

Educators Learning Lessons From Multilingual Family Engagement Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Cory Buxton, Kathryn McIntosh, Barbara Ettenauer, and Karen Thompson

Abstract

We report on a project to support teachers and district administrators working with multilingual learners as they deepened relationships and understandings with multilingual families in five Oregon school districts. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which radically shifted the ways educators engaged with students' families, we repurposed this ongoing research to answer the question: How did teachers' and supporting administrators' conceptions of and actions to promote multilingual family engagement shift in response to the COVID-19 pandemic? Further influenced by the concurrent national protests for racial justice, we consider how teachers and administrators engaged in liberatory work as they questioned structures that had previously seemed inevitable or unproblematic. Framed using Harro's cycle of liberation, we discuss lessons learned based on systematic data collected from both teachers and administrators from multiple districts and multiple time points before and during pandemic-impacted schooling.

Key words: family engagement, multilingual learners, COVID-19 pandemic, anti-racist education, Teachers Educating All Multilingual Students, educators

Introduction

The ongoing Teachers Educating All Multilingual Students (TEAMS) project supports teachers in five Oregon school districts in developing knowledge and skills for educating multilingual learners. Participating districts span a range of geographic contexts, including large, mid-sized, and small cities, and economically disadvantaged students constitute between 35–60% of the districts' enrollment. Participating teachers complete coursework leading to a state endorsement in English for Speakers of Other Languages or a Dual Language specialization, supported by facilitators and administrators in each school district. Enhancing family and community engagement is a central component of the TEAMS model. To this end, in collaboration with administrators and district-based facilitators, teachers work in partnership with local community organizations to co-design and co-plan education-focused community events with families of multilingual students as part of their professional learning (Ishimaru, 2019; Zeichner et al., 2016).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these efforts to deepen family engagement shifted suddenly and unexpectedly in Winter 2020 from planning large community events, such as health fairs and cultural exchanges, to building individual connections with families focused on their most basic day-to-day needs in the transition to quarantine and remote learning. In Oregon, where this work took place, in-person schooling shut down in March 2020, and Oregon students remained in virtual instruction for longer than much of the country (Burbio, 2021). The concurrent protests for racial justice in Spring and Summer 2020 further pushed teachers and administrators in the project to think about multilingual family engagement in new ways.

While there is a fast-emerging literature (reviewed below) on both teachers' and administrators' experiences during the pandemic, we are unaware of other studies to date based on systematic data from both teachers and administrators from multiple school districts and at multiple time points, including before the COVID-19 pandemic, shortly after the shift to remote learning, and during the second year of COVID impacted teaching. Thus, our analysis allows us to discuss several issues based on empirical data that have not been addressed previously. This includes guidance for educational leaders and teacher educators about how to support individual teachers' creative actions—while also recognizing the need to center collective responsibility and community focus (Cahapay, 2020; Moss et al., 2020).

As teacher educators and researchers with long-term commitments to justice-centered family engagement work, we have been struck by the unexpected impacts of the pandemic on teachers' experiences engaging with their students'

families (Buxton et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021) and on administrators' evolving thinking about the role of family engagement (Brion & Kiral, 2021; McLeod & Dulskey, 2021). We redirected our ongoing research to document and learn from the ways that participating teachers and administrators began to rethink much of what they believed about multilingual families and what was possible or desirable in terms of family and community engagement. Specifically, we addressed the research question: How did TEAMS teachers' and supporting administrators' conceptions of and actions to promote multilingual family engagement shift in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Emerging Literature on Teachers' and Administrators' Experiences During COVID-19

We conceptualize this work as a productive tension between teachers' and administrators' agency—the power that educators can exert to push for desired change—and the broader structures of educational systems that often resist efforts to disrupt the status quo (Buxton et al., 2015). We see the pandemic as a disrupter of structures that typically constrain educator agency. That is, among the many impacts of the pandemic, it opened new agentic possibilities for educators in radical and unexpected ways (Okilwa & Barnett, 2021). As schools transitioned from in-person to remote learning, existing structures were abandoned by necessity, creating the potential for new ways of thinking and acting (Schlegelmilch & Douglas, 2020).

Given the global scope of the pandemic and its impact on education systems around the world, it is not surprising that there is a rapidly expanding literature documenting and analyzing the multiple influences of COVID-19 on education. One focus of this emerging research has been on teachers' responses as schools shifted to remote learning. Much of the work published to date relies on survey data of how teachers responded, both pedagogically and socioemotionally, to the radical shift in their work. For example, Baker et al. (2021) explored stressors (such as technology and communication challenges) and protective factors (such as supportive administrators) that teachers in New Orleans experienced in the first months of quarantine. The study found that teachers who reported experiencing more stressors also reported more difficulty teaching and coping with the pandemic more broadly. Similarly, Gicheva (2021) made use of extant data from the Basic Monthly Current Population Survey to explore changes in the hours worked by teachers during the pandemic. While the common narrative in education has been that the pandemic required teachers to work more as well as differently, this study added important nuance to that storyline. Gicheva found that overall, teachers' hours decreased early in the pandemic, but then increased substantially in the second

year of pandemic teaching, with the work of veteran and female teachers increasing more than for new teachers and male teachers.

Using a large multistate survey, Kraft et al. (2021) explored the challenges that teachers reported as they engaged their students in remote learning, as well as personal challenges teachers faced balancing their professional responsibilities with other life demands. Results point to a large drop in teachers' overall sense of professional success and self-efficacy in meeting the needs of their students during remote teaching. While teachers in all contexts pointed to numerous challenges, teachers in high-poverty schools and schools serving majority African American populations reported these challenges to be most severe. Teachers also indicated the importance of supportive working conditions as critical to sustaining their sense of success, and particularly the importance of working in schools with strong communication, targeted training, and fair expectations during the pandemic. Similarly, Jones et al. (2021) used a small-scale open-ended survey of teachers in one middle school in the Pacific Northwest to study teachers' perceptions of their students' experiences during the transition to remote learning and of how racial inequities influenced the school's pandemic responses. While largely expressing empathy for the challenges their students faced during the pandemic, most teachers in this study continued to present a colorblind and individualized analysis of pandemic impacts, without recognizing the ways that race and other structural features influenced families' pandemic experiences.

Pandemic responses in education also provided new opportunities to understand the roles that educational leaders and administrators play in such times of rapid change to existing systems. While schools were some of the most highly impacted social institutions during the pandemic, most school leaders had little or no training or experience dealing with a crisis of this scope, scale, or duration, yet were still tasked with making critical decisions with lasting education impacts. For example, based on historical data from past education crises as well as open-ended surveys of school leaders in five districts in the U.S. Southwest, Okilwa and Barnett (2021) described school leaders' efforts at leadership in crisis times, concluding that the most effective school leaders in this crisis were decisive in their decision making, able to clearly communicate their decisions, flexible and responsive to change, and seen as both creative and optimistic in their responses. Similarly, Brion and Kiral (2021) reported on American school leaders struggling to balance responses to the two simultaneous pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism. Those they interviewed expressed that in times of educational and social crisis, the decisions that administrators make are central to how well schools can navigate these crises. A

broader international study by McLeod and Dulskey (2021), reflected the global nature of educational leaders' responses to the pandemic, such as increased attention to supporting care and well-being of employees, better alignment of leadership practices with school values around equity, and planning to build more organizational capacity for managing crises. Together, this emerging literature on the realities of leading schools during a crisis provides consistent suggestions for educational leadership about lessons we can take for the future based on varied pandemic responses during COVID-19.

A final focus of the emerging literature on educational impacts of COVID-19 has been research that looks directly at family responses to remote learning during the pandemic. For example, Garbe et al. (2020) sought to understand the experiences of parents during remote learning to inform future education policy and decision making. Using an online survey of 122 parents, the study focused on parents' perceptions of the various educational struggles experienced during quarantine and school closure. Parents highlighted challenges with balancing responsibilities, learner motivation, accessibility of learning materials, and difficulty of meeting learning outcomes. While these issues showed up in unique ways during remote learning, they also reflect long-standing challenges faced by many families in meeting schools' expectations for family engagement in their children's education.

A related study by Davis et al. (2021) examined the association between distance learning and the mental health of parents who took on the role of proxy educators during the pandemic. Using data from a nationally representative survey of over 3,000 households conducted in March and April 2020 (the National Panel Study of Coronavirus pandemic [NPSC-19]) this study highlighted the effects on parents with children who struggled with distance learning. Over half of responding families claimed to have one or more students who were struggling with distance learning at that point. These families with struggling students reported elevated mental distress when compared with families who claimed that none of their children were struggling.

In sum, there is a rapidly growing literature on the educational impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspectives of teachers, school leaders, and parents. However, most of this research is based on survey data, much is based on a single time point, and nearly all look at only one of these three groups of stakeholders. Further, while some theorizing of this work has occurred, many of the studies to date have provided data snapshots and emergent themes of pandemic impacts without application of a clear framework to guide analysis and interpretation. With those limitations in mind, we next share our framing for the current study.

Theoretical Framework

As teachers and administrators in the TEAMS project began to raise new questions about their roles as educators during the global pandemic and shift to remote learning, we applied Bobbie Harro's (2000) cycle of liberation as a critical framework for exploring transformation of schooling conditions. The cycle of liberation draws from critical pedagogy, and particularly the work of Paolo Freire (2018), to view educators' justice-centered agency as acts of seeing and becoming that evolve as new experiences help us learn to read the world in new ways. More specifically, for Harro, this cycle of liberation develops through six phases of action: waking up; reaching out; building community; coalescing; creating change; and maintaining change. We view the first two phases of the cycle of liberation—waking up and reaching out—as representing *intrapersonal* change focused on one's growing personal awareness and self-education around inequities. The next two phases—building community and coalescing—represent *interpersonal* change as individuals build shared understanding with others as they seek to create more equitable opportunities. The last two phases of the cycle—creating change and maintaining change—represent systemic change, through a focus on enacting those agreed upon changes while considering what would need to happen to sustain those changes over time.

We do not view the cycle of liberation as linear or unidirectional; sometimes individuals move backwards before moving forward again or jump ahead, skipping one or more phases. Nor do we believe that everyone enters the cycle in the same place or moves through it at the same speed. By nature of our unique lived experiences and standpoints, some people may need to spend more time in the intrapersonal phases of the cycle, coming to terms, for example, with the prevalence of systemic racism in our education system, while others may quickly move on to building community for making change. Still, this framework allowed us to connect our ongoing thinking about teachers' agency within and against inequitable structures with the kinds of rapid changes and new insights that are prompted by society-wide upheavals such as a global pandemic. Thus, the cycle of liberation became both a theoretical guide and an analytical framing for our data analysis as we explored the experiences of teachers and leaders in the TEAMS project while they engaged with students and families over time through the pandemic.

Methods

Participants and Settings

A total of 42 teachers and 10 education leaders from five Oregon school districts—identified by the pseudonyms Spruce, Juniper, Birch, Oak, and

Pine—participated in the second cohort of the TEAMS project between Summer 2019 and Fall 2020. Table 1 provides a demographic overview of the participating teachers. Each teacher completed at least six online university courses focused on supporting multilingual learners, with most teachers in the program taking these courses together as a group. In each school district, a district administrator and a district-based TEAMS facilitator supported participating teachers in that district throughout the program. These district-level groups held monthly meetings to provide a combination of academic support for the online coursework, logistical support for progressing through the program, and emotional support for the work of teaching more broadly. Prior to the pandemic, these meetings took place in person and served as a convenient opportunity to collect survey and interview data from participants. These monthly meetings took on new significance after the shift to remote learning. While these meetings shifted to online gatherings as well, they became opportunities for teachers from the same district but different schools to strategize and compare pandemic responses and to problem-solve together.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of TEAMS Teachers

	Spruce	Juniper	Birch	Oak	Pine	Overall
Gender						
Female	100%	88%	86%	75%	80%	86%
Male	0%	13%	14%	25%	20%	14%
Race/Ethnicity						
White	78%	75%	71%	88%	70%	76%
Latino/a	0%	13%	14%	0%	20%	10%
Asian American	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Multiracial	0%	13%	14%	13%	10%	10%
Grade level						
Elementary	67%	63%	86%	75%	50%	67%
Middle	11%	38%	0%	13%	20%	17%
High	22%	0%	14%	13%	30%	17%

The five districts had a variety of similarities and differences in student composition. Table 2 provides demographic information about the K–12 student

population in each district. In all five districts, Latino/a students were the largest minoritized group, but the proportion of students identifying as Latino/a ranged from about 30% in the Spruce district to about 10% in the Juniper district. The Spruce district also had the largest proportion of students who had ever been classified as English learners, at about 30%, and the largest proportion of Asian students, at about 20%. The percentage of students receiving free- or reduced-price lunch ranged from about 30% in the Birch district to 70% in the Pine district.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of K–12 Students in Partner Districts, 2018–19

	Spruce	Juniper	Birch	Oak	Pine
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian	20%	1%	10%	1%	1%
Black/African American	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Hispanic/Latino/a	30%	10%	20%	20%	20%
Multiracial	10%	1%	10%	10%	10%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
White	50%	80%	70%	70%	70%
Ever English Learner	30%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	40%	40%	30%	40%	70%
District Size	Large	Medium	Small	Small	Small

Note. To preserve district anonymity, percentages have been rounded to the nearest 10 (where applicable, rounded to 1 rather than 0, to indicate students' presence). For district size, small refers to districts enrolling under 12,000 students, medium refers to districts as enrolling between 12,000–24,999 students, and large refers to districts enrolling 25,000 students or more (Schirm & Kirkendall, 2010).

Data Collection

Data were collected through focus group interviews administered at three time points and a survey administered at two time points. The authors conducted three rounds of teacher focus group interviews and administrator/facilitator paired interviews in each district: in Fall 2019, prior to the pandemic; in Spring 2020, soon after the shift to remote learning; and in Fall 2020/Winter 2021, during the second school year impacted by the pandemic. Overall, this resulted in 15 teacher focus groups with between 4–10 teachers each,

and 15 interviews with the administrator/facilitator pairs. The teacher focus groups were limited to one hour in duration to fit within the monthly teacher meetings, and most administrator/facilitator interviews were of a similar length. These conversations were transcribed using TEMI transcription software and analyzed using Dedoose qualitative analysis software to document participants' evolving work with family engagement, using the six phases of Harro's cycle of liberation to frame their experiences.

TEAMS was funded by a grant, which required an external evaluation. Surveys were administered to all teachers in the second TEAMS cohort by the grant's external evaluators, before and after teachers' participation in the program, in spring 2019 and Fall 2020/Winter 2021. The survey was originally designed to provide broad feedback to the funder and to grant personnel. For our analysis, we were able to use this deidentified survey data, aggregated at the district level. These surveys asked teachers broad questions about the impact of their participation in the TEAMS project on their beliefs and practices about educating multilingual learners. Topics included learning from the TEAMS coursework, ideas about multilingual learners, and practices related to family and community engagement, among others. For this study, we extracted the survey items related to family and community engagement. We then sorted these items into categories based on the six phases of Harro's cycle of liberation, allowing us to connect the survey data to our focus group interview data. Only teachers in the project participated in this survey; the district administrators and facilitators did not.

Data Analysis

The resulting data were analyzed using theoretical coding (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014) based on the six phases of Harro's cycle of liberation. Four of the authors were involved in the analysis process. The research team worked together to code several transcripts to develop our analytic codebook (MacQueen et al., 1998), defining and providing exemplars of each code. Table 3 shows the resulting codebook that was used to guide the analysis. Remaining transcripts were divided up and coded by three of the authors, with one author finally reviewing and reconciling differences in codes.

After receiving deidentified survey data from the external evaluators, the authors extracted the survey items that aligned with each phase of the cycle of liberation, as indicated in the codebook. One author then calculated the percentage of respondents indicating that they felt confident or very confident in the practices named in the relevant survey items prior to and after TEAMS participation.

Table 3. Cycle of Liberation TEAMS Codebook

Code Name	Definition of Code	Exemplar Code	Survey Items That Align w/Code
1-1 Waking Up	Becoming aware of a situation that is inequitable or problematic or seeing such a situation in a new way; typically an individual “a-ha” moment	I recognized that I’m not available to answer parents’ questions at the times they are available to ask these questions	Make connections between EL and bilingual students’ culture and concepts they were learning
1-2 Reaching Out	Once an inequity or problem has been noticed in a waking up moment, reaching out is talking about that inequity with others to try to understand additional perspectives or to get feedback on one’s own perspective; requires talking with someone else about the issue but not necessarily with those affected, so teachers discussing these issues in TEAMS monthly meetings is an example	I reached out to peers in my cohort to ask if they’re likewise recognizing a disconnect between when parents are trying to help their children and when I’ve been available to support parents	Collaborate with colleagues to better support EL and bilingual students Gather information about students’ home and community resources
1-3 Building Community	In talking with others about an inequity that has been noticed, efforts are made to empathize and see the inequity as a shared issue to be addressed; this building community could involve initial conversations with those who are directly affected with a focus on the new perspective or could also involve continuing with “reaching out” conversations but focused on how the issue affects you as well others (emphasizes an empathy piece that may be missing from “reaching out”)	I began trying to contact parents to ask them when they are most likely to have questions for me and the mode of communication that works best for them (text, phone, email, etc.)	Build positive relationships with parents of EL and bilingual students Serve as a resource and advocate for EL and bilingual students

Table 3, Continued

1-4 Coalescing	Once a shared desire to address an inequity has been reached, the group coalesces around a plan to address the inequity. Parents or other stakeholders need to be directly part of this planning for it to be “coalescing.” If only the teachers/educators are doing the planning this is either reaching out or building community	Based on parent feedback I consider being available from 9–10 pm, three evenings per week to respond to parent questions and provide academic support. I confirm with parents that this is a better time for them.	Collaborate with community members to better support EL and bilingual students Use information about students’ home and community resources to inform your teaching Engage EL families and communities in their child’s education
1-5 Creating Change	Once a shared plan for addressing an inequity is agreed upon, communal action begins to create this change. This may involve just one teacher implementing new approaches with their families or multiple teachers trying similar or different things independently or multiple teachers trying the same or similar approaches	I began making myself available later in the evenings three evenings per week for parent communication, asking parents who do connect with me if this time works better for them and reaching out to parents who do not connect with me to remind them of my availability	Teach in ways that minimize the effects of cultural mismatch between home and school Incorporate family and community knowledge and resources in your classroom Provide culturally and linguistically relevant instruction to EL and bilingual students
1-6 Maintaining Change	Once there is action underway to create change, individuals need to share what is working with leaders who have some control over relevant structures and systems. New systems must be created to maintain meaningful change over time and beyond the work of individuals. Needed to prevent burn out, to share what has worked, and to encourage others to try similar approaches	I talked to my TEAMS facilitator and my school principal about the shift I made to be available to parents later in the evening and the positive changes I saw from this shift. I asked what we could do as a school community to build upon this together	None of the survey items connect to maintaining change

Findings: Progressing Through the Cycle of Liberation

As teachers and administrators in the TEAMS project worked and learned together to support their students and students' families in the shift to remote learning during the pandemic, they reflected a range of evolving beliefs and practices that aligned well with our framing of moving through Harro's cycle of liberation. Because we view the six phases of Harro's cycle as aligning with the three broader categories of intrapersonal change, interpersonal change, and systemic change, we pair Harro's six phases to present the findings in three sections. In each section, we describe the relevant phases of the cycle of liberation, considering patterns across the three time points of our data collection, between teachers and administrators, and across the five school districts. We provide illustrative quotes from the focus group interviews to elaborate on participants' thinking and practices related to family engagement during the pandemic. Finally, we summarize the survey responses for the items that align with the relevant phases of the cycle.

Intrapersonal Changes: Waking Up & Reaching Out

Waking Up

Individuals typically enter the cycle of liberation when a critical incident forces an internal change in what the person believes about how society functions and about the opportunities to which different people and communities may or may not have access. This is the waking up phase. For example, White, middle-class teachers may come to recognize that some of the challenges that seemed to show up as "new" problems during the pandemic, such as students having care responsibilities for younger siblings, were not actually new but were existing challenges that became increasingly visible. In the case of TEAMS participants, these challenges associated with the shift to remote learning resonated with other literature reviewed above, including insufficient technology and internet access, students with substantial responsibilities within their families, issues of food and housing insecurity, and basic trust in how the school system operates.

Interviews with teachers and administrators highlighted a range of examples that indicated ways in which they were waking up to inequities that the pandemic made more visible. Analysis of all interviews identified 207 total examples of waking up behaviors, with 36% of these occurring during Fall 2019 interviews, prior to the pandemic; 40% occurring during Spring 2020 soon after the shift to remote learning; and 24% occurring during Fall 2020 in the second year of remote learning. That is, waking up episodes were present over time, but were most often expressed in the months soon after the start

of quarantine and remote learning. Overall numbers and patterns of waking up incidents were largely consistent between teachers (47%) and administrators (53%). Across the five school districts, one district (Birch) demonstrated substantially fewer waking up episodes (13% of the total), and one district (Juniper) demonstrated substantially more waking up episodes (28% of the total). Two quotes, one from an administrator and one from a teacher, provide a picture of typical waking up episodes we encountered:

One thing we got on quickly was parent connectedness and communicating. What do you have in terms of technology at home? And so, people are saying, yeah, we've got technology. And then we thought, well, no, they actually don't have a laptop. They have a smartphone, but that's really not sufficient to do the online work that you need to do. And then we found out, not everybody has Wi-Fi....So, we've discovered that it's a much larger gap than we thought in terms of families and parents really even feeling comfortable getting on and using a laptop versus their phone. (Birch District leader, Spring 2020)

Often, these waking up insights emerged when a teacher or administrator recognized more clearly how traditional school norms and practices that had been disrupted by the shift to remote learning had previously confounded their thinking about racial and socioeconomic differences, as the following quote illustrates:

I just really feel like [remote learning] has illuminated huge differences in engagement and ability to participate and complete work...and it's almost painful to look at the two different grade books [for my "accelerated" and "on level" classes]. So, I'm really glad we're not grading. I mean if you were to parse it out and see how much of [the difference in participation] is based on race and how much of it is based on poverty....It helped me see what was happening in this remote format. (Pine District teacher, Spring 2020)

Reaching Out

In the second phase of the cycle of liberation, individuals begin to broaden their perspectives and seek to extend their understandings of contradictions that are becoming visible. While reaching out episodes involve communicating with others, the focus at this point is still on intrapersonal growth and increased understanding of challenging issues.

Analysis of interviews identified 230 total examples of reaching out behaviors, with 36% of these occurring during Fall 2019 interviews, prior to the pandemic; 43% occurring during Spring 2020 soon after the shift to remote learning; and 21% occurring during Fall 2020 in the second year of remote

learning. Thus, much like the waking up episodes, the shift to remote learning in Spring 2020 prompted substantial increases in teachers’ and administrators’ articulating efforts at reaching out to others to increase their understanding. One school district (Spruce) described substantially more reaching out episodes (39% of total) than the other four districts, and administrators described more examples of reaching out behaviors than teachers (58% to 42%). Again, two examples, with one from an administrator and one from a teacher, highlight the nature of these reaching out episodes.

One of our goals now really needs to be to reach out to our Latino community as we start thinking and planning for next year and beyond. Whether we will be hybrid or distance learning again or whatever it will be, we need to know, “What are your specific needs that we can take care of, and what should we think about that we haven’t perhaps thought of this spring?” (Oak District administrator, Spring 2020)

While teachers and administrators increasingly perceived the importance of new approaches to build trust and community, they also recognized that academic learning needed support through new ways of reaching out. For example, initial approaches and efforts to contact students in the early days of remote learning were often fruitless and frustrating. Numerous participants pointed to unsuccessful efforts to connect with many of their students and families in the early days of the pandemic, for example:

I was supposed to tutor these kids, but I’ve been calling their cell phone numbers. There is no way to reach many of them. Sometimes they have very unreliable communication. Some families, I think they avoid the calls because they are afraid of, if they’ve received calls before to tell them that their kid is in trouble, that he’s not doing his work or whatever. So, it’s been frustrating, and we really need some new ways to build reliable communication. (Pine District teacher, Spring 2020)

Survey Items for Waking Up and Reaching Out

Table 4. Percentage of Teachers Reporting Being Very Confident or Confident on Survey Items Aligned With Waking Up and Reaching Out

Survey Statement	Before TEAMS	After TEAMS	% Change
Gather information about students’ home and community resources	29%	69%	40
Make connections between bilingual students’ cultures and concepts they were learning	36%	71%	35
Collaborate with colleagues to better support bilingual students	69%	90%	21

Three survey items aligned with the waking up and reaching out phases of intrapersonal development within the cycle of liberation. As can be seen in Table 4, overall, most teachers in the study were only confident about using one of these three practices—collaborating with colleagues to better support bilingual students—prior to their participation in TEAMS. However, at the end of their TEAMS participation, most teachers expressed confidence in their ability to engage in all three of these practices.

When taken together, waking up and reaching out episodes highlight growing intrapersonal awareness about the challenges faced by multilingual families, brought about by the intersection of what teachers were learning from TEAMS coursework and what they were learning from teaching through the pandemic. Remote learning helped participants observe educational and broader social inequities in new ways, including how existing school policies and practices have contributed to those inequities. We interpret the strongest difference in waking up responses between Birch district (low) and Juniper district (high) in our qualitative data as based largely on geographic and demographic differences between these districts. Birch district includes a large university and had many support structures in place for multilingual family engagement prior to the pandemic. This can explain fewer waking up episodes due to existing consciousness of these issues. Juniper is a smaller, more rural, and less ethnically diverse district that had less prior support for multilingual families in place, leading to increased numbers of waking up episodes during the pandemic. We interpret the greater number of qualitatively reported reaching out episodes in Spruce district as due to it being the largest, most urban, and most linguistically diverse district. This has resulted historically in more efforts to reach out and engage parents than in other participating districts, and thus may explain greater efforts to continue reaching out to families following the shift to remote learning.

Interpersonal Changes: Building Community & Coalescing

Building Community

In the third phase of the cycle of liberation, individuals come to recognize that they cannot create meaningful and sustainable change alone, and they look to join in liberatory dialogue with others. In the case of TEAMS participants, the fact that they were already working together in district cohorts with support from leadership eased the process of building community within each cohort. Further, TEAMS teachers began building community with families through home visits (in person with social distancing or virtual), as TEAMS coursework helped teachers see home visits as a viable option for enhancing family engagement. Teachers who conducted home visits gained different experiences and insights when compared to traditional phone calls home or

parent–teacher conferences. In addition to home visits, examples of other actions that promoted community building among educators and families included: resource distribution events including both recreational and academic resources; virtual language classes; teacher professional learning sessions about community organizations; family advisory board meetings; new connections between teachers and university professors; outdoor art activities; and renovation and upkeep of community outdoor play spaces. Thus, teachers recognized that exploring new ways of building community could increase empathy and understanding, leading to different engagement outcomes and the potential for closer personal connections.

Interviews with teachers and administrators highlighted efforts to build community in new ways. Analysis of interviews identified 256 total examples of building community behaviors, with 37% of these occurring during Fall 2019 interviews, prior to the pandemic; 28% occurring during Spring 2020 soon after the shift to remote learning; and 35% occurring during Fall 2020 in the second year of remote learning. Thus, unlike for waking up and reaching out, references to building community fell off in the time period soon after the shift to remote learning but then rose again during the second year of pandemic-affected schooling. More variation in building community was visible across the five school districts, with Spruce (36%) district raising substantially more examples than the other districts, and Oak district (11%) raising substantially fewer references to building community. Administrators again identified more total examples describing building community behaviors than teachers (57% to 43%). Two examples provide snapshots of the sorts of building community episodes that were discussed:

Initially in the spring, when we started the pandemic, I was delivering packages to students in person, and I got to know this family more. And then in the summer...I did some reading tutoring with the student in their backyard...and I got to know the mom and the brothers....It wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for TEAMS and for the pandemic and just learning about their story....They are immigrants from Guatemala, and their experiences put things into perspective for me. (Juniper District teacher, Fall 2020)

TEAMS participants also built stronger communities with each other in their district cohorts as they shared their own struggles as parents, trying to support their own children's remote learning. This helped build empathy for the multilingual families in their districts:

And so, I have seen my daughter who has many comforts in this world, you know...a comfortable living situation, and to see how she has strug-

gled through the isolation even with the technology to connect with her friends every day....So, she has this easy ability to connect with people, [but] it has really been a struggle for her emotionally and her understanding of who she is and how she belongs in this world...and so, I have thought deeply that if she has struggled, how about all the kids and families who don't necessarily have the comforts we do? (Oak District administrator, Winter 2021)

Coalescing

In the fourth phase of the cycle of liberation individuals come to recognize that talking across differences and gaining new knowledge about inequities can strengthen their resolve to take action together and to consider desirable changes to their business-as-usual practices. Once such a shared desire to address an inequity has been reached, the group coalesces around a plan to address it. Parents or other stakeholders need to be part of this planning for it to be considered an example of coalescing in Harro's model. That is, if only the educators were doing the planning, such episodes were considered to be reaching out or building community. For example, one area of emphasis in TEAMS coursework was for teachers to recognize that norms of child-rearing and home life that differ from their own experiences were not wrong, but just different. Teachers and administrators learned to practice listening to what families said they needed as support rather than what the teacher might assume the family needed.

Our interviews highlighted varied coalescing examples of how TEAMS participants more intentionally came together with parents to consider needed actions. Analysis of interviews identified 116 total examples of coalescing behaviors, with 18% of these occurring during Fall 2019 interviews, prior to the pandemic; 31% occurring during Spring 2020 soon after the shift to remote learning; and 51% occurring during Fall 2020 in the second year of remote learning. This pattern of coalescing examples differs from the three previous phases, with few coalescing moments occurring prior to the pandemic and the greatest number of episodes coming from the final time point during the second year of pandemic teaching. Across the five school districts, Spruce district (38%) again included the most examples of coalescing episodes while Oak (9%) provided the fewest examples, with the following quotes exemplify coalescing episodes:

We've had closer family connections recently than we've had in the past and with more families because of COVID. We created a care and connection team that specifically revolves around supporting our families. There were things like home visits that were being done initially at the district level, and now we've moved that to the building level. And we

found that its often students letting us know that something's going on, and then our teachers following up right away to find a pathway for the issue, if the student needs clothes, the family needs housing. (Pine District administrator, Winter 2021)

TEAMS participants were also coming to recognize that their students' families had knowledge relevant to academic goals that could support students' learning, as opposed to pre-pandemic, when participants typically only referred to cultural knowledge when discussing what immigrant parents could contribute to their children's learning:

Are we giving value to the things our students are learning at home and the knowledge that families have? Do we recognize when you are using math and science at home? I started looking at students' moms in a different way. Kind of giving her more power like she's an expert too in certain things and really knowledgeable. We can engage families by showing the kids that their parents are knowledgeable and have things to teach. (Spruce District teacher, Fall 2020)

Survey Items for Building Community and Coalescing

Table 5. Percentage of Teachers Reporting Being Very Confident or Confident on Survey Items Aligned With Building Community and Coalescing

Survey Statement	Before TEAMS	After TEAMS	% Change
Serve as a resource and advocate for bilingual students	31%	98%	67
Engage EL families and communities in their child's education	19%	74%	55
Use information about students' home and community resources to inform your teaching	29%	79%	50
Collaborate with community members to better support bilingual students	26%	62%	36
Build positive relationships with parents of bilingual students	61%	81%	20

Five survey items aligned with the building community and coalescing phases of interpersonal development within the cycle of liberation. As can be seen in Table 5, most teachers in the study were only confident about their ability with one of these five relevant practices—building positive relationships with parents of bilingual students—prior to their participation in TEAMS. Despite the struggles with teaching through the pandemic, most TEAMS

teachers expressed confidence in using all five of these practices by the end of their TEAMS participation.

When taken together, building community and coalescing episodes highlight increasing interpersonal awareness about both the challenges that families faced in the transition to remote learning and the strengths families had to persevere in the face of these challenges. As with the earlier phases, teachers and administrators shared similar insights and examples of building community and coalescing to address academic and societal inequities faced by multilingual learners and their families. In these interpersonal phases, one district (Spruce) consistently raised the greatest number of examples during the focus group conversations, and one district (Oak) consistently raised fewer examples of building community and coalescing. These district-level differences can again be explained at least in part by community demographics. Spruce, as noted earlier, is the largest and most multilingual of the five participating districts, with an established multilingual learning department that was already active in supporting family engagement. Thus, Spruce district teachers and especially administrators were able to reference numerous efforts to connect with parents that were in place prior to the pandemic and could be adapted during remote education. Oak district, which is smaller and less linguistically diverse, was in the midst of politically motivated school district upheaval while also confronting the pandemic. Oak district teachers and administrators may thus have felt less secure reaching out to their multilingual families during this timeframe and/or less secure in discussing these issues during the interviews.

Systemic Change: Creating Change and Maintaining Change

Creating Change

In the fifth phase of Harro's cycle of liberation, participants come together and start to build a new culture that reflects the collective identity of the group. Attention begins to shift toward new understandings of systems and structures that cause inequitable conditions and specific changes that might be made.

Analysis of teacher and administrator focus groups identified 125 total examples of creating change behaviors, with 8% of these occurring during Fall 2019 interviews, prior to the pandemic; 18% occurring during Spring 2020 soon after the shift to remote learning; and 74% occurring during Fall 2020 in the second year of remote learning. We can see that efforts focused on creating change took longer to develop but then became prominent during the second year of pandemic-affected schooling. These episodes of creating change were more evenly distributed across the five school districts than other phases. Still, Spruce district (25%) again had the highest number of episodes, and Oak (14%) had the fewest. Between teachers and administrators, administrators again described more total creating change behaviors than teachers (64% to 36%).

Several TEAMS teachers began taking concrete steps to support new anti-racism efforts in their schools in response to a combination of their TEAMS coursework, the racial justice protests of 2020, and their direct work with families during the pandemic, as described by the administrator in Birch district:

We started a new leadership development group...to become instructional leaders around anti-racist practices. Teachers had to submit an application and talk about why they wanted to be a part of this...and I noticed that there was a solid handful of our TEAMS teachers who applied for this cohort and mentioned...their experiences from TEAMS as part of their motivation for wanting to be in this anti-racist teacher leadership group. (Birch District administrator, Fall 2020)

Other teachers were identifying moments when they had the opportunity and obligation to speak up and challenge the perspectives of colleagues who were failing to recognize structural inequities that influence academic outcomes and perceptions. In the following example, a TEAMS teacher participating in a grade level student support meeting felt compelled to point out how the educator team was focused on students' academic and behavioral issues during remote learning without attention to the lived experiences of the students or recognition of the structural issues that often influence families' abilities to support school expectations:

And I finally said, "Hey...we are not looking at this through an equity lens. What we expect from one kid, who is home alone with his four-year-old sister that he's taking care of, should not be judged [in the same way] as a kid whose mom is a stay-at-home mom, and they do the work together and turn it in together with all of this support." And I just felt super frustrated having to defend that...but I felt empowered to say, this is not right. We need to be looking at this differently. (Juniper District teacher, Fall 2020)

Maintaining Change

In the final phase of the cycle of liberation, participants recognize that building and sustaining justice-centered learning moving forward requires more than individual or even team efforts from teachers planning and working together. As TEAMS teachers and administrators were still grappling with remote instruction when we conducted our last interviews in Fall 2020 and Winter 2021, their goals for building new systems and structures around liberatory education were more aspirational than operational. For example, multiple TEAMS teachers recognized that despite what they were trying to do to create change, many of their multilingual students' parents still struggled to get the

support they needed because they did not know how to navigate the systems in the communities where they now lived.

Unsurprisingly, teacher and administrator focus groups included fewer examples of maintaining change episodes than any other phase of the cycle of liberation. Analysis identified 53 total examples of maintaining change behaviors, with 13% of these occurring during Fall 2019 interviews, 6% occurring during Spring 2020, and 81% occurring Fall 2020. As with creating change episodes, efforts focused on maintaining change took longer to develop but became more clearly visible during the second year of pandemic-affected schooling. Across the five school districts, Birch district (34%) described the greatest number of maintaining change episodes, while Oak district (8%) provided the fewest examples. Administrators again described more examples of maintaining change behaviors than teachers (75% to 25%). The following quote exemplifies these maintaining change episodes:

I'm much more able to be a leader in terms of speaking out for equity. Partly because I feel like our district is taking stronger stands when it comes to equity, and so, I feel like when I step forward and speak up for equity, that's going to be heard, but also because of the work through TEAMS which has been really empowering when you can back up what you're saying with, this is what I know from research....And so, I feel more comfortable pushing back against the status quo. (Birch District teacher, Fall 2020)

Survey Items for Creating Change and Maintaining Change

Table 6. Percentage of Teachers Reporting Being Very Confident or Confident on Survey Items Aligned With Creating Change and Maintaining Change

Survey Statement	Before TEAMS	After TEAMS	% Change
Provide culturally and linguistically relevant instruction to bilingual students	21%	95%	74
Incorporate family and community knowledge and resources in your classroom	29%	79%	50
Teach in ways that minimizes the cultural mismatch between home and school	31%	79%	48

Three survey items aligned with the creating change and maintaining change phases of structural change within the cycle of liberation (Table 6). Most teachers in the study initially lacked confidence about each of these three practices prior to their participation in TEAMS. As with the other survey

items, however, most teachers expressed confidence in all three practices by the end of their TEAMS participation.

When taken together, creating and maintaining change episodes highlight growing awareness of the need to change structures of schooling. As TEAMS teachers and administrators considered what they learned from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as from their participation in TEAMS more broadly, it became increasingly clear that multilingual learners and their families were not being equitably served by the education system. The pattern across districts, with Spruce district high and Oak district low, reflects the same pattern as for building community and coalescing and is likely a result of the same forces discussed above. The pattern for maintaining change episodes, with Birch district high and Oak district low, again reflects patterns that have been mentioned previously. Birch district's location in a university town provided resources and perspectives less common in some of the other districts, while Oak district's heated educational policy debates seems to have tamped down participants' efforts to change school structures.

Discussion and Conclusions

Because we were able to collect systematic data from both teachers and administrators in multiple school districts at three different time points, we can discuss several issues based on empirical data that have not been addressed to date in the literature on the effects of the pandemic on education. We begin our discussion by drawing connections to the emerging literature around teachers' and administrators' experiences and responses to the pandemic. Then, we briefly describe how the project work has continued since the end of the data collection described here. We conclude with suggestions of promising practices for enhancing multilingual family engagement in schools based on lessons learned from the teachers and administrators in this study.

Experiences of TEAMS Participants Compared to Others

In considering how the experiences and ideas of teachers and administrators in the TEAMS project compared to the research literature to date on the COVID-19 pandemic, we note numerous areas of overlap but also several important differences. While the similarities seem largely due to common impacts of the pandemic across the United States and in much of the world, the differences can be explained, at least in part, by the structures and activities of the TEAMS project.

TEAMS teachers reported many of the same challenges of pandemic teaching that have been mentioned in other studies, such as families' lack of needed

technology to engage in remote learning (Baker et al., 2021), struggles communicating with their students and their parents (Kraft et al., 2021), and their own personal struggles to balance their professional teaching role and their roles as parents themselves (Moss et al., 2020). Despite these similarities, TEAMS teachers consistently expressed one important difference. While other studies (e.g., Kraft et al., 2021) show a drop in teachers' sense of professional self-efficacy as they struggled to adjust teaching practices to meet a radically new teaching modality, the survey of TEAMS teachers shows quite the opposite. Nearly all TEAMS teachers exited the project in the winter of the second year of the pandemic expressing increased confidence in most of the practices for supporting multilingual family engagement. We attribute this enhanced self-efficacy, at least in part, to the intentional structures the TEAMS project put in place.

When we consider TEAMS administrators, we find that they likewise discussed many of the same pandemic response strategies that are reflected elsewhere in the literature on school leadership. This included reflecting on an increased need for clear communication (Okilwa & Barnett, 2021), flexible responses (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021), and optimism (Brion & Kiral, 2021). However, as with TEAMS teachers, TEAMS administrators expressed an important difference in their responses when compared to the broader literature on pandemic leadership. TEAMS administrators were often future-focused, highlighting changes that would be needed in the coming years to make their districts more equitable, such as building capacity for equity leadership. This differed from other literature where administrators were largely focused on day-to-day reactive responses needed to keep education systems running during the pandemic (e.g., McLeod & Dulsky, 2021). We attribute this difference at least in part to these administrators' connections to the TEAMS structures, as well as to structures that existed previously in districts such as Birch and Spruce. Support for family engagement in these districts that was already in place at the start of the pandemic could be more readily adapted when compared to districts where such structures needed to be constructed during pandemic schooling.

Promising Practices for Enhancing Multilingual Family Engagement

As schools have returned to updated versions of in-person teaching and learning, achievement data from 2020–22 show large and painfully inequitable learning losses that occurred during remote learning (Wortham & Forgety Grimm, 2022). The TEAMS research reminds us that while it is natural to focus on students' academic progress as a primary concern, supporting that academic progress is a multifaceted effort that requires simultaneous work at the *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, and *systemic* levels. Schools need to build capacity at each level, and families can and should be part of that capacity-building.

Building *intrapersonal* capacity, both for teachers and for administrators, highlights the need for all of us to engage and deepen our personal understandings of families generally, of multilingual families specifically, and of the inequities that have always been part of our education systems in the United States and around the world. This intrapersonal growth can occur through coursework, reading groups, or informal conversations with colleagues, families of students, and others. The key point is to continue to learn the lessons that both the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice protests can teach us about our education system and how it has always met the needs of some students and families better than others.

Building *interpersonal* capacity for teachers and administrators requires further outreach and connection to learn with and for the benefit of others. This *interpersonal* capacity-building is supported through professional learning communities that bring together teachers and leaders but must also involve direct engagement with families. There is a long history of teachers and administrators deciding what families need and how those needs can best be met (Barton et al., 2004). Lessons from the pandemic should teach us that supportive family engagement requires two-way exchange and direct communication to understand what families need and want for themselves.

Finally, while intrapersonal and interpersonal growth are both needed to create meaningful change, schools must also build systemic capacity. By its nature, systemic change takes time and the involvement of multiple stakeholders. Harro's cycle of liberation model emphasizes that individual goodwill, desire, and effort to make a positive difference for students can only be sustained when systems and structures are developed to ease this burden on individuals. Otherwise making and sustaining change falls to individuals who feel most strongly called to do this work. The data on teacher burnout and career change show that this is not a sustainable model (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2015). However, one accessible first step is to expand leadership opportunities for teachers and parents to help shape policy and practices. In the final section of this article, we share briefly about ongoing project work that has occurred since the end of the data collection reported here. Specifically, we share ideas about how the TEAMS project seeks to maintain change, the final and most challenging phase of Harro's Cycle of Liberation.

Maintaining Change Via TEAMS

The TEAMS project included supportive structures such as the district cohorts with monthly professional practice meetings for the full duration of teachers' time in the project, opportunities to stay connected as TEAMS alumni, the ongoing involvement of district administrators and facilitators to deepen

relationships over time, and a targeted focus on improving relationships with multilingual families to help everyone involved stay centered on a particular population. Our surveys and interviews indicate successes that resulted, at least in part, from this approach.

We highlight two examples, mentioned in the TEAMS data, of changes that build systemic capacity while strengthening family engagement. First, as schools transitioned back to in-person teaching, some began to develop comprehensive plans for addressing the increased mental and physical health needs of their communities along with increased academic needs (Phelps & Spery, 2020). This has included adding health clinics, food pantries, and other resources to school sites. Such shifts in our collective vision for the role of schools as hubs for community services (Horn et al., 2015) can never come to fruition without the collective advocacy of families and school personnel. Funding from Oregon's Student Success Act (HB 3427, 2019), which raises taxes on corporations in the state to fund a variety of K–12 education investments, including expanding mental and physical health supports and school meal programs, serves as an important resource for districts' efforts (e.g., Oregon Department of Education, n.d.). This legislation was passed with intensive efforts from a wide range of stakeholders, including the teachers' union and a coalition of community organizations representing marginalized families, and ongoing advocacy efforts by these groups seek to ensure the legislation lives up to its promise (Oregon Partners for Education Justice, 2021).

As a second example, school and district leaders can expand their ideas about the kinds of work teachers should be compensated for, including the very time-consuming but highly valuable family engagement work that we witnessed from TEAMS teachers. We note that U.S. high school teachers already have nearly twice as many student contact hours per week as teachers in many other economically developed nations (Borthwick, 2021). School systems have an opportunity to rethink how we structure teachers' schedules as well as how we compensate teachers in ways that might enhance teacher retention. Again, new funding streams, including Oregon's Student Success Act (2019) and pandemic relief funds, provide opportunities for districts to invest in this work if they choose to prioritize it.

While our first iteration of TEAMS funding has ended, we recently received an additional five years of funding to extend and deepen our work in TEAMS 2.0. Importantly, the funding for the initial TEAMS project, as well as for TEAMS 2.0, comes from federally funded National Professional Development (NPD) grants. NPD grants are funded through an explicit, ongoing provision of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), "to provide for professional development activities that will improve classroom instruction for English learners and

assist educational personnel working with English learners to meet high professional standards,” and among other areas, the grants may focus on “strategies that strengthen and increase parent, family, and community member engagement in the education of English learners” (Title III, §3131). Over the past two years, nearly 100 NPD grants were awarded across the U.S., representing an investment of over \$250 million (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). The fact that this funding stream is ongoing and is an explicit part of federal law can be interpreted as a mechanism for maintaining change—a recognition at the federal level that building the capacity of educators to effectively serve multilingual students, families, and communities requires a dedicated, specific, robust, and ongoing investment.

Within TEAMS 2.0, we are incorporating a variety of strategies to deepen and maintain change within partner districts. The grant continues to support cohorts of educators in partner districts to earn their ESOL endorsement and/or Dual Language specialization. In addition, each district group is partnering with a local community organization serving multilingual families, co-planning and co-facilitating activities focused specifically on family literacy. We have deepened our emphasis on building not just teachers’ but also leaders’ capacity through professional learning for the district-based facilitators and for our district partners. The increased knowledge and skills that leaders build will serve as an important mechanism for maintaining change. In addition, we are working to recognize and build the skills of our TEAMS alumni, such as inviting them to serve as cooperating teachers for current TEAMS participants.

As school systems have returned to somewhat updated prior school structures, we must not forget what we have seen and learned about what has and has not worked well (Cahapay, 2020). If we take one lesson from the experiences of educators in the TEAMS project working through the pandemic, it is this: committed teachers can find creative and innovative ways to support their students under the most challenging circumstances for a time, but structural inequities built into our society are bigger than individual responses can meaningfully address. We are continuing the work, recognizing that only when we build a collective and inclusive exchange of voices and ideas can we create meaningful collective action that can bring lasting change for the common good.

References

- Baker, C. N., Peele, H., Daniels, M., Saybe, M., Whalen, K., Overstreet, S., & The New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative. (2021). The experience of COVID-19 and its impact on teachers’ mental health, coping, and teaching. *School Psychology Review*, 50(4), 491–504. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2020.1855473>

- Barton, A. C., Drake, C., Perez, J. G., St. Louis, K., & George, M. (2004). Ecologies of parental engagement in urban education. *Educational Researcher*, 33(4), 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033004003>
- Blundell, R., Cribb, J., McNally, S., Warwick, R., & Xu, X. (2021). Inequalities in education, skills, and incomes in the UK: The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Institute for Fiscal Studies*. <https://bit.ly/3qNHP3o>
- Borthwick, A. (2021). Creating a new normal: Breaking open the daily schedule to improve teaching and learning. *National Center for Education and the Economy*. <https://ncee.org/quick-read/creating-a-new-normal-breaking-open-the-daily-schedule-to-improve-teaching-and-learning/>
- Brion, C., & Kiral, B. (2021). COVID-19 crisis challenges and management strategies of educational leaders in America. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 8(4), 170–183. <https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.943568>
- Burbio. (2021, January 11). *In-person index as of 1/11/21*. <https://about.burbio.com/school-opening-tracker>
- Buxton, C., McIntosh, K., Ettenauer, B., & Burho, J. (2022). Teachers strengthening partnerships with multilingual families during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2022.2125129>
- Buxton, C. Allexsah-Snyder, M., Kayumova, S., Aghasaleh, R., Choi, Y., & Cohen, A. (2015). Teacher agency and professional learning: Rethinking fidelity of implementation as multiplicities of enactment. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 52(4), 489–502. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tea.21223>
- Cahapay, M. B. (2020). Rethinking education in the new normal post-COVID-19 era: A curriculum studies perspective. *Aquademia*, 4(2), ep20018. <https://doi.org/10.29333/aquademia/8315>
- Civil, M., Stoehr, K. J., & Salazar, F. (2020). Learning with and from immigrant mothers: Implications for adult numeracy. *ZDM—Mathematics Education*, 52(3), 489–500. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11858-019-01076-2>
- Davis, C. R., Grooms, J., Ortega, A., Rubalcaba, J. A.-A., & Vargas, E. (2021). Distance learning and parental mental health during COVID-19. *Educational Researcher*, 50(1), 61–64. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20978806>
- DeMatthews, D. E., Edwards Jr, D. B., & Rincones, R. (2016). Social justice leadership and family engagement: A successful case from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(5), 754–792. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16664006>
- Freire, P. (2018). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury.
- Garbe, A., Ogurlu, U., Logan, N., & Cook, P. (2020). COVID-19 and remote learning: Experiences of parents with children during the pandemic. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 4(3), 45–65. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/8471>
- Ghanizadeh, A., & Jahedizadeh, S. (2015). Teacher burnout: A review of sources and ramifications. *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science*, 6(1), 24–39. <http://dx.doi.org/10.9734/BJESBS/2015/15162>.
- Gicheva, D. (2021). Teachers’ working hours during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Educational Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X211056897>
- Harro, B. (2000). The cycle of liberation. In M. Adams (Ed.), *Readings for diversity and social justice* (pp. 52–58). Routledge.
- Horn, M. B., Freeland, J., & Butler, S. M. (2015). Schools as community hubs: Integrating support services to drive educational outcomes. *Discussion Papers on Building Healthy Neighborhoods*, 3.

- Ishimaru, A. M. (2019). From family engagement to equitable collaboration. *Educational Policy*, 33(2), 350–385.
- Jones, T. M., Diaz, A., Bruick, S., McCowan, K., Wong, D. W., Chatterji, A., Malorni, A., & Spencer, M. S. (2021). Experiences and perceptions of school staff regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and racial equity: The role of colorblindness. *School Psychology*, 36(6), 546–554. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000464>
- Kim, L. E., Dundas, S., & Asbury, K. (2021). “I think it’s been difficult for the ones that haven’t got as many resources in their homes”: Teacher concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on pupil learning and well-being. *Teachers and Teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2021.1982690>
- Kraft, M. A., Simon, N. S., & Lyon, M. A. (2021). Sustaining a sense of success: The protective role of teacher working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 14(4), 727–769. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2021.1938314>
- MacQueen, K. M., McLellan, E., Kay, K., & Milstein, B. (1998). Codebook development for team-based qualitative analysis. *Cam Journal*, 10(2), 31–36.
- Mangin, M. (2007). Facilitating elementary principals’ support for instructional teacher leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(3), 319–357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X07299438>
- McLeod, S., & Dulsky, S. (2021). Resilience, reorientation, and reinvention: School leadership during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Education*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.637075>
- Morrison, D., & Porter-Webb, E. (2019). Building power through racial justice: Organizing the #BlackLivesMatterAtSchool Week of Action in K–12 and beyond. *Berkeley Review of Education*, 9(1). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/02c9d5zw>
- Moss, G., Allen, R., Bradbury, A., Duncan, S., Harmey, S., & Levy, R. (2020). *Primary teachers’ experience of the COVID-19 lockdown—Eight key messages for policymakers going forward*. University of Central London Institute of Education. <https://bit.ly/3DCMz3l>
- Okilwa, N. S., & Barnett, B. G. (2021). Strategies and practices of leading schools during the current COVID-19 Crisis. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 49(3).
- Oregon Department of Education. (n.d.). *Fueling students for success*. <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/childnutrition/SNP/Pages/Student-Success.aspx>
- Oregon Partners for Education Justice. (2021). *2021 legislative agenda*. <https://www.betteroregon.org/assets/2021-Legislative-Agenda-Oregon-Partners-for-Education-Justice.pdf>
- Phelps, C., & Sperry, L. L. (2020). Children and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(S1), S73–S75. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tra0000861>
- Rodriguez, A. J., Collins-Parks, T., & Garza, J. (2013). Interpreting research on parent involvement and connecting it to the science classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 52(1), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07351690.2013.743775>
- Schirm, A., & Kirkendall, N. (Eds.). (2010). *Developing and evaluating methods for using American community survey data to support the school meals programs: Interim report*. National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/12917>
- Schlegelmilch, J., & Douglas, C. (2020). Initial Coronavirus Disease–2019 closure strategies adopted by a convenience sample of U.S. school districts: Directions for future research. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 14(3), e17–e18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2020.147>

- Thornberg, R., & Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded theory and theoretical coding. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, 5, 153–69.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2022). *National Professional Development program*. <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/nfdp/awards.html>
- Wenner, J. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(1), 134–171. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316653478>
- Wortham, D. G., & Forgety Grimm, L. (2022). School interrupted: Recovering learning losses related to COVID-19. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 25(2), 124–135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15554589221078273>
- Zeichner, K., Bowman, M., Guillen, L., & Napolitan, K. (2016). Engaging and working in solidarity with local communities in preparing the teachers of their children. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 67(4), 277–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487116660623>

Authors' Notes: This research was supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition (#T365Z160134). The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funder. This study was reviewed and approved by the IRB at Education Northwest (Study #358), and Oregon State University's IRB deferred oversight to Education Northwest (Study #HE-2023-159).

Cory Buxton is a professor of science education at Oregon State University. His research fosters more equitable and justice-centered science learning opportunities for all students, and especially for multilingual learners, by bringing together teacher professional learning and family engagement experiences in both school-based and out of school settings. Correspondence concerning this article may be addressed to Dr. Cory Buxton, 204A Furman Hall, Oregon State University, Corvallis OR 97331, or email buxtonc@oregonstate.edu

Kathryn McIntosh is an associate professor of ESOL/DL and language equity in education in the College of Education at Oregon State University. Her research focuses on multilingualism, multiculturalism, and social justice education through a critical race feminist lens. Her research utilizes critical methodologies and focuses on experiences of students of color and Latinx communities.

Barbara Ettenauer is a doctoral candidate at the College of Education at Oregon State University. Her research focuses on fostering equitable opportunities in formal and informal science learning (e.g., birthday parties, science clubs), especially for pre-school and elementary students, and multilingual family engagement.

Karen Thompson is an associate professor in the College of Education at Oregon State University. Her research explores the experiences of multilingual students in K–12 U.S. schools using mixed methods and an ecological approach to learning and educational systems.

