1917) and overall school achievement (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002, 2008). The more words a reader knows, the easier it is for the reader to read and understand text (Blachowicz, Fisher, Ogle, & Watts-Taffe, 2006; Kamil, 2004; National Reading Panel, 2000). Generally, one is able to understand more words than one uses. Therefore, receptive vocabulary is larger than expressive vocabulary (Beck et al., 2002). The students’ academic growth was measured by F&P scores, student grades, NWEA MAPS, and SOL scores. Quarterly self-evaluation report cards and discipline reports measured the students’ personal growth.

Three of the category coded activities within the extended learning theme represent a secondary causal link—social emotional learning, fitness, enrichment. During the analysis, it was identified that students’ attendance is improved in extended learning programs when they have an opportunity to participate in fitness and enrichment activities (Blank et al., 2003; Cooper et al., 1999). This explains the Community
Learning Centers decision to include both fitness and enrichment programs. In a study of 35 recommended elementary and middle school after-school programs, the researchers attributed positive academic outcomes as well as social and behavioral outcomes on recreational (exercise) and enrichment activities that included high-quality arts programming (Reisner et al., 2007). In the summer and during the school year, students were provided with an opportunity to participate in an array of activities.

The activities were initially chosen by the program providers but based on the analysis process; the program now seeks input from students, allowing them to select their choice of enrichment activities. Birmingham et al. (2005) examined the shared features of high-quality programs and concluded that programs offering a broad array of enrichment activities were impactful because they provided students the opportunity to experience something different and to master a new skill, such as dancing or art. The opportunities for their child to engage in enrichment activities was the most significant for parents. This increased the likelihood that students would attend. Consequently, these non-academic programs yielded increases in students’ academic achievement, school engagement, and high school graduation rates. They also decreased problem behaviors, particularly those related to violence and bullying, as well as decrease school dropout numbers (Eccles & Templeton, 2002). Among the other reasons, the researchers attributed the students’ success to enhanced social supports, caring relationships with adults, and leadership opportunities.

**Family engagement.** The family engagement themes showcased three activity categories—student parent connectors and parent enrichment. The strong causal link found that the Theory of Change for the program perceives that parents who engage in
student-parent connector activities will become more active in their child's academic skills development. During a follow-up interview one of the key stakeholders explained that many of the parents had negative experiences during their time in school and felt ill equipped to provide coordinated support for their children. Dr. Joyce Epstein (2001) recommends programming that focus on six areas: parenting education, communication, engagement, at-home learning opportunities, decision-making opportunities, and community collaboration. The parent-student connector activities identified during the analysis included opportunities for students to display the knowledge acquired during the extended learning program. It was perceived that participation in this activity enhanced their connection to the school, which was supported by participation in student activities and evaluated by a parent sign-in sheet. During a follow-up interview with a key stakeholder, it was explained that parents were given an opportunity to learn instructional strategies to further support student instruction, which may have an additional outcome of enhancing student academic achievement based on F&P scores, student grades, NWEA-MAPS, and SOL scores. No clear rationale for parent enrichment was provided. Full-Service Community School are known to provide these activities but based on the identified problem statement and impact there was not a clear alignment.

**Input.** The input section is combination of assumption statements and preconditions established using insight from the analysis, literature review and other supporting research. Assumptions are the identification of things already in place, whereas preconditions are the establishment of things that must be in place, put in place, or maintained, for the program to be a success (Taplin & Clark, 2012, p. 5). The assumptions and preconditions were established using insight from the interview
questions that asked participants to identify factors that could impede the program’s success. It is the assumed resources needed by the phenomenon to produce the results desired by the organization.

The following areas were identified and defined: paid staff, volunteers, day school support, funding during the first round of interview. The second round of interviews introduced district support. District support was not recognized within the first round of interviews; therefore, the evaluator asked the interviewees from the second-round follow-up questions to clearly define the term district support. Based on initial coding and follow-up interviews, district support was described as “all programs, policy or functions administered by district entities, such as transportation, school space, pacing guide.” This definition allowed the evaluator to review the supporting statements to find additional areas of support. The following codes were established—district engagement, school engagement, identifying and training staff, space, student behavior, and funding.

Later they were restated using insight from the field notes and transcripts: (a) the district would be interested in having the program at one of their school sites—providing space and other supports as needed, (b) the school would be actively engaged and willing to collaborate with the program, (c) staff would be able to be identified and appropriately trained to work with the program, (d) space would be available to support programming, (e) student behavior would not be a limiting factor in the identification and retention of staff or programming, and (f) funding would continue. The restatement was needed for the validation process that took place in cycle three.

For example, one interviewee mentioned how much they appreciated that students were transported home from the extended day program. Transportation was noted as
input, even though it was not initially clear who provided funding. The second round of interviews clarified that the county paid for transportation. Another example of this was the description of the reading specialist. The reading specialist interviewed during the first round, identified how receptive the site coordinator and staff were on receiving the literacy lesson support she has tasked to provide. Initially the evaluator assumed the reading specialist was a school support staff and quantified her assistance as a school support resource. However, in the second round of interviews it was clarified that the reading specialist was district support. The reading specialist supported efforts that aligned the instruction, provided during the day to the extended in compliance with the district pacing guide. In both the first and second round of interviews, 9 of the 10 people interviewed identified the site coordinator as a significant resource. Interestingly, the site coordinator did not have the same appreciation of their role. Next the evaluator sought to validate the identified beliefs and contextual underpinnings of Theory of Change.

**Cycle Three**

In cycle three, the evaluator engaged in a two-step validation process—individualized and focus group using member checking. Both methods were designed to confirm and disconfirm information from cycle one and cycle two. Member checking was done in two rounds—individual and group. Before the second validation process, a Theory of Change model was crafted. The Theory of Change model included insight from cycle one and cycle two as well as the recommended revisions identified during the individualized member checking interviews. During the focus group, the Theory of Change model was referenced. The narrative of cycle three describes both rounds of member checking as well as a brief description of the theory of change.
**Individual member checking.** The evaluator established three goals for individual member checking. The first goal was to validate that the elements were appropriately coded in the activity section. The second goal was to confirm the identified resources and the chain of logic (if-then causal statement links). The precondition and the if-then causal statement links were designed to provide context for the phenomenon. The third goal was to affirm the resources necessary for the system to function as intended.

During the individualized member checking process, the evaluator privately met with all three of the main stakeholder participants at different times. All interviews took place at an offsite location, not at the school.

**Goal one—individual.** An illustrated qualitative content analysis chart was designed to assist with assessing the first goal. This content analysis chart provided an overview of the coding analysis for both rounds of interviews. The content analysis chart was an effective way to show the sequence of events. The content analysis chart only illustrated the elements, concepts (categories, themes) and analysis (rationale) of codes for the activity section of the model. The content analysis chart described a linear process, but it was essential to remember that the constant-comparative coding process involved a back and forth movement of ideas and thoughts. A limited number of rationales were included in the chart due to space and concern about the disclosure. All participants were asked to review the coding content analysis chart. The coding chart was reviewed and there was only one concern that required a change and another area that required clarification.

The one area requiring a change was the definition of new teacher empowerment. All three individuals who participated in the individual member checks did not fully
agree with the definition. New teacher empowerment is defined as providing intentional literacy support and coaching for new teachers working with students that have an urban orientation. The analysis assigned the following activities to the theme—equity pedagogy and content integration. It also recognized one distinguishing attribute—collaboration. The concerns were that the urban literacy coach supported both new and seasoned teachers. They all explained in different ways that the consultant support included individualized coaching, lesson plan development, literacy strategy coordination, and book recommendations. After providing the rationale, they agreed with the category codes but continued to feel that the theme needed to be broadened. Based on their input, with agreement from the auditor, the evaluator agreed that their concern met the standard for change. As a result, the theme was expanded from “new teacher empowerment” to “teacher empowerment” but the assigned activities did not change.

One stakeholder stated that they felt that social-emotional learning should be named social skills instruction. The evaluator explained the rationale for identifying social-emotional learning and provided context for the definition. The evaluator chose to use the definition used by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2017) defines social-emotional learning as:

The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (para. 1)
The premise was the restorative justice programming identified by interviewees and supported by documents as well as the observed interactions between teachers and students. The stakeholder accepted the explanation.

To assess the evaluator’s understanding of the program theory, and to simplify the perceived relationship links, a causal relationship links table created for the validation process. The table showed links between the identified intervention (activity themes), output (beliefs-evaluation) and impact (expected change). The causal relationship links table and an if-then statement sheet was provided to the stakeholders. In some instances, the table and if-then statements were incomplete because the evaluator lacked information. All participating individuals were given an opportunity to view the chart and asked to respond to the following two questions: (1) “What are your thoughts about the information found within the causal relationship links table and the if-then statements?” and (2) “What resources are required for the activities within the chart?” Different parameters were set for each question.

**Goal two—individual.** The second goal was to validate the authenticity of the problem statement and the established causal links. The causal links were found both on the causal link table and on the if-then statement sheets. The parameter was set for the first question, “What are your thoughts about the problem statement and the information found within input section of the table?” The evaluator set the following parameters for the stakeholders. If any of the three stakeholders noted the same points about an output during the discussion, it would be recognized. No additional amendments would be made unless there were unanimous reactions to something on the causal chart. Prior to asking the initial question, the evaluator provided clarification about the information that should
have been found within the components noted on the causal relationship table—input, activity, output, and outcomes. Overarching the causal relationship table was the identified problem statement.

The evaluator crafted a standard explanation for the causal relationships that were used as a reference guide during the conversation. The stakeholders, for the most part, agreed to the problem statement and all of the casual linked relationships described in the chart. Although, there were some questions about why specific activities were not noted. The evaluator explained how the activities were either grouped into a broader category, or clarified that it did not meet quantification standards, during the initial analysis process. There were no issues with the established inputs. All stakeholders agreed that the preconditions, included herein, were accurate. Due to unanimous agreement, no additional validation was needed.

There was significant discussion about information missing from the boxes on the table. The participants provided insight about the missing information. For example, causal link #3 found in the extended learning theme was missing information from the activity-beliefs for the social emotional learning, fitness, student enrichment opportunities activities. The activity-belief was empty because prior analysis did not show a clear articulation for the rationale. The analysis showed that the stakeholders believed these activities were drivers for personal growth and increased the students’ exposure. But there were no implicit connecting beliefs stated by participants for why this would occur. During the discussion, the stakeholders had differing opinions and the evaluator decided to table the discussion and seek additional insight during the group
member check, but areas of refinement were identified. Based on the discussion, and the adherence to the parameters, two significant changes were made to the chart.

The first was the inclusion of parent support groups as a category. Two stakeholders expressed the need for the recognition of parent support groups that are coordinated by the Community Learning Center program. Based on the definition, adult enrichment programs only included activities (e.g., arts, sports, music, theater, or other types of activities) not necessarily related to increasing academic performance but focused on building human and cultural capital to develop or further enhance areas of interest. This definition was not inclusive of parental support programs. The evaluator reviewed the data and explained that support groups were only mentioned two times during the interview process: once during the first round and another time in the second round. Therefore, support groups were not recognized. Both stakeholders felt the work needed to be recognized because it showed the Community Learning Center program provided support that potentially met the social-emotional needs of parents. One stakeholder stated that "many of the parents are young and have experienced significant trauma and they need support." Both stakeholders agreed to provide evidence to affirm the existence of the program.

After a discussion with the auditor, it was decided that as long as there were two forms of documents, parent support groups would be included in the model. In a follow-up meeting, documents were provided showing that a local community agency sponsored the on-site sessions. The documentation included sign-in sheets from the previous year and a current newsletter announcing/marketing the support group sessions for the Spring. Based on input from the stakeholders the “parent support group” category was defined as
a sponsored group that works to build support for yourself and learn ways to maintain
and solve problems in your family as well as support connections between school and
parents. The parent support group was added as a category within the parent engagement
theme.

The second was the need for the creation of a causal link chain that highlighted
literacy outside of academic achievement. All three stakeholders asked questions that
suggested the need for more spotlight on literacy. The rationale was that literacy was the
primary focus area of the Community Learning Center program. Because literacy
instruction was mentioned during eight of the nine interviews, making it the most
mentioned activity, the stakeholders’ reasonable request was granted. The evaluator
reviewed the transcripts and was able to identify clear beliefs as well as supporting
evaluations to include the change.

It was recommended that teacher empowerment change from academic
achievement to literacy achievement due to specificity of their focus. This change was
further verified by the evaluator during a review of the notes taken during the document
review. The document review showed that there was a significant emphasis on building
the students’ vocabulary. As stated in Chapter 3, vocabulary knowledge has long been
recognized as an excellent predictor of both later reading comprehension (Davis, 1972;
Thorndike, 1917) and overall school achievement (Beck et al., 2002, 2008). The students’
literacy growth was measured by F&P scores, student grades, NWEA-MAPS, and SOL
scores. Quarterly self-evaluation report cards and discipline reports measured the
students’ personal growth.
While not as significant, there was concern expressed that there was a perception that teacher retention would result, based on the identified activities. On the causal relationship chart the evaluator identified teacher retention as a potential outcome for implementing the activities (strategies) found within the teacher empowerment theme. This was identified based on insights from the analysis. During the discussion regarding placement of this potential outcome, the evaluator shared verbatim statements with the stakeholders suggesting that teacher retention could be a potential outcome. For example, the evaluator shared this verbatim statement:

We (school-site) have such high teacher turnover that I’m afraid that we also impact the school success….when you have such a large number of teachers that are transitioning each year….it takes several years to really get in the groove….that is why we [CLC] are helping with [urban literacy] coaching and support.

The evaluator, nor auditor, felt that the potential teacher retention outcome should be removed. As such, they agreed that no decision would be made until after the focus group.

**Goal three—individual.** The third and final goal was designed to affirm the identified resources. The second question—“What inputs (resources or preconditions) are required for the activities within the chart?”—required the evaluator to ask open-ended questions, make a list of responses, and group the responses into identified resources. To affirm a resource, it was required to have at least three affirming comments. If there were comments outside of the listed categories, they were considered, but did not require a unanimous identification of the resource. The evaluator went down the list of causal
statements and allowed the participants to describe the multitude of resources needed for each of the activities. The resources were listed and later categorized with the goal being to assess if they aligned with the inputs established during cycle one and cycle two.

The evaluator was able to group most of the identified resources into several categories—paid staff, volunteers, day school support, funding, and district-based support. Two essential insights were gained from the discussion regarding these resources. Based on comments from all three stakeholders, parents and students should have been noted as a resource. At some point during the discussion to include parents and students as a resource, it was noted that student attendance was tied to funding. The stakeholders explained that student attendance in the program was the driver for accessing federal funds. If the students refused to participate, or the parents chose not to send them, the school would lose the 21st-century grant. The conversation led to a second insight—they needed to recognize diverse funding sources. The specific program and staffing were all funded by different entities. The evaluator decided that it was important to note the diversity in funding on the Theory of Change model because it provided additional context for the phenomenon being studied. This was later removed from the final illustrated draft due to a desire to streamline the information.

**Group—member checking**

The evaluator designed a Theory of Change model using information from cycle one and cycle two, as well as information acquired from the stakeholders who participated in the individualized member check process. The Theory of Change model is described at the end because adjustments were made to the model after the focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to validate the findings from the analysis. Savin-
Baden and Major (2013) defined a focus group as “a gathering of a limited number of individuals, who through conversations with each other, provide information about a specific topic, issue, or subject” (p. 375).

The evaluator had four goals for the focus group. The first goal was to further validate the theoretical model identified—Pedagogy of Confidence. The second goal was to validate and quantify the significant of identified external factors. Researchers acknowledge that focus groups serve many purposes, and one such purpose is to verify data gathered from other methods (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) and transparently share information with stakeholders and requesting their feedback (Merriam, 2009). The third goal was to corroborate the contextual analysis using if-then statements. Direct quotations were provided throughout the presentation to authenticate the formation of the if-then statements. The inclusion of direct quotations increased the reliability of the study (Creswell, 2013). The final goal was to obtain an endorsement, not agreement, that the visually illustrated Theory of Change model was an accurate representation of the current program.

Nine of the ten stakeholders interviewed attended the focus group. To create a sense of enthusiasm among the focus group participants, dinner was provided. The event also took place on the day they were hosting a Community Learning Center evening event. The evaluator served as the presenter and led the discussion. As the facilitator of the focus group, the evaluator made efforts to (a) support confidentiality, (b) ask open-ended questions, (c) respectfully facilitate discourse, (d) encourage participation, and (e) support the presentation of all views (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).
**Goal one—group.** To address the first, the evaluator asked participants to engage in activity to further validate the theoretical model identified, Pedagogy of Confidence. The evaluator gave all of the participants a piece of paper with a list of the seven operational practices for the pedagogy of confidence. The evaluator clarified the meaning of each identified practice and provided examples.

Prior to reviewing the findings, the evaluator identified, with input from the auditor, the parameters for affirming the programs’ alignment to the pedagogy of confidence: (1) if more than three stakeholders marked through the same operational practice then it was determined that the Community Learning Center was not engaged in that practice and it was noted as not identified; (2) if more than three operational practices were noted as not identified, then the Pedagogy of Confidence theoretical construct could not be referenced. Next, the evaluator asked the stakeholders to rule out any operational practices that they did not see embodied within the Community Learning Center program. After the paper was collected the evaluator further explained how the Pedagogy of Confidence theoretical construct was identified and provided verbatim statements as well as documents to the stakeholders. Following the meeting, the evaluator reviewed the information and it was determined that only one area meet the requirements for not identified. The one area was locating learning in the lives of students. This was not surprising because it was also not observed by the evaluator. It is important to note there was one other area that two individuals identified—eliciting high intellectual performance regardless of circumstance.
**Goal two—group.** To address the second goal the evaluator asked participants to validate and quantify the external factor coded categories - district engagement, school engagement, identifying and training staff, space, student behavior and funding. One additional item was included on the list (lack of parent support) based on insight from the stakeholders who participated in the individualized member checks. The stakeholders were given the list of category codes and provided with the sub-category codes for funding. The sub-category category codes for funding included: internal funding, community grant funding, 21st Century funding, a list of all of the category codes are provided in Appendix D.

Prior to engaging in the discussion, the evaluator clarified the meaning of the relevant factors identified on the list. One parameter for affirming the relevant factors was determining when a relevant factor would be excluded or included. It was determined that if four or more people commented or supported the exclusion or inclusion of a relevant factor, those comments would guide the discussion on the consideration of that relevant factor. The stakeholders were also provided definitions that included the category and sub-category codes. The participants were asked two questions: (1) “Is there any factor you do not feel belongs on the list?”; and (2) “Is there any factor you feel needs to be included in the list?” There was limited discussion. No one disagreed with the listed factors, and no one added additional factors.

The evaluator believed that it was important that there was an appreciation of what factors were perceived as the most relevant for the success of the program. To do this, the evaluator asked the stakeholders to rank the factors. The ranking information was used to determine the order that the factors would be noted on the logic model and
provided additional insight into the perception of the program by participants. After the stakeholders ranked the factors, the evaluator explained the rationale for the ranking. After the meeting the evaluator reviewed the eight completed rankings and learned the ranked order: (1) internal funding, (2) staff identification and training, (3) school engagement, (4) external funding, (5) lack of parental support, (6) district engagement, (7) community grant funding, (8) student behavior, (9) space.

**Goal three—group.** The second goal was to corroborate the contextual analysis using if-then statements to provide additional context for the program. The evaluator shared the updated causal relationship table that illustrated six if-then links between identified intervention inputs (resources), activity (themes), output (beliefs-evaluation) to outcomes (expected change). The chart was informed by findings from cycle one, cycle two, the individualized member check and the literature review. The final chart provides a systematic narrative of the programs’ improvement strategy. However, there were two areas that were filled in. Both of these areas were addressed during the analysis process. Most of the information came from the analysis process but the literature review was referenced throughout. Information from the literature review was only included when there were some well-established connections that aligned with findings from the analysis and from the individualized member check. The parameters for including or changing information within the table was based on the number of stakeholders. Once it was established that nine stakeholders would participate, the quantification number was determined as four. If more than four stakeholders made the same or similar comment, the evaluator would speak with the auditor about addressing the noted concern.
Prior to asking the initial question, the evaluator provided clarification about the information found within the table. All stakeholders were given an opportunity to view the chart along with a written narrative breakdown of the causal relationship links. The stakeholders were then asked the following two questions: (1) “What are your thoughts about the if-then statements?”; and (2) “Is there anything you disagree with in the chart?” The parameter was established that if four participants noted the same points in response to the question, the end would be recognized and discussed with the auditor. During the discussion, direct quotes were provided to the stakeholders to provide context and support for the rationales. The stakeholders reviewed all six relationships individually. There was significant discussion about each section but the three causal relationship links that had blank sections elicited the most conversation – causal link #3, #5 and #6. These were also the three links that had missing components.

Causal link #3 was found in the extended learning theme. The extended learning theme housed two activity groupings. One grouping was focused on academics and this information was outlined in causal link #2. Causal link #3 housed the remaining activities—social emotional learning, fitness, and student enrichment opportunities. The activity (belief) section of the link was not completed because the evaluator did not have sufficient evidence. During a conversation that explored the basis of the program beliefs, the evaluator explained that the output (evaluations) and outcomes (significant change) that were identified were based on information from the literature review. The evaluator but did not feel comfortable assessing the belief system with input received from the stakeholders. After much discussion, wherein it was agreed that social emotional learning did not have supporting analysis to stand-alone as a causal link to improved discipline, it
was also determined that there was a belief that the activities increased engagement and had a positive impact on student discipline.

Causal link #5 represented the if-then relationship for the teacher empowerment. Originally, there were two outcomes for this relationship—teacher retention and increased literacy achievement. The evaluator deleted teacher retention based on insight from the member check. The evaluator introduced teacher retention into the conversation and explained the rationale for the revision. A rich discussion ensued between the stakeholders. Five of the nine stakeholders agreed that “teacher retention” should not be included. In summary, they believed that the Community Learning Center program should not be viewed as a strategy for retaining day school teachers. The evaluator used the focus group discussion to affirm the change and provide additional context for this causal relationship. The summarizing statements were used to make the following determination: if teachers were provided with coaching and support using an equity pedagogy (activity) and content integration (activity) then students would have increased skills and knowledge for supporting literacy instruction of students from urban communities (activity—beliefs) and these students would have increased literacy achievement (outcome) based on standardized assessments (i.e., F&P, NWEA-MAP, SOL). All nine of the stakeholders agreed with this determination.

Causal link #6 represented the if-then relationship for the parent empowerment theme to the parent support group activity. Three of the areas were not completed in the casual relationship chain—activities (beliefs), output (evaluations), and outcomes (significant change). The evaluator intentionally left the rationale blank because the creation of this link was driven by the individualized member check and not by the
analysis from cycle one and cycle two. Therefore the evaluator, and auditor, felt it was important that the stakeholders be given full influence over the content.

The evaluator asked probing questions and tried to identify areas of agreement. The stakeholders unanimously agreed that parent empowerment should not be grouped into the causal relationship link #4 and should have a singular link. Causal link #4 represented an if-then relationship for parent empowerment focused on student-parent connectors and adult enrichment activities. This link identified that the activities were premised on their ability to build connections between school and families in hopes of strengthening student achievement. Not everyone agreed with this linkage but no one disputed the analysis. Finally, it was determined that areas would be left blank on the linkage because consensus could not be reached.

**Goal four—group.** The final goal was to obtain an endorsement, not an agreement, that the visually illustrated Theory of Change model was an accurate representation of the current program. All of the stakeholders were given copies of the evaluation; it was also presented to all of them via an overhead presentation. First, the evaluator walked the stakeholders through the illustrated visuals and category code definitions. Next, the evaluator asked the following four main questions: (a) “What are your impressions about model?”; (b) “Is anything inaccurate in the model?”; (c) “What specific features do you like about the model?”; and (d) “What specific feature do you dislike about the model?” During the focus group, a non-participant took discussion notes. The parameter was identified based on the number of participants. Once it was established that nine stakeholders would participate, the quantification number was determined as four. If more than four stakeholders made the same or similar comment
about the model, the evaluator would speak with the auditor about addressing the noted concern. The evaluator gave the stakeholders an opportunity to voice their thoughts as well as asked them to write any concerns on the model that they were provided. To maintain anonymity, the stakeholders were asked not to place their names on the model and not to identify themselves by name when voicing their thoughts. At the end of the meeting the models were collected and used to support the analysis process.

From the discussion, two additional areas were identified by the stakeholders as areas of concern. Although the two areas did not meet the requirements for change, they should be noted. Two stakeholders expressed concerns relative to the attribute—making learning fun. They did not believe that the attribute was an accurate statement. One stakeholder stated that the “activities were fun because the instructors used problem-centered teaching methods that expect students to learn about a subject through the experience of solving a problem.” Another stakeholder stated that, “these types of activities motivated students and made learning fun.” Based on the discussion there was general agreement from the stakeholders that the instruction was engaging. However, there was not enough statement attesting to the idea that learning was fun due to the intentional engineering of problem-based instruction.

Another point was the placement of the Pedagogy of Confidence. The draft model identified it within the bubble that housed the site coordinator. It was explained that the construct was the lens with which the site coordinator devised instruction, programming, and engagement with stakeholders. Based on the analysis, the site coordinator was only in charge of programming for two identified themes—extended learning and family engagement. Stakeholders asked why the construct did not undergird the third theme -
new teacher empowerment. It was explained that there was no evidence that identified an embodiment of the theoretical construct into this theme.

There were also observations made about the look of the model design. The model uses shapes and color to provide context to the phenomena. All but two of the stakeholders expressed opinions that they liked the use of color and shapes to provide context. The original model design presented one set of activity themes side by side with a set of six bubbles used to house the numerical representation of assumptions. Three stakeholders asked that the model have more of a linear design that clearly established the programmatic connections. The observations about the design were considered during the construction of the final Theory of Change model for the community learning center. The model and narrative are in section five of the evaluation along with key findings.
CHAPTER 5

Model Narrative, Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

Chapter 5 concludes the formative program evaluation process used to evaluate the Community Learning Center program located at the Elementary school being evaluated. The findings related to the following evaluation questions were presented in Chapter 4.

1. What are the program stakeholders’ perception of the impact of the community learning center located at Elementary school?

2. What are the program stakeholders’ perception of the outputs process orientation for the community learning center located at the Elementary school?

3. What are the activities and links identified by program stakeholders for the community learning center located at the Elementary school?

4. What are the program stakeholders’ perception of the inputs identified to support program implementation of the community learning center at the Elementary school?

In this chapter, the findings will be explained in terms of the identified Theory of Change for the Community Learning Center. To explain the findings, this chapter will first identify a pedagogy that possibly provides a framework for the phenomenon being

31 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
32 Outcomes.
33 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
34 Service utilization and evaluation mechanisms.
35 Interventions & Strategies.
36 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
37 School leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, and lead agency representatives
38 Resources
studied. Next a narrative of the illustrated logic model is provided. The illustrated model and narrative responds to the program evaluation questions set forth above. The model was created to provide insight into the context of the Community Learning Center programs. Last the chapter will include an interpretation of key findings and suggestions that will provide insight into the creation of a Theory of Change for the program. Chapter 5 closes with an overall conclusion that describes efforts to minimize evaluator bias, identify limitations of study and provide research recommendations.

**Pedagogy Identification**

When interviewing a key stakeholder, she expressed significant frustration due to being unable to clearly articulate a conceptual framework. She could articulate the pieces but was unable to synthesize a clear rationale for the beliefs behind his personal engagement with students and parents as well as his programmatic choices. Based on their concerns I reviewed the findings from the constructed knowledge and identified that a potential pedagogical framework that seemingly supports the underpinnings of the program. The responsive evaluation approach affords evaluators the flexibility to construct knowledge outside of the realm of original intent in response to concerns put forward by stakeholders (Stake, 2000, 2004). The primary evaluation goal was to determine the elements and use this device the logic of the program but in response to the concern of a key stakeholder the evaluator engaged in an analysis to establish a pedagogy framework for the program.

The initial part of the study was done using a constructivist paradigm therefore the evaluator collected data without the guidance of a preexisting coding frame. Prior to engaging in this analysis, the evaluator reviewed the books of well-known researchers
who devoted their professional careers to identifying best practices or developing pedagogies to support academic achievement for students in under-resourced communities. To establish the pedagogical framework, the evaluator reviewed emergent and category codes for recognizable ideas, thoughts, and statements. The information was viewed holistically and themed based on potential belief systems.

Seven critical features of the activities were categorized into relationship building, school—community learning center collaborations, high academic expectations, stakeholder voice, promote the idea that learning should be fun engagement, opportunities for empowerment, and student innovation. The newly identified themes and the previously identified activities were used to create various casual network charts. A causal network chart is a mental map that allows researchers to elaborate on concepts by piecing discrete bits of data together (Miles, Huberman, & Saldâna, 2014).

The evaluator read and summarized their work and placed them on a reference sheet. The evaluator used this as a reference document for the causal network chart. When the evaluator grouped “voice” alongside three of the identified concepts—relationships, high expectations, and enrichment, it aligned with a pedagogy known as the Pedagogy of Confidence (Y. Jackson, 2011). There was no other grouping that closely aligned with the categorized activities. Following the identification, the evaluator conducted additional analysis to ensure the authenticity of the identification.

In the Pedagogy of Confidence (Y. Jackson, 2011), it is recommended that teachers, especially those working with students historically viewed as deficient, embrace the instructional principles primarily used for gifted education. The seven high operational practices identified student strength; providing enrichment; integrating
prerequisites for learning; building relationships; locating learning in the lives of students; helping students find their voice; and the eliciting high intellectual performance regardless of circumstances. Next, the evaluator created a deductive theoretical sampling process to determine if the phenomenon embodied the principles of the pedagogy to the point of saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The number four was established as the point of saturation by the evaluator and affirmed by the external auditor. The evaluator analyzed the transcripts to identify statements or characterizations to determine the principles of the Pedagogy of Confidence.

Evidence included verbatim comments, ideas, thoughts, and concepts. The evaluator found that the transcriptions provided preliminary evidence for five of the seven principles: identification of student strength; providing enrichment; integrating prerequisites for learning; building relationships; locating learning in the lives of students; helping students find their voice; and the eliciting high intellectual performance regardless of circumstances. For example, a teacher in the first round of interviews identified that the extended day program often introduced new vocabulary prior to a lesson, explaining that many students had limited vocabularies and needed this information “up front to truly understand” the lesson. The inclusion of vocabulary activities came up repeatedly during other interviews. In the second round of interviews, two interviewees talked about providing “readiness” activities to support new knowledge acquisition. The site coordinator described lessons developed specifically for students before going on the "exposure" field trips, to ensure they had prior knowledge to appreciate the experience.
Another example was the identification of the principle—build a relationship with students. The site coordinator and teachers actively worked to build relationships with students and staff. This determination was primarily based on the first round of interviews. The parents, and teachers all highlighted examples and expressed appreciation for the effort put into building strong relationships with the student. An example of the importance of relationship building occurred when a Community Learning Center leader voiced concern that they were initially able to do a whole group read aloud once a week with small groups. The interviewee lamented that this read aloud assisted with building a relationship because the books that were chosen allowed for discussions about how the activities and emotions of the protagonist were similar to their own. Students often opened up and shared. The interviewee believed these opportunities “provided a bond” with the students. The interviewee emphasized that there is sustained effort to build relationships and that she planned to reinstate that activity in the spring. Because two of the principles—locate learning in the lives of students, and helping students find their voice—did not meet the quantification requirement, the evaluator determined additional information was needed. Specifically, the evaluator determined the need for a document review (e.g., lesson plans, activity sheets) which is discussed in Chapter 4.

One experience identified for supporting students with finding their voice occurred during a reading lesson. Students were asked to read a story and during a follow-up discussion, were asked several questions: “What do you think the main character is feeling and what questions would you like to ask one of the characters?” The activity expanded into questions that asked the students to identify their thoughts about the character: “How are you like the main character?” The students used their insights to
craft a picture of the main character, a penguin. The information they formed was placed on different parts of the penguin. When asked a clarifying question about the lesson the teacher explained that the questions allowed the students to think critically both about the story and themselves. In addition, the program schedule identified numerous enrichment opportunities for the students. The documents showed the students participating in drama, art, fitness, and chess club.

The evaluator engaged in two supporting observations focused on observing relationship building. The students were also given the opportunity to locate learning within their own lives. The evaluator set three parameters for the observation. The first parameter stated that if the students did not meet the quantification requirements of the primary focus of the observation, which was to provide evidence of the third principle—locate learning in the lives of students and the fourth principle—helping students find their voice. The evaluator noted other principles as they were observed. The second parameter was that no one affiliated with the community center would be made aware of the observation focus. The third parameter was that the observation would be unstructured and last for at least an hour.

Two separate observations occurred on different days over a 2-week period. During the observations, the evaluator identified numerous examples of staff intentionally creating an environment where students felt comfortable. One way that they did this was by using supportive and affirming language. On the other hand, the evaluator could not identify any documented examples of students being given the opportunity to locate learning within their own lives. The evaluator, with support from the auditor, agreed that the transcripts, document review, and observation were substantive enough to
exemplify how the phenomenon embodies most principles within the Pedagogy of Confidence. Therefore, the information was included as an identified theoretical construct for the program theory of change, but the fact that it did not meet the five principles was noted in the discussion section of the program evaluation.

Another pedagogical consideration was the intentional instruction towards developing a Growth Mindset. The growth mindset identification was initially derived when assessing how parents and teachers from the first round of interviews, characterized students feeling empowered with the information they learned from the Community Learning Center program. Growth Mindset focuses on helping students understand the values of effort, persistence and trying. It is the recognition that abilities can be developed to increase intelligence levels, talents, and abilities whereas fixed mindset would be the belief that abilities are unchangeable (Kazakoff & Mitchell, 2017).

Identified habits of Growth Mindset in the classroom are (a) effort is seen as a path to mastery; (b) challenge is embraced and viewed as something useful; (c) mistakes are not harmful but perceived as a tool for learning; (d) feedback should be oriented towards giving information and insight that assist with the development or improvement of your work; (e) opportunities should be provided to students that promote thinking because it enhances their mental flexibility; (f) persistence is celebrated—obstacles should be overcome and their efforts should lead to mastery; (g) students feel empowered to make an effort and not fear the consequences of being wrong (Gershon, 2016; Ricci, 2013).

The evaluator analyzed the transcripts to identify statements or characterizations to assess if any aligned with Growth Mindset habits. The evaluator only found evidence showing (e) opportunities were being provided to students to promote thinking. Due to
limited evidence, the evaluator did not seek additional information nor was it included in
the logic model.

The last pedagogy considered was culturally responsive educational practices. This pedagogy was considered because of the characteristics attributed to the Urban Literacy Consultant by one stakeholder. The stakeholder characterized the Urban Literacy Consultant as a person who coached teachers on best practices for literacy in schools that served students from historically marginalized racial groups, living in under-resourced communities. Based on the substantive support for new day school teachers, the evaluator determined that an additional theme was needed that recognized the efforts, provided within the Community Learning Center context to support new day school teachers. The theme was identified as new teacher empowerment and the code category was defined by the evaluator as providing intentional literacy support and coaching for new teachers working with students that have an urban orientation.

During the second round of interviews it was also identified that the Urban Literacy Consultant pushed for the use of diverse literature and promoted using teaching practices known to intentionally work for students of color. To determine if culturally responsive education pedagogy undergirded the overall instruction and programming for the extended learning component of the phenomenon, the evaluator engaged in analysis.

Culturally Responsive Education (Banks, 2006b) identified five dimensions of Culturally Responsive Education practices: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, empowering school culture, and equity pedagogy. Content integration deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and content from many cultures in their teaching. Knowledge construction provides teachers with knowledge on
how to help students understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence how knowledge is constructed. Prejudice reduction focuses on the characteristics of students' racial attitudes and how they can be modified by teaching methods and materials. Empowering school culture highlights the bias in labeling practices, sports participation, disproportionality in achievement, and the interaction of the staff and the students across ethnic and racial lines with the goal of empowering students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups. Equity pedagogy occurs when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups.

The evaluator analyzed the transcripts to identify statements, or characterizations, to assess if the program embodied the five dimensions of Culturally Responsive Education (Banks, 2006a). During the assessment, only two dimensions were identified: content integration and equity pedagogy. Using diverse literature is a direct indicator for content integration and a significant number of interviewees identified the use of diverse literature in the extended day program. The intentional identification of an Urban Literature Consultant was assessed as an indicator for Equity Pedagogy because the identification of this dimension demonstrated an understanding that students from urban communities needed distinctively different instructional strategies and supports than their peers from suburban communities.

Due to limited evidence for the other three dimensions of Culturally Responsive Education (Banks, 2006b) the evaluator did not seek additional information to affirm this as a program pedagogy. However, the evaluator took additional steps to quantify the
significance of content integration and equity pedagogy as evidenced during the next analysis process. Identification of the Pedagogy of Confidence Framework provided stakeholders with a belief system roadmap that can clarify expectations internally and externally and facilitate more effective planning and future evaluations of the Community Learning Center program. Table 2 provides examples of how the Community Learning Center program responded to the operational practices presented within the Pedagogy of Confidence (Y. Jackson, 2011).

Table 2

Responses and Supports for the Pedagogy of Confidence Operational Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Practice</th>
<th>Example Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and enhance student strength.</td>
<td>Students are given choice in their assignments. The power of choice is that it allows students an opportunity to identify and strengthen their areas of knowledge as well as provide them with opportunities to be exposed to new areas. In addition, a significant amount of opportunities for recognition built into the program. These opportunities seek to highlight and celebrate student strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships.</td>
<td>Communication is highlighted by all participants. The communication that was described used two-way communication patterns but the word choice was intentional. The intentionality of being supportive and empathetic was highlighted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate prerequisites for learning.</td>
<td>This is inclusive to ensure that teachers are educated on the importance of preparing students for learning, which includes intentional teaching of overlearning for basic skills and ongoing introduction to vocabulary terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify student voice.</td>
<td>Based on the document reviewed and the observations, the instructional leaders for the program created opportunities for student to have a voice during their lessons as well as during the interactions with their parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicit high intellectual performance.</td>
<td>There was a focus on literacy that included intentional instruction on phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, sustained reading, and so forth. Based on lessons that were reviewed, it was clear that the instructional leaders for the program aspired to create remediation activities that encouraged students to engage high intellectual performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model Narrative

As set forth in Chapter 3 the evaluator employed a Responsive Evaluation Approach (Stake, 1975, 2004). Employing these prominent events allowed the evaluator to understand the phenomenon with “increasing precision and confidence” (Stake, 2005, p. 92). By illustrating connections, it provides a way for stakeholders to visually spot-check the initiative’s logic as well as identify where additional initiatives may be needed to intervene as well as points out inconsistencies. This has the potential to improve productivity and accountability. Based on insight from the stakeholders, the evaluator was able to construct a model that identifies key program elements that can referenced when establishing the programs theory of change. The model is narrated below and the illustration of the model can be found in Figure 2 in Appendix A.

The problem statement is provided on the left-hand side of the illustrated model. The original position statement was that the Community Learning Center was created to provide high-quality extended learning opportunities for students, parents, and community members; engage in comprehensive early childhood education; and provide physical and mental health services for adults and young people in the neighborhood. The evaluator expanded this statement to include a focus on “fiscally under-resourced communities (low SES)” and reframed the declaration into a problem statement. The opening problem statement is that “a community learning center is needed to alleviate the impact of fiscally under-resourced communities (low SES).” Following the problem statement are the established inputs.

The established inputs include parents, students, school support, district support, paid staff, volunteers, and funding. The inputs represent the identified resources that
stakeholders perceive to be necessary for the program to function. One sub-category within the input was deemed specifically significant. The site-coordinator was a sub-category of paid staff. A single person symbol was placed to represent the significance of the site-coordinator’s influence. Following the input illustration, the logic model moves to activities.

The activities and outputs are both located within a large red box on the logic model. The large red box houses the components that specifically responded to the evaluation questions. At the top of the red box was the heading “Theory of Change.” The Theory of Change heading signifies that the information within, was derived in direct response to evaluation questions, and the analysis used to construct this knowledge provides insight that can be used for the creation of the Theory of Change for the Community Learning Center. Beneath the heading was the established program framework—Pedagogy of Confidence (Y. Jackson, 2011). The Pedagogy of Confidence framework is located within the red box because the analysis concluded that the framework undergirded all three-identified program themes—teacher empowerment, extended learning, and parent engagement.

The three programming themes identified during the analysis is displayed within three different colored rectangular boxes. The top box is identified with a teacher empowerment theme. The box is yellow because the theme takes place during the day school. Within the box there are two pink boxes. Two activity category codes—equity pedagogy and content integration are located within the pink box. The analysis determined that stakeholders believed that by engaging in these two established activities they would obtain a positive academic output. It was established that there were four
evaluation mechanism that could be used to assess the output. The four established evaluation mechanisms are F&P, NWEA, Standard of Learning and academic grades. They can all be used to inform the students’ growth in the area of literacy.

The teacher empowerment rectangular box is connected to the extended learning theme. The arrows moving back and forth from between teacher empowerment and the extended learning program are intended to signify an identified attribute of collaboration. The end analysis determined that a significant amount of collaboration took place between the day school and extended learning program.

Within the extended learning theme there are six activity category codes. Three of the activity category codes are light pink. The light pink category codes include academic remediation, new knowledge, and homework support. The analysis determined that students who engage in all of the activities within the pink category coded boxes from both the teacher empowerment and extended learning theme are expected to have a specific positive outcome. The other three activity codes are located in bright orange boxes. The codes in the orange boxes include social-emotional learning, fitness, and enrichment. The analysis determined that the three activity codes in the orange boxes could influence students’ personal growth. The evaluation metrics identified to assess their influence were discipline and attendance data.

The four established evaluation mechanisms in the area of academic achievement are F&P, NWEA-MAPS, Standard of Learning and academic grades and they can all be used to inform the students’ growth. The dual inclusion of activities from both the teacher empowerment and extend learning was further illustrated by outlining the output box in both blue and yellow. Activity attributes of the extended learning program were
identified by figures. These figures are all within the extended learning box. The crown was identified to show that the program promoted opportunities for student empowerment. The hand represented the use of hands on learning activities.

A dual colored box was located between the improved literacy and improved academic achievement output box. The two colors surrounding the determined category code was blue and yellow—blue to represent the extended learning theme and yellow to represent the teacher empowerment theme. The box was not connected to either theme. The box was placed in this location because the analysis determined that stakeholders believed that teacher retention could potentially be a byproduct of students improved literacy and academic achievement.

The rectangular box below extended learning is parent engagement. Both the extended learning theme and the parent engagement theme are placed within a maroon box. The maroon box signifies that these programs take place during out-of-school hours. The parent engagement theme box has three identified category codes. Two of the activity category codes are located in pale blue boxes—adult enrichment programs and parent support groups. The other activity category code is located in a nautical blue box—student parent connectors. During the analysis, no output connection was identified therefore the pale blue box was empty. The analysis did determine an output for student-parent connectors. The output identified that parent participation sign-in sheets would show enhanced parent involvement.
Interpretation of Findings

In triangulating analyses of interviews, document reviews, observations, and notes, there were three findings that stood out: 1) the recognized resource assumptions, 2) the lack of rationale for chosen activities, and 3) the omitted but vital resources.

Recognized Resource Assumptions

The comprehensive analysis identified a total of six inputs also known resources on the logic model—school support, district support, funding, parents and students, volunteers, and paid staff. Recognized resource assumptions were identified because of the strategic knowledge, capacity to act on that knowledge, relationships with other allies or constituents, and control of financial resources that need to be strategically considered as stakeholders collaboratively craft a Theory of Change for the Community Learning Center program.

School and district support. A significant resource of the Community Learning Center was their inter-organizational collaborations between the program and the district. Due to the ever-increasing demands by students who participate in the full-service, or modified variation, school programs require inter-organizational collaboration to address the wide range of variables (e.g., academic, behavioral, social-emotional, motivation) that negatively impact students (Ehrhardt-Padgett, Hatzichristou, Kitson, & Meyers, 2004).

Often full-service community school programs include nutritional services, medical care, student leisure activities, in-service professional learning for staff, school teachers, and/or parents.

In conjunction with that, providing this high-level of service to students, and parents requires collaboration between the district and the community learning center.
staff. During the interview, it was identified that a number of district policies had to be changed to allow for the implementation of certain aspects of the programming provided under the community learning center umbrella. An example of this was transportation. Transportation was a concern for parents who needed supervision for their children after 6 p.m. The Community Learning Center program implemented a policy that allowed elementary students participating in the program to receive bus transportation home.

**Funding.** Throughout the analysis, it was clear that there were a number of funding sources identified to support programming. Some of such identified sources included the 21st century state grant, a grant for robotics equipment from a local foundation, as well as mini-grants that had been identified to purchase diverse book sets for instruction. It is best practice that key program stakeholders engage in consistent and ongoing conversations about funding to ensure program sustainability.

**Parents and students.** A significant resource that surprisingly was not identified until the second round of interviews were parents and students. Interestingly the beneficiary stakeholders, who participated in the first round of interviews, did not view themselves as a resource. To ensure that the programs offered at the Community Learning Center are truly meeting the needs of the beneficiaries, the students and families need to be involved in the decision-making process. Decision-making opportunities allow families to view themselves as partners in the decision-making process on educational decisions that have an impact on their children (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, 2017b). Researchers identified that the most successful type of parental involvement programs identified to promote academic gains were the ones that emphasized a teacher-parent partnership. These programs did not use a “one and done”
workshop model, but promoted the idea of parents and teachers collaborating to develop “common strategies, rules, guidelines, and expectations to support the student” (Maier et al., 2017, p. 57). They also advocated holding participatory roles in parent-teacher-student organizations, school advisory councils, and school committees (Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000; Epstein, 1987).

**Volunteers.** The identification of appropriate volunteers was noted. Volunteers were found to support activities or programming during the Community Learning Center program. Research has shown that using volunteers has short and long-term benefits for students (Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000). This is because the people who assist with programming become natural champions in the community and in the district for the importance of the program. Many volunteers came from entities outside the community. Significant effort was expended to try to engage parents, and community members to volunteer in the program.

**Paid staff.** Past researchers identified three comparable features for having a successful after-school program. The first was the importance of having quality staffing (Little et al., 2008). This was included as part of the paid staff coding category. Many researchers argue that success is achievable when school administrators embrace the ideologies of collective trust in support of a collaborative environment (Schneider, 2012). Providing staff opportunities for their voice to be heard and their ideas considered, is an integral part of building commitment. Research has shown that staff commitment is associated with job effort (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1991), which in turn enhances job satisfaction (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Blasé, Dedrick, & Strathe, 1986; Brackett, Palomera, Mosja-Kaja, Reyes, & Solovey, 2010). It is not only important
to have quality staff but also to provide them with professional development that gives them the skills to support student success. Research has shown that students are most successful when staff model positive behavior, actively promote students’ skills, provide feedback to students, and establish clear expectations (Birmingham et al., 2005).

**Site coordinator.** Not all full-service schools have a site-coordinator due to financial constraints but having a coordinator is widely recognized as a best practice (Calfee et al., 1998; D. Huang, Cho, Mostafavi, & Nam, 2010; Little et al., 2008). The Community Learning Center program had a full-time paid site coordinator. The analysis identified the presence of a strong leader in the site coordinator. This resource was highlighted on the logic model due to the unsolicited belief by the beneficiary stakeholders that this person’s impact on program implementation and facilitation was the most significant. This was especially espoused by the parents of the participating students.

Based on an analysis of comments, the site coordinator was perceived to have strong communication skills. For example, one parent described how important it was for her to be able to see all the exciting things her child did. She went on to express she appreciated the site coordinator for updating Facebook with weekly photos of participants. Another parent praised the site coordinator’s accessibility.

The establishment of regular and meaningful communication between the home and school ensures that families are informed about school programs and children’s progress. Often there is a lack of understanding of parents’ communication styles. It is suggested that to increase access and to improve student outcomes of children in underserved communities it is important to streamline communication, ensure visibility,
provide resources via communication and/or websites, host informational meetings, and create policies to match the language needs of diverse communities (Maier et al., 2017). Studies conducted on the best forms of communication and engagements with parents in support for school improvement encompassed phone calls home, face-to-face meetings, and teacher-parent partnerships (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2012; Maier et al., 2017). Research emphasizes the importance of engagement between school and families (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a). The communication between school and families has a positive impact on the development of reading habits, increased student motivation, reduction in behavioral problems, and improvement of social-emotional factors (Castro et al., 2015; Niehaus & Addelson, 2014; Usher & Kober, 2012). Some efforts at increasing involvement fail because there is a mismatch in the communication styles of families and teachers. This is often due to cultural and language differences (Caplan, 2000).

Universally, the site coordinator was perceived as a strength, even though there was a unified concern noted by the stakeholders who were designated as beneficiaries of the program. The concern was that the site coordinator would be unable to sustain current efforts. Currently, the site coordinator willingly visits the students’ communities wherein such visits serve to mitigate parental fear and distrust. The coordinator makes these visits to homes and apartment complexes within the community. Based on the field notes, the site coordinator seemed stressed during the interview. Perhaps she did not feel comfortable with the quality of the answers or was overwhelmed by the idea that the program may not be performing adequately. Throughout the evaluation process, the evaluator observed that the site coordinator seemed inundated with tasks. One way to
address this might be to invoke three leadership principles of shared responsibility, collaborative leadership (responsibility) model and collective trust.

Shared responsibility is also known as distributed leadership and requires that principals identify a coalition of teacher leaders who have the skills to meet identified objectives while promoting continuous learning and provides them with opportunities for shared decision-making. One study used the national database to examine the effects of professional (administrative and peer) support on teacher commitment and found the largest effect on teacher commitment was principal leadership (Singh & Billingsley, 1998). This study identified that teachers were most committed when their school administrators fostered a shared vision, goals, and values, and promoted a supportive environment that emphasized professional growth (Singh & Billingsley, 1998).

Collaborative leadership focuses on relationship building and the use of shared responsibility principles (Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006). In the report, Community schools as an effective school improvement strategy: A review of the evidence, similar characteristics between CLC and high-quality schools provides a climate that allows for a safe and trusting relationship to be built between schools and families (Maier et al., 2017). Strong connections between schools and out of school time programs, along with strong community collaboration, are crucial to the success of this initiative. A school seeking to implement any new program must have strong leadership skills and the ability to create conditions that support all parties involved in the program implementation (Gulsen & Gulenay, 2014).

Collaborative leadership requires the leader to shift from personal control to a model that promotes shared power and collaborative decision-making. Instead of a single
entity driving the programming. Instead staff and parents, as appropriate, are invited to collaborate and share the responsibility for leadership. Collaborative leadership promotes a collective trust amongst all the contributing stakeholders. School leaders, teachers, parents, and students must recognize that they are valuable contributors to the school quality. Scholars have noted that stakeholders thrive, even in difficult schools, when school administrators embrace the ideologies of collaborative leadership and collective trust staff shows increased commitment (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011). Staff commitment is associated with job effort (Mowday et al., 1982; Rosenholtz, 1991) which in turn enhances job satisfaction (Blase, Dedrick & Strathe, 1986; Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Brackett et al., 2010) and increases likelihood of retaining staff. These ideas are not only for schools but should extend into extended learning. Embracing these ideologies would not only lessen the burden of expectations amassing on the site coordinator but could positively impact staff retention. Staff retention was identified as a significant concern by 6 out of the 10 individuals interviewed.

**Omitted but Vital Resources**

The omitted vital resource needed to be identified because it should assist with issue framing, message development, targeted communications, advocacy, and sustainability.

**Lead agency.** The most significant concern entailed the entities that were not identified as resources. The most notable was the omission of the lead agency. The lead agency is the entity that was willing to make the long-term commitment to partner with the school district to design, implement, manage, and sustain the community learning center. Surprisingly they were not mentioned, not even by individuals who were
employed by the lead agency. This is potentially problematic because it showed a lack of appreciation for the significance of the lead agency’s role. Lead agencies are not only important internally but also serve as intermediaries that link numerous partners and organizations throughout the school and within the community. In some instances, they constitute the entity that is charged with identifying funding sources and providing oversight. Based on a follow-up conversation, it was identified that the lead agency was solely charged with securing most of the public and private funding for the programming.

**Community.** Community collaboration requires the formation of connections with local agencies, businesses, religious organizations, cultural groups, and community organizations with the common goal that everyone needs to share responsibility for students’ future success (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a). As explained in Chapter 4, the Community was not listed as a resource for the Community Learning Center. Omitting the Community is significant. Community should serve as core component for engaging supports and services. Community can provide human and fiscal resources. For example, schools can set up programs with local merchants to offer discounts for families who are involved with the school (Duncan, 2002). More important, they provide insight into how to engage in efforts to address issues of concern within the community; not only short-term solutions but long term programs that benefit students (Caplan, 2000; Drake, 2000; Epstein, 1987).

Moreover, sustaining a quality relationship with the community is the role of program leaders including the lead agency, school leadership, and site coordinator. This includes engaging in a collaborative leadership model. Blank, Jacobson, and Melaville (2012) explain that Community Learning Center programs that engage a collaborative
leadership model explicitly work with community members to ensure a common vision among partners, structure ongoing activities to engage community stakeholder in an open dialogue about challenges and solutions, to assist with identifying and leveraging community resources.

**Lack of Rationale for Chosen Activities**

One significant area of weakness regarding the importance of safety was the seeming disconnect in the perceptions of stakeholders who are beneficiaries and key stakeholders charged with program implementation. Educators can sometimes suffer from a “kitchen sink” syndrome of doing a little bit of everything and expecting change. Identifying which strategies are most promising within a particular theoretical framework, and establishing a rationale, can provide some guardrails and guidance for making strategic choices with limited resources.

For example, the first event of interviewing stakeholders identified that safety factors related to out-of-school time for students was the most significant reason community learning centers were needed. The identified needs were used to establish the output and based on current programming. Based on the findings from the needs assessment conducted in 2015-2016, safety was not identified as a significant area of need. The lack of acknowledgment explains why the choice of activities and programming did not reflect consideration for this concern. For example, the Extended Learning program only runs Monday through Thursday from 3:45 pm to 5:30 pm. Extended Learning activities do not take place on Fridays. Had there been recognition of the concern for student safety within the community, they may have extended the program for the entire week.
Suggestions to Improve Practice

The remainder of the discussion will outline four suggestions to improve practice at Community Learning Center based on insights identified during the analysis process. The first two suggestions were identified because they have been found to assist with the immediate need for staff identification and retention—blended staff and professional learning communities. Staff identification and retention was identified as a significant concern for the current program by 6 of the 10 stakeholders. The third suggestion was identified to ensure fidelity to the Full-Service Community School paradigm. A core requirement of this paradigm is the determination of a common vision (e.g., goals, progress indicators) for the Community Learning Center program. A vision that align with the needs of the community. The last suggestion is the need for a creation of an ongoing evaluative model. An ongoing evaluative model will support program fidelity to their model, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact.

Blended Staff

One suggestion for improvement would be the blending of staff between the day school and the extended learning component of the Community Learning Center program. It would be helpful if the part-time paraprofessionals were given the opportunity to become full time and split the day between day school and extended day program. Blending staff entrenches the understanding of how the program works. How the students are individually engaged while at the Community Learning Center is relevant to the overall program. At Community Learning Centers, school day teachers are asked to assist with the planning and implementation of after-school programs. The intentional hiring of staff with an understanding of the school allows them to speak a similar
language. Having a similarity of language has the potential to bridge the experiences that occur within the Community Learning Center program and the school. For example, teachers or paraprofessionals in the evening program may send an email, or stop by and speak with a students’ teachers, in their regular classroom to explain a de-escalation technique that was effective at supporting self-regulation or they could share a students’ academic success. The use of blended mid-day staff may also assist with staff retention because both the teachers and students are more engaged, resulting in positive outcomes that serve to boost the morale of all involved.

**Professional Learning Communities**

In the position paper, *Nine Elements of Effective School-Community Partnerships to Address Student Mental Health, Physical Health, and Overall Wellness*, issued jointly by the Institute for Educational Leadership, Coalition for Community Schools and the National Association of School Psychologist, insight is provided into the best practices for the implementation of Community Learning Center partnerships (Roche & Strobach, 2016). One of their recommendations was that school leaders, staff, and community partners, engage in continuous high-quality professional development as well as participate in regular meetings with stakeholders. These regular meetings should be designed to enhance relationships between the stakeholders as well as to ensure cohesion in the delivery of services by promoting the development of a common vocabulary, instruction on best practices, and a rationale for policy and procedural changes as necessary.

Fullan (2001) suggests that there is an emerging consensus about the shifts in practice that are needed to make professional learning more effective and recommends
the use of professional learning communities. Other research identified that when teachers do not obtain professional support, they have increased feelings of helplessness and frustration (Blase, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1991). In addition, it is recommended that professional development sessions with all stakeholders participating (school staff and community partners) meet regularly to ensure that they learn the same content and best practices to build trust by engaging in group learning (Roche & Strobach, 2016). Building in high-level professional learning may assist with identifying and retaining Community Learning Center staff.

**Needs Assessment**

Based on the interviews, there seems to be an unclear vision of the program among all the stakeholders. When their visions are compared to the actual priorities, the discrepancies are even more significant. Many of established activities and outputs do not have an impact on the priority areas. There may need to be increased collaboration with outside entities to ensure the other established priorities are provided with increased financial support. This may include a realignment of resources. In either case, strong consideration should be given to collaboratively embarking on completing a community needs assessment that provides a contextual understanding of the students’ home and

The needs assessment involves multiple kinds of data including, but not limited to, student data, community data, and community resource assessments. Student data assesses standardized academic achievement, attendance, course completion, graduation, school health needs, and so forth. Community data assesses socio-economic factors, health status, transportation, crime rates, food accessibility; and community resource assessments provide macro-mapping for available resources (i.e., healthcare,
employment, transportation) within the community (Children’s Aid Society, 2011; Dryfoos, 1994; Dryfoos et al., 2005; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017b). Community school leaders use this data to establish goals in support of student and family development, as well as to create milestones. Developing a collaborative planning process for planning and executing a needs assessment provides an opportunity to build relationships between the lead agency and the school community. It also identifies a shared vision for the program.

**Evaluation**

The fourth suggestion is that the Community Learning Center program engage in regular cycles of program evaluation. The establishment of a theory of action is a positive step towards this effort. The evaluator should use the insight from this evaluation to embark on a determination of their pathway of change. The insight provided within the analysis and discussion should be helpful to key stakeholders as they embark on pathways of change. The pathway of change requires they not only define expectations, assumptions, and features of their change process with specificity and clear intent but also engage in an ongoing evaluative cycle. The evaluative cycle should include measures to ensure that the Community Learning Center programming is actively meeting the identified outputs in support of their outcomes as well as assess if the established outcome align with the current needs of the school and community (Maier et al., 2017).
Conclusion

The *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents* (Hagan, Shaw, & Duncan, 2017) provided empirical evidence of the adverse social and environmental effects of poverty on children to include infant mortality; delayed growth and development; chronic health concerns; compromised mental health, behavioral health and relational development; as well as poor academic progress. Community Learning Center want to use schools as a hub of support for students and their families, featuring partnerships that respond to the challenges students face inside and outside of the classroom and it is imperative that a clear Theory of Change articulated. Engaging in this constructivist program evaluation provides an analysis that allows stakeholders to see the phenomenon in a multifaceted manner. The primary goal of the evaluation was to identify the program elements. The program elements are found within the model. The model is important, but the expansive analysis process provided meaningful insight into the context of the phenomenon. This information could be used to inform stakeholders during the process of establishing the programs Theory of Change.

The model and narrative constructed during the program evaluation process provided the lead stakeholders with an overview of the component within their current pathway for change. In addition, it provided a common language for stakeholders to use during the Theory of Change discussions. Second, it informed stakeholders about the perceived connections between current activities and chains of outcomes as well as determined what areas need additional clarification. As stated earlier in this chapter a broader discussion is needed to determine the appropriateness of current program priorities because current programming does not seem to adequately addresses the
established priorities. It is the hope of the evaluator that stakeholders acknowledged this during their Theory of Change discussion.

The literature review and analysis within the paper should be used a reference during the Theory of Change discussion. The social science research, as well as the analysis of the assumed linkages, and outcome paths, will provide fodder for the Theory of Change discussion about what areas needs to be added, refined or enhanced. This includes, but is not limited to, assumptions held by stakeholders; appreciation of specific implementation characteristics; beliefs driving the identification of program strategies; and the response to challenges. The evaluator believes the insights from the analysis can shape the thinking about what conditions are necessary for success, which methods to undertake in which circumstances, and what changes need to be achieved along the way.

This evaluation is only the first step in untangling the beliefs and assumptions about the inner workings of the program by identifying the causal connections within the context of the phenomenon. It is important that educators, advocates, and funders all have a common understanding about the beliefs and assumptions on how change will happen within the program. By clearly articulating their particular worldview or theory guiding their work, programs are more effective, and funders are more likely to provide resources when they feel there is a clear pathway for change. Addressing any issue necessitates high levels of specificity but alleviating the factors of poverty requires a well-defined pathway that moves from established goals to the intended impact. This program evaluation serves as a solid footprint.
Efforts to Minimize Bias

In the evaluator’s official role as a Director with the School District, it was vital that she not only maintain a professional distance from the program before the start of the evaluation but also not infuse recommendations within the closing discussion. Keeping professional distance from the program was difficult. This school has the highest number of free and reduced students in the district, and it is the lowest performing elementary school in the district. In the evaluator’s official capacity, it is essential to engage with this school, but the Superintendent permitted a hands-off approach for the duration of this evaluation. As the Director of Equity & Diversity the author now plans to take an active role in championing the needs of the school and supporting the Community Learning Center program, because of my belief that it can alleviate the factors of poverty for students.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a small sample of stakeholders; although, there were representatives of all stakeholder groups except for the students and external collaborators. In future studies, it would be important to obtain insights from the students. Students are the most significant beneficiaries of the program and need an opportunity to have a voice. In a time of funding limitations, there is a great need for community partnerships and collaborations, but these collaborations must be strategic and practical. In the future, community collaborators also need to be included in the program evaluation. For this design, it was determined that the inclusion of both parties was not needed, but other evaluations should employ their input because it significantly
contributes to the knowledge base and will assist with designing the most effective Community Learning Center program for the identified school community.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Recommended areas for future study entail analyzing the role of site coordinators to identify high-quality characteristics, evaluating the quality of reading programming and determining students’ and families’ needs for extended learning programs. Additionally, assessing the measures for instructor qualifications outside of the broader measure of teacher certification would be crucial and productive. Hill, Rowan, and Ball (2005) found that instructors’ relative confidence in their subject matter may have more of a positive impact on student achievement, but there is no significant research on highly effective instruction qualities needed for extended learning programs. Another area is a lack of time for professional development in support of behavior and instructional planning. Therefore, additional research on best practices for providing professional development for extended learning staff is necessary.
Appendix A – Figures 1, 2, and 4

Figure 1. Is a visual depiction of how community learning centers premised on the full-service community school paradigm responds to the needs put forward in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model.
Figure 2. Model that was shown to the focus group during Cycle three of the analysis process. The model outlined the perceived need for the Community Learning Center program, inputs, activities, assumptions, and outputs. This model unlike the final model included information about funding sources.
Figure 4. The final conceptual logic model is derived from the three-cycle constant comparative analysis process. A complete narrative of the model can be found within the conclusion section.
## Appendix B. Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Focus Areas</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
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</table>
| Needs Identification (Baseline) | Stakeholder Group 1 | 1. What is an Elementary School Community Learning Center (CLC)?  
2. Why do you think an Elementary School Community Learning Center (CLC) was established at the Elementary School?  
3. What do you think they want to accomplish by having a 21st Century Learning Center (CLC) at Elementary Stakeholder Group 2? |
|                              | Stakeholder Group 2 | 4. Please identify the program priorities for Community Learning Center (CLC)?  
5. What are the established goals for the Elementary School Community Learning Center (CLC)? |
| What are the inputs (activities) identified by program stakeholders (school leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, lead agency representatives)? | Stakeholder Group 1 | 6. What type of activities and programs does the Elementary School Community Learning Center (CLC) offer? |
|                              | Stakeholder Group 2 | 7. What are the specific programs and activities that have been implemented to address the identified program priorities?  
8. Are there particular strategies or best practices that undergird the programs and activities you identified? If so, what are they? (if asked for clarity, only ask them about the activities they identified not those identified by other participants mentioned by stakeholder group #1 in a follow-up question) |
| What are the outputs (service utilization) identified by program stakeholders (school leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, lead agency representatives)? Service Utilization as defined by the Theory of Change. Sis premised on the program’s assumptions and expectations about how to reach the target population. | Stakeholder Group 1 | 10. Do you believe the programs and activities you identified respond to the needs of the school community?  
11. Assumptions: What things do you believe support or hinder the success of the programs and activities being offered by the 21st CLC program? * |
<p>|                              | Stakeholder Group 2 | 12. How do these programs and activities respond to the identified program priorities of the school community? (if asked for clarity, ask them only about the activities they identified in question #7 and ask them about other program and activities mentioned by stakeholder group #1 in a follow-up question) |
|                              |                      | 13. What is the desired change or impact intended as result of successful implementation of your efforts? |
|                              |                      | 14. Assumptions: What change processes are already underway in your “ecosystem”, and how do they influence the outcomes that your program wants to achieve? |
|                              |                      | 15. Assumptions: What internal and external things might impact the success of the 21st CLC program? (such as political, economic and social factors) |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the impacts (outcomes) identified by program stakeholders (school leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, lead agency representatives)?</td>
<td>Stakeholder Group 1</td>
<td>16. How would participants, families, and/or communities be different as a result of the 21st CLC program?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stakeholder Group 2</td>
<td>17. <strong>Assumptions:</strong> What pre-conditions are needed to ensure the change is sustainable?</td>
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<td>18. <strong>Evaluative Mechanisms:</strong> How will you know that the identified programs and activities are effectively addressing the identified program priorities?</td>
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What are the assumptions that inform program conditions (assumptions) identified by program stakeholders (school leaders, program coordinators, teachers, parents, lead agency representatives)?

*Questions are identified by the asterisk because I have chosen to weave them throughout the interview process.*
Appendix C. Consent for Participation in Research Interview

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Monica Manns. I understand that this is a formative program evaluation designed to gather information about the Theory of Change used within the Elementary School Community Century Learning Program. I will be one of approximately 10-15 people being interviewed for this research. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes.

1. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be making. If I do not want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study. I understand that most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

2. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one on my campus will be told.

3. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies that protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

4. I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview, which may reveal my identity or the identity of the
interviewees. Recorded interview will be sent to an (outside entity), you will be identified by (list all that apply: direct personal identifier or code number, etc.). The list that matches your name with the code number will be kept in a fire resistant locked file in my home office.

5. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in my dissertation or future conference presentation or publication.

6. I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

7. I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in [specify location, security arrangements and who has access to data] until [specific relevant period – for students this will be until the exam board confirms the results of their dissertation].

8. No faculty and administrators from my campus will be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.

9. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Studies Involving Human Subjects: Behavioral Sciences Committee at the William and Mary – School of Education. For research problems or questions regarding subjects, the Institutional Review Board may be
contacted through [information of the contact person at IRB office of William and Mary – School of Education].

10. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

11. I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

12. I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

13. Names, degrees, affiliations and contact details of researchers (and academic supervisors when relevant) will be provided upon request.

14. During the initial interview process, all participating teachers and parents will be given to $25 Visa card and an additional $10 Visa card if they are asked to participate in a follow-up interview.

To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, there will be no more risk of harm than you would normally experience in daily life. The anticipated risks associated with participation in this research will be minimal and I have been given a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

____________________________ ________________________
Participant’s Signature Date

____________________________ ________________________
Researcher’s Signature Date

For further information, please contact: Prof. [Name of Principle Investigator] [Contact Information of PI]

150
Appendix D. Final Category Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle One &amp; Cycle Two</th>
<th>Cycle Three</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alleviate Poverty</td>
<td>Teacher Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>(New) Teacher Empowerment</td>
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Theory of Change: Input, Activities, Output, Impact

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle One &amp; Cycle Two</th>
<th>Cycle Three</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Safety</td>
<td>Parent Support Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance Academic Achievement</td>
<td>Improved Literacy (F &amp; P, North West Evaluation Association – NWEA, Academic Grades)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students’ Personal Growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Retention</td>
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<td>Paid Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary Staff</td>
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<td>Site coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
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<td>Fitness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrichment (student)</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEAM</td>
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<td>Social Emotional Learning</td>
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<td>Academic Remediation</td>
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<td>Literacy Instruction</td>
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<td>New Knowledge (exposure)</td>
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<td>Homework (assessment) Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Parent Connector</td>
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<td>Adult Enrichment Programs</td>
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<td>Learning should be fun (hands-on)</td>
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<td>Opportunities for empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program-to-school collaboration</td>
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<td>Parent Engagement</td>
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<td>School Support</td>
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<td>District Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRE: Content Integration (Diverse Literature)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRE: Equity Pedagogy (Urban Literacy Consultant)</td>
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<td>Enhanced parental involvement</td>
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<td>Parent Support Group</td>
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<td>Hands-On Learning</td>
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<td>Empowerment Collaboration</td>
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<td>Private Grants</td>
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<td>District Support</td>
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<td>21st Century Grant</td>
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<td>Resource: Students &amp; Parents</td>
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<td>Improved academic achievement (NWEA, Academic Grades)</td>
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<td>Enhanced parent involvement (participation sign-in)</td>
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<td>Student personal growth (discipline referrals, school attendance).</td>
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<td>Ped. of Con.: Identifying and activating student strengths</td>
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<td>Ped. of Con.: Integrating prerequisites for academic learning</td>
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<td>Ped. of Con.: Amplifying student voice</td>
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<td>Teacher Retention (Human Resources)</td>
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<td>Alleviate Factors of Poverty</td>
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Appendix E. If-Then Causal Link Statements

#1. If participating teachers participate in all of the program components for teacher empowerment
   ○ urban literacy instructional coaching (equity pedagogy which is intentional identification of student support known to work with specific student groups)
   ○ diverse materials recommendation (content integration which is the intentional inclusion of cultural and racial diversity information during instruction)
   then they will have increased literacy instruction skills that will prepare them to better support students with an urban instructional orientation and an additional by product could be increased teacher retention in day school based on human resource records. In addition, the students who also participate in the extended learning program are provided with the following program elements:
   ○ Academic Remediation - strengthening and building students’ knowledge with a focus on literacy that include intentional instruction on phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, sustained reading, etc.
   ○ New Knowledge (exposure) - new knowledge assist with comprehension
   ○ Literature Instruction focus on literacy that include intentional instruction on phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, sustained reading, etc.
   then students will have improved academic achievement scores that will be measured by F & P scores, student grades, NWEA-Maps and SOL scores.

#2. If students participate in all of the program components for the extended learning program, then they will experience personal growth based on their quarterly self-evaluation report cards, discipline reports, increased academic and literacy achievement measured by F & P scores, student grades, NWEA-Maps and SOL scores.

#3. If students participate in the following program components
   ○ fitness
   ○ enrichment activities
   then students will be more engaged which will be measured by attendance reports.
#4. If students participate in the extended learning program, then they will be safe from negative community influences and potential community violence will be measured by (no evaluation mechanism identified).

#5. If parents engage in
- Adult enrichment activities
- Parent support groups
then (no clear expected effect identified) and it will be measured by (no evaluation mechanism identified).

#6. If parents engage in student – parent connector activities then they will become more active in their child academic skills development which will increase student academic achievement which will be measured by their F & P scores, student grades, NWEA-Maps and SOL scores and an additional by product could be increased teacher retention in day school based on human resource records and it is perceived that parents who provide academic assistance to their child will have higher levels of academic achievement which will be measured by F & P scores, student grades, NWEA-Maps and SOL scores.

#7. If six of the seven high operational practices based on the Pedagogy of Confidence (Jackson, 2007) are provided opportunities that includes
- Identifying and activating student strengths
- Building relationships
- Eliciting high intellectual performances
- Providing enrichment
- Integrating prerequisites for academic learning
- Amplifying student voice
then students will be engaged and show academic achievement and literacy achievement in day school which will be measured by F & P scores, student grades, NWEA-Maps and SOL scores and an additional by product could be increased teacher retention in day school based on human resource records.
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PROFESSIONAL TITLES HELD
Director of Equity & Diversity* Educational Consultant *Preventative Specialist * Vice-President of Educational Services & Training * Director of Education / Principal * Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Coordinator * Special Education Department Chair * Special Education Teacher * Rehabilitation Counselor *Vocational Coordinator

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Henrico County Public Schools Richmond, VA
Director of Equity and Diversity 2018 – Current
As the first Director of Equity and Diversity I have championed, facilitated and stewarded processes and programs that support the district staff and schools in becoming even more equitable and inclusive. In this role, I serve as a strategic thinker, deep listener, educator, coach, and connector.

C & M Educational Consulting Group - Lead Consultant Richmond, VA
Lead Consultant 2013 – Present
Assessed the needs of educational programs through data desegregation, staff interviews, student & family interviews, and information gathered from other appropriate individuals or school data. Provided Professional Development & Coaching (i.e. classroom management, co-teaching, differentiated instruction) for staff on evidenced based practices that appropriately impact the academic and social – emotional growth of students and young adults.

Preventative Specialist (HCPS) 2014 – 2016
Collectively designed and provided oversight for a team purposed to implement the school HCPS 3-tiered model of mental health and behavioral programming developed to support students and staff. The focus was on preventative services that used transformative practices to decrease risk factors and build resilience in students.

Virginia Home for Boys and Girls - John G. Wood School Richmond, VA
Vice President of Educational Services & Training 2011 – 2013
Director of Education/Principal
Reviewed, Revised, and Implemented policies & procedures that successfully allowed VHBG to meet all federal, state, & local licensing and accreditation requirements for private day school programs in Virginia. Received the highest pass rates ever acquired, one of the highest in the state. Implemented instructional revisions that emphasized academic & behavioral data collection and promoted the utilization of evidence-based learning techniques that incorporated higher order and real-life learning principles.

Department of Correctional Education Richmond, VA
Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Coordinator 2007 - 2009
Ensured compliance with state and federal special education guidelines for students with identified educational needs. Responsibilities included, managing and appropriating program budget; conducting and monitoring the implementation of student’s individualized education plan (IEP), 504 & Gifted Plans; and ensured the inclusion of students with varied needs in all aspects of the educational program with a focus on equity and improvement.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATES
Educational Doctorate (Ed.D.) in Leadership and Policy with an emphasis in Special Education Administration William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA, May 2019
Educational Administration & Leadership Certificate VCU, Richmond, VA Fall 2006
Masters of Education Special Education Emphasis Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA May 2003
Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, Dec. 1997
Bachelor of Arts in Middle Grades Education Berea College. Berea, KY, Spr. 1995