Impact of California's Local Control Funding Formula: Addressing Adequacy and Equity
Issues of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students in Secondary Schools

A Thesis Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

California State University Channel Islands

In (Partial) Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts

By

Johnny Garcia Vasquez
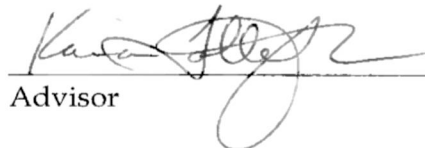
May 2018

Student Name: Johnny Garcia Vasquez

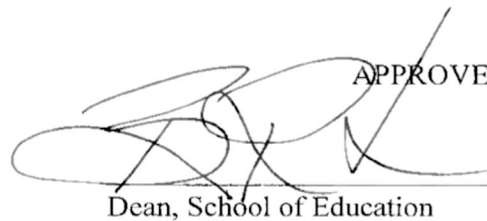Student ID: _000835485_____

Thesis/Project Title: Impact of California's Local Control Funding Formula: Addressing

Adequacy and Equity Issues of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students in Secondary

Schools

APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

_____   5/21/2018
Advisor   Date

_____   5/21/2018
Second Reader   Date

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

_____   5/21/18
Dean, School of Education   Date

Dedication

To all the students out there that have to overcome struggle everyday to accomplish their education and career aspirations, and have been told that they do not belong. Do not give up, use your struggles as your inspiration and keep fighting until you make it. Your struggles build strong character, and with strong character you can accomplish anything you set your heart to.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

The accomplishment of this thesis would have not been achievable without all the love and support of my family and friends. I am sorry that my academics and my more than full-time career have made me miss a lot of special occasions in all of your lives…birthdays, family gatherings, and celebrations. I promise that moving forward I will be more present in all of your daily lives.

To my mother Andeya, thank you for everything you have done to raise a strong, independent young man all by yourself. I recognize that as a single mother it was not an easy task, and I am incredibly grateful.

To my siblings Deniece, Karla, and Dylan thank you for being my daily encouragement to be a remarkable big brother to all of you. I strive to be a male role model for you to look up to in our family, who inspires you to reach your education and career goals.

To my grandparents, Samuel and Esperanza, thank you for your immigration to the United States and your strong will to work as farmer workers in an effort to give your children and grandchildren a better life.

To Ms. Maricela Morales (Ms. UC Santa Barbara), thank you for being my grad school best friend, and for always being there when I needed a shoulder to lean on throughout this program.

To my thesis advisors Dr. Kaia Tollefson and Dr. James Martinez, and the entire School of Education faculty, thank you all for your support and guidance throughout these last "three" years of this program.

You all inspired and encouraged me to obtain this advanced degree without all of you this first-generation, socioeconomic disadvantaged, student of color that was discouraged by his high school guidance counselor to pursue a higher education would have not made it.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to measure the degree of impact of funds from California's Local Control Funding Formula in responding to issues of adequacy and equity among socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) students in secondary schools. The research question asks: Are Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) monies responding to issues of adequacy and equity among socioeconomically disadvantaged students in secondary schools? The research methodology consisted of one-on-one interviews with five administrators located in SED school sites in Southern California. The findings of the study indicate that funds from the Local Control Funding Formula are responding to the equity issues of SED students in secondary schools. In addition, funds from the Local Control Funding Formula are responding to adequacy issues of SED students in secondary schools to an extent.

Chapter One

Statement of the Problem

Historically communities of color have disproportionally borne the costs of economic development of the United States through impoverishment and displacement. The economic development processes in the United States have led to many students of color being pushed into economically disadvantaged communities with underperforming schools and lack of opportunity to excel in education (Linda Darling-Hammond, 2015). Paradoxically, these economic development processes necessitate and promote educational achievement as a gateway to a middle class life beyond the poverty students experience in the resultant economically disadvantaged communities. Although increased public funding and emphasis on educational attainment has resulted in economic mobility for some students of color, the vast majority of students within these communities have yet to experience the equalizing powers of education, as Growe and Montgomery (2003) acknowledged:

> "from its inception, American public education has had as one of its tenets the notion of being that remedy by which inequality of opportunity and poverty can be reduced, thereby becoming the great equalizer... yet it still has not flourished into true equality for all" (pp. 23-24).

The statement holds true when examining data on gaps in instructional quality, funding, and academic achievement for socioeconomically disadvantaged and other underserved minority students in the United States compared to their white peers. Noguera and Akom recognized that, "Explaining why poor children of color perform comparatively less well in school is relatively easy: Consistently, such children are

educated in schools that are woefully inadequate on most measures of quality and funding" (2000, p. 29).

Some researchers like Jonathan Kozol (1991) contend that access to a quality education and opportunity to succeed in education are strongly correlated to wealth in the United States. Wealth stratification continues to benefit affluent children, while hindering minority students of color struggling and living in poverty. Wealth in the United States allows affluent communities and parents to provide more resources and supports for their children to succeed and fulfill their educational aspirations. Additional resources to affluent children are bestowed by wealth via internal Parent Teacher Association (PTA) fundraising methods to support school sites, and external parent funding contributions directly to the child (e.g., extra touring services, access to high quality technology, and college preparation resources and supports). In contrast, socioeconomically disadvantaged communities and school sites are comprised of parents and students who financially struggle to make-ends-meet, and have a reduced amount of ability to fulfill gaps of fundraising for student resources and provide supports for struggling students who need assistance to academically achieve. According to Growe and Montgomery (2003), "schools serving low-income students receive fewer resources, face greater difficulties attracting qualified teachers, face many more challenges in addressing students' needs, and receive less support from parents" (p. 23).

To bridge the gap of educational inequity, funding mandates and reforms are needed to ensure that the needs of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students are met. Current research studies associate socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students' educational equity issues with inadequate funding

that is being provided to students and the local school sites that serve such students. For example, Verstegan, Venegas, and Knoeppel (2006) stated, "today we witness entire states in which school funding is found to be inadequate, unsatisfactory, and insufficient, creating an affront to any standard of decency and caring for America's future-its children and youth" (p. 74). Even 12 years after the publication of this study, the statement holds true when comparing adequate education funding models between affluent and socioeconomically disadvantaged school sites across different states in the United States. It held true in California, and in 2013 the State's leadership drafted a plan and placed it into action to attempt to address funding inequities.

As a result, to address educational funding inequity among socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) students in California, Governor Jerry Brown in 2013 signed into law the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) (Affeldt, 2015). With the passage of the LCFF, lawmakers replaced California's 40 year-old K-12 public education Revenue Limits Funding Formula. Under LCFF, the state increased local district fiscal flexibility and allocated additional funding to districts that serve large targeted student populations of low-income, English learners (EL), and foster youth.

This new funding mechanism is currently in its infancy and there is a deficiency in research studies that analyze the impact of the funding on educational equity and adequacy. Additionally, with the implementation of LCFF the State also adopted the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LCAP is a three-year district plan that is updated annually. The plan describes the school district's key goals for students as well as the specific actions (with funding allocations) the district will take to achieve the goals and the metrics used to measure progress. The LCAP should address the needs of all

students, including specific student targeted groups, and all school districts must exclusively address the needs of low-income, English learners (EL), and foster youth. Moreover, the LCAP should also address the eight state priorities that include student academic achievement, school climate, student access to a broad curriculum, and parent engagement. As part of the LCAP development process school districts must engage community stakeholder input to determine the allocation from LCFF funds. However, early studies examining the projected impact of the new funding formula took place before implementation and typically did not include the perspectives of local administrators. Therefore, it is well within the scope of this study to ask the following research question: Are the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) monies responding to issues of adequacy and equity among socioeconomically disadvantaged students in secondary schools?

It is important to address educational funding adequacy and equity issues among socioeconomically disadvantaged students to increase the possibility of equal educational attainment for every child in California. The State of California leads the nation with the largest and most diverse student population, as Affeldt (2015) acknowledged: "California educates one in every eight public school students in the U.S.; those one in eight are, on average, among the nation's most challenging. Over half of the state's 6 million students qualify for free or reduced-price meals and a quarter of all students are English language learners (ELLs)" (p. 2-3). Therefore, the results of California's new funding formula may help to lead the nation in future best practices that improve the educational quality and outcomes for socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students. By contributing to current research, this study aspires to determine if California's new funding model truly

addresses adequacy and equity issues for socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The

next chapters will provide an outline of past research studies and a literature review

related to the current subject matter, illustrate the research methodology of the current

study, discuss the findings of the study, and provide a discussion of the research findings.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Overview

The research question to the current study asks: Are Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) monies responding to issues of adequacy and equity among socioeconomically disadvantaged students in secondary schools? Therefore, in this chapter the literature review provides evidence of educational inequalities, examines previous studies about educational funding levels for equity and adequacy, and gives an overview of the historical context of California's K-12 funding models and preliminary findings of LCFF.

Evidence of Educational Inequalities

Growe and Montgomery (2003) compiled archival research to examine educational inequalities and achievement gap issues of socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students. The writers argued that much work is still to be done to ensure that education remains a true equalizer for society. The article provided an overview of the achievement gaps and highlighted research studies that point to underlying factors of educational inequalities. Academic achievement of disadvantaged and minority students is lower when compared to their white, affluent peers. These underlying factors are associated with the issues of low-income students and school sites facing poverty, such as fewer resources allocated to them, under-qualified teachers, challenges to address needs of low-income students, and less parental support. To support the arguments in the article, the authors aggregated material from previously published studies. Growe and Montgomery (2003) concluded by arguing that for education to become the true equalizer

of our society, work has to be done to achieve educational equity of all students. Nearly 15 years after the publication the statement holds true when analyzing current educational equity and funding for all students across the United States. The statement held true in California and led to the passage of the Local Control Funding Formula in 2013. The power and complexity of this article is remarkable as it establishes the issue at the core and calls for advocacy for true educational equity for all students. While the authors provided insight into the variety of social and communal complexities that impact socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students, Growe and Montgomery (2003) do not provide quantitative data or investigate how educational equity may be addressed.

Reed (2001) in a quantitative study explored the dynamics of public opposition to equal educational opportunity during a period when the Connecticut and New Jersey Supreme Courts ruled in favor of school finance reform. In addition, Reed examined the relationship between attitudes toward equality in American life and public education, taxation issues, and the efficiency of the American public education system. Reed's data sample included state level polling results from Connecticut and New Jersey during each of the respective states' supreme courts' rulings, which would effectively equalize spending in public schools in both states. The research samples are drawn from Connecticut Poll 1 (May 1979), Connecticut Poll 7 (June 1980), and New Jersey polls (June 1990) that were carried out by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling. The findings in the study conclude the purpose that identify the concerns of localism that create funding inequities and are connected to local sentiments and differential property tax bases. Therefore, the court rulings aimed at equalizing spending in the public schools in both states would acquire opposition, even if such reforms did not impact the

economic self-interest of taxpayers or affluent school districts. This study informs current academic research through its examination of public opinion on the issues of educational funding, and, more specifically, equalizing funding to address gaps in student achievement. The primary limitations of the study consist of an outdated data sample size and the study's geographical limitations. Since Reed's research was limited to Connecticut and New Jersey, it does not account for other geographical regions and states around the country.

Verstegen, Venegas, and Knoeppel (2006) examined the inadequate funding issues of state educational systems via court litigations. The researchers explored the multiple United States courts' shift of looking at adequacy levels of education quality and opportunities offered to children in one of more schools and districts within a state. In addition, the researchers highlighted that courts are interested in determining whether an apparent quality of education is offered to all children and are looking for disparities not only in funding but also what funding acquires, which includes teachers, class sizes, technology, curriculum, facilities, and budgetary flexibility. The method the authors used to assemble the arguments of growing inadequacies in America's education system involved compiling and analyzing judicial rulings and testimony from different states in the United States. The findings demonstrate that schools in America are rich and poor, therefore disparate and inadequate when compared to each other. In addition, the authors concluded by stating that the evidence in the court cases that exemplify the growing inequalities and inadequacies in the United States' educational system highlight that the least resources are allocated to those who need them the most: low-income students, special education students, and students of color. The limitation of the article is that it

does not answer or address how the issues of student equity and adequacy should be disentangled.

Examining Educational Funding Levels for Equity and Adequacy

Ikpa (2016) examines structural problems and policy tensions affecting public school funding. Ikpa points out that urban school districts serve a majority of children living in poverty, and are over burdened and underfunded. The author also highlights the challenges of overcrowding, outdated resources, limited funding and day-to-day survival challenges for staff and students. In addition, the author discusses the issue of disparities in funding between poor and affluent school districts. Ikpa provides the explanation that funding comes from local funding and from state and federal aid, yet it is still inadequate in meeting the needs of students. In 2007 there was an effort nationwide led by local governments to raise school funding via property taxes, but frequent public opposition to tax increases limits the power of elected officials to raise additional funding in this way. Moreover, state funding has historically been focused on equitable distribution of funds between districts in terms of funding allocation. Resources available to school districts have always depended heavily on local property wealth, and property wealth per student varies greatly. Ikpa found that decreases in revenue for socioeconomically disadvantaged communities are associated with decreasing sales tax, income tax, and tourism tax revenues. In addition, issues of budget deficits have led to less funding support for education from the state, due to competing costs of other public services.

Ikpa (2016) further argued that federal and state educational reform initiatives require adequate funding to be fully implemented and sustained. Moreover, funding education is a national priority according to elected officials, but funding formulas do not

reflect the priority. As an example Ikpa analyzed the Obama Administration's 2015 budget and compared the proposed spending of education to that of the military. The article concludes with the author asking the following questions regarding the relationship between funding and quality: 1) Can education quality be improved with current educational funding spent, instead of increasing funding? And 2) What quality of education should the public pay for, and when should the individual student or family pay for additional quality? Limitations of the article are that it does not attempt to define what quality of education is or how quality of education is measured.

Bandranayake (2013) in a mixed study examined how the formula-based school funding in Victoria, Australia was designed to meet equity considerations to ensure that every student's needs were met, and that every school site serving the same student population obtained the same amount of funding. In addition, the researcher examined the impact of the equity considerations on a student population that had been exposed to the funding formula implementation, versus a student population that had not. The method of the study consisted of a combination of observed research methods collected from analysis of policy documents, outcome performance data, testing of statements from education finance literature, and interviews with departmental officials and principals. Bandranayake (2013) provided a comprehensive overview of the meaning of equity in education finance and presented the reader with a definitive understanding of equity as 1) provide as much equality as possible in educational services, and 2) establish fairness in regards to the community sharing the tax burden for education (pp. 204-205). Further, the author differentiated the variation between horizontal and vertical equity. Horizontal equity is defined as funds allocated equally among schools that share certain

characteristics. Under the definition of horizontal equity, it does not take for granted that all schools have comparable needs. Instead the definition refers to the philosophy of "equal treatment of equals" (p.193). Vertical equity allocates funds based on the notion that students should be treated according to their different learning needs and characteristics. Vertical equity emphasizes that if students have different educational needs, equitable state funding should be provided at different levels of funding to meet student needs.

Bingham, Jones, and Jackson (2007) examined the level of equity of Texas' funding system of public schools in September 2004, which was held unconstitutional by a state judge. In addition, the researchers examined the issue of accessibility to funding by school districts in the state. The researchers employed quantitative methods to examine 2004 data. The sample in the research was based on the total population of students within the State of Texas, which at that time was 5,336,535 students enrolled across 774 public school districts. The findings of the study concluded that that the State's 2004 school funding model was reasonably equitable and that for any school-funding model that depends on local property taxes to fund or supplement education, equity and recapture are inseparable. This means that funding is recaptured from wealthy property school districts and then redirected into low-income property school districts to address equity issues of low-income school districts. Bingham, Jones, and Jackson (2007) referred to this funding model as a "Robin Hood" plan (p. 2). In addition, the study found that some school districts were not accessing the full funding available to them, because of the lack of Average Daily Attendance and/or the disparities in taxes owed or taxes paid. The inability of some school districts to access the full funding available to them

contributed to widening the inequity gap for students. Limitations of the study are that the data and funding formula are geographically isolated to the State of Texas.

In a quantitative research study by Jones, Johnson, Bell, and McFarley (2002), the researchers examined the adequacy of state funding in North Carolina schools for capital projects and school facilities. The analysts provided an overview and background of the importance of quality school facilities and implications for student learning. In addition, they outlined court lawsuits in North Carolina and other states that have served as evidence of the importance of the quality of school facilities. The analysts looked at the constitutional compliance and conducted an equity analysis. The data samples used by the researchers included the local per pupil expenditure for 1989 and 1998. The researchers in the study compared and measured the ratio of the actual per student expenditure at the local level for all students and school districts, and the average expenditure for all districts in the state. The results of the study concluded that despite efforts by the North Carolina State Legislature to address the issue of improving funding per student, there still existed a great discrepancy of per-student expenditures between wealthy and low-income districts since 1989. The study concludes with the researchers' argument that local property taxes still influence disparities in educational opportunities and quality of facilities between affluent and low-income school districts. Lastly, the study concludes that federal or state support could help to reduce gaps in facility funding. Limitations of the study are that the researchers only take into account the data and funding formula of the State of North Carolina, and the data set only included the years of 1989 and 1998.

Historical Context of California's K-12 Funding Models and Preliminary Findings

of Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

Derived from an article written by Jacquie Canfield (2007), the following is a

historical overview of the California public school funding model. California's public

school funding model evolved due to court rulings, the passage of voter-approved

initiatives, and with state-provided categorical funds. California's public school funding

model began to change in 1971 with the ruling of Serrano v. Priest that altered the State's

funding model. Under this court ruling, the California Supreme Court found that the

rights of students from low-wealth districts were being violated under the State

Constitution's guarantee of equal protection, because they were being denied an equal

education opportunity. Due to the State's funding model, local school districts were

allowed to increase their own property taxes to fund their local schools, which resulted in

large education disparities between poor and affluent school districts. The courts

mandated the State to provide a higher adjustment for low-income districts in an effort to

equalize funding. Therefore, the State Legislature adopted the first form of California's

revenue limit funding model for public schools in 1972. The revenue limit funding model

for public schools consisted of funds received by schools from the State. The funds were

allocated on a per-student basis and based on average daily student attendance. Under the

revenue limit funding model funds were allocated for general purpose.

In addition to California's revenue limit funding model for public schools, the

legislature also created and provided categorical funds for specific purposes (Canfield,

2007). Categorical funds were used for programs such as class size reduction, special

education, transportation, and English learners… just to name a few. Each categorical

program had specific rules that had to be followed that were developed by the legislature.

Moreover, in response to the Serrano v. Priest court ruling, voters passed

Proposition 13, which limited property tax rate increases and required that any new taxes

be approved by two-thirds of voters. In 1978, the state passed Assembly Bill 8, which

created formulas outlining how property taxes would be divided between cities, counties

and school districts. After the passage of Proposition 13, the voters also passed the

California Lottery initiative in 1984 to fund education, and Proposition 98 to create a

guaranteed minimum allocation of funding from property and state taxes for elementary

schools, secondary schools, and community colleges (K-14 education) each year. In the

1990s, the State of California experienced an economic recession and fell behind in

providing schools with all the funds that were due to them (Canfield, 2007).

Canfield's method of analysis involved compiling historical state documents,

policies, and other articles. The findings of the article concluded that California's public

school funding model started with local school districts being able to increase their own

property taxes to fund their local schools. Limitations of the article are that Canfield does

not provide an analysis of the pros and cons of California's revenue limit funding model,

nor does Canfield examine the equity and adequacy issues created by the revenue limit

funding model.

In their qualitative study, Wolf and Sands (2016) examined and investigated the

early implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in California. The

researchers in the study provided background and an overview of the new funding

formula, and the new requirements of both county offices of education and school

districts. Wolf and Sands selected ten school districts in California and conducted interviews with school district and county office of education officials. The research sample consisted of districts that were diverse in enrollment, geographic region, urbanicity, and scope of English learner and low-income students. The findings of the study demonstrated that the interviewees viewed the new LCFF as positive and with a general sense of optimism, but still had concerns regarding the adequacy of funding from the state. In addition, researchers found two common issues in terms of implementation of the LCFF: 1) Districts officials struggled to define the purpose, audience, and scope of their Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and 2) District officials lacked the capacity and skills to engage their local communities, particularly the families of the targeted student subgroups. Limitations of the study are that no community members, parents, or school site administrators were interviewed or incorporated into the study.

Connections to Literature

A number of major research contributions have increased the academic body of knowledge, and have assisted to improve the understanding and knowledge of educational inequities of socioeconomically disadvantaged communities and students. Some studies found that educational inequities still exist due to unequal funding provided for socioeconomically disadvantaged students compared to their affluent peers. The results of such findings empowered states and countries to address educational funding issues. Other studies found that states' educational funding mechanisms did not address equity and/or adequacy needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Recent research studies on California's educational funding mechanism have resulted in preliminary findings, however these are limited due to the sample size and limited

participation of high-level education administrators. The research conducted related to educational funding and equity informs the larger fields of education, politics, and sociology in creating policies, practices, and programs that advance the cause of social justice. In addition, the research findings also inform specialized research in educational leadership and policy, in a more realistic way.

Conclusion

The articles reviewed in this chapter provide evidence of educational inequities, examine educational funding levels for equity and adequacy, and give an overview of the historical context of California's elementary and secondary school (K-12) funding models and preliminary findings about the LCFF. With pupil demographics being increasingly diverse in the United States and minorities surpassing the dominant Anglo group, it is important to address the issue of education and funding inequity. In California alone, the number of Latinos in the state has surpassed the dominant Anglo population and continuities to grow (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015). Yet, there is a shortfall in Latinos who obtain higher education degrees in California. The Campaign for College Opportunity (2015) reported, "Only 12 percent of the Latino population between the ages of 25 and 64 has a baccalaureate degree or higher, compared with 42 percent of the White population" (p. 3). Given this disparity, it is imperative to examine the following research question: Are Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) monies responding to issues of adequacy and equity among socioeconomically disadvantaged students in secondary schools? It is important to address educational funding adequacy and equity issues of socioeconomically disadvantaged students in order to increase the possibility of equal educational attainment to every child in California. Conducting a

study that examines the impact of California's Local Control Funding Formula contributes to the body of literature on education finance. By contributing to current research, the study aspires to assist in determining if California's new funding model truly addresses adequacy and equity issues for socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology for the research study is illustrated as qualitative, and a description of the participants, setting, instrument, procedures, and analysis is discussed. The theoretical framework for this study was social justice education (Bell, 2007) and social justice education leadership (Theoharis, 2007) theories. Education in the United States is believed to be an equalizer to socioeconomic mobility and opportunity but, as described in Chapter 2, there are still numerous existent educational inequalities of SED students and communities. Some theorists state that to truly address educational inequalities, there has to be a social justice education lens applied and employed within education institutions. The researcher in this study employed a social justice education theory lens in analyzing the data gathered. The academic work of theorist Bell (2007) explains this focus:

> The goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical
> analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization
> within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to
> interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the
> institutions and communities of which they are a part. (p. 2)

Therefore, the researcher in the study attempted to answer the following research question with a social justice education lens that would allow for SED students and communities to critically understand the impact of their socioeconomic status to their subjugation in society: Are Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) monies responding

to issues of adequacy and equity among socioeconomically disadvantaged students in secondary schools? Additionally, the researcher employed the concepts of the social justice education lens to determine the impact it has for SED students and communities to develop agency within the structure and implementation of LCFF.

Moreover the researcher in the study applied social justice education theory to look at how school sites used LCFF funds to allow students and the community to take an active role in their education. To illustrate, Hackman (2005) wrote, "social justice education encourages students to take an active role in their own education and supports teachers in creating empowering, democratic, and critical educational environments" (p. 103). Therefore, the researcher applied the concepts of social justice education theory to how the implementation of LCFF funds allowed school officials to or not to create empowering, democratic, and critical education environments within their schools.

The second lens that the researcher applied in the study was social justice education leadership theory. Social justice education leadership is important for education leaders to ensure successful practices when working with diverse schools and student populations. Theoharis (2007) wrote, "leaders for social justice—guide their schools to transform the culture, curriculum, pedagogical practices, atmosphere, and schoolwide priorities to benefit marginalized students" (p. 221). Theoharis further illustrates how social justice leaders have to navigate the "social frontiers" within the internal spaces at their schools and the external community to transform and address the needs of diverse and marginalized student populations. From the shared experiences of the participants in the study the researcher sought to determine whether the concepts of

social justice education leadership are being applied through the implementation of LCFF funds.

Participants and Setting

To better understand the true impact of LCFF on socioeconomically disadvantaged students, the researcher attempted to employ purposeful sampling. According to Creswell (2012), "in qualitative research, we identify participants and sites on purposeful sampling, based on places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon" (p. 205). To better understand the central phenomenon, voluntary participants in the study included three school site principals and two assistant principals (all at different school sites) from a high school district composed of ten schools in Southern California, the majority of which are classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged. The voluntary participants were selected after obtaining approval from the participating district's assistant superintendent of educational services and the researcher's university Institutional Review Board. The researcher reached out directly to principals and other administrators from the school district to schedule interviews and seek voluntary participation. No snowball sampling transpired during the research study. Therefore, five school officials within the school district are reflected in the participatory research.

The names have been changed to protect participant confidentiality. In addition, school demographic information shared below is located at the California Department of Education (CDE) website. (2018):

Zackary Lopez: serves as a principal within the participating school district. Mr. Lopez's high school has an enrollment of 2,118 in Spring 2017, with 85% of students

identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged as determined by the number of students

qualifying for free and reduced lunch. 21% of students identified as English Learners and

1% of students identified as foster youth as determined by the California Department of

Education's Dash Board Equity Report (CDE, 2018).

Marc Hanson: serves as a principal within the participating school district. Mr.

Hanson's high school has an enrollment of 2,433 in 2017, with 81% of students identified

as socioeconomically disadvantaged as determined by the number of students qualifying

for free and reduced lunch. 26% of students identified as English Learners and 0% of

students identified as foster youth as determined by the California Department of

Education's Dash Board Equity Report (CDE, 2018).

Matthew Johnson: serves as a principal within the participating school district.

Mr. Johnson's high school has an enrollment of 345 in Spring 2017, with 9% of students

identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged as determined by the number of students

qualifying for free and reduced lunch. 3% of students identified as English Learners and

0% of students identified as foster youth as determined by the California Department of

Education's Dash Board Equity Report (CDE, 2018).

Jon Thomson: serves as an assistant principal within the participating school

district. Mr. Thomson's high school has an enrollment of 3,306 in Spring 2017, with

77% of students identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged as determined by the

number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. 17% of students identified as

English Learners and 0% of students identified as foster youth as determined by the

California Department of Education's Dash Board Equity Report (CDE, 2018).

Karina Cruz: serves as an assistant principal within the participating school district. Ms. Cruz's high school has an enrollment of 2,433 in 2017,with 81% of students identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged as determined by the number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. 26% of students identified as English Learners and 0% of students identified as foster youth as determined by the California Department of Education's Dash Board Equity Report (CDE, 2018).

Procedures

Participants were interviewed in a one-on-one recorded setting. Once the researcher obtained approval, the researcher set-up the interviews with participants. The interviews took place at each school site in the administrators' office, and the interviews were structured and conducted one-on-one with the participants for approximately 30 minutes.

The researcher then took the following steps: 1) Researcher greeted the participant and provided an overview of the consent form (see Appendix A) with participants, and obtained their verbal and written consent to participate in the audio recorded interview. Also, the participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. 2) Researcher began the interview, audio recordings, and used the interview guide (see Appendix B) to ask the questions of the participant. 3) Researcher took notes and listened throughout the interview. 4) Researcher completed the interview and thanked the participant; and once again assured the participant of the confidentiality of their responses. The researcher repeated the four steps mentioned above with each participant.

The researcher considers himself an outsider within the scope of the research setting, due to the fact that the researcher does not work within a secondary school or

within the school district. Moreover, the researcher does not identify with the profession or scope of employment of participants. The researcher previously worked with the district's assistant superintendent of educational services, but not with the principals or assistant principals who were interviewed at each school site.

Instrument

During the interviews the researcher used an interview guide (see Appendix B) to ensure that the same questions were asked of all participants. The researcher developed the interview guide by adapting a previous research study by Wolf and Sands (2016), which interviewed office of education and school district superintendents. The interview guide consisted of eleven questions relative to the implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula at each school site, how campuses were meeting the needs for special targeted students, and how each participant's school site was measuring success. The qualitative interview instrument proved to be effective, because it allowed the researcher to seek a deeper understanding of the true impact of California's Local Control Funding Formula, and allowed structure and a consistent interview process for all participants.

Analysis

The audio-recorded interviews were sent out to a third party vendor to transcribe into text. The data were then hand analyzed, meaning the researcher read the data, marked it by hand, divided it into parts, and used color-coding to mark parts of the text, and cut and paste text sentences onto a digital Microsoft Word document. The researcher then used the processes of coding transcribed interviews to find common themes in the data as described by Creswell (2012). The researcher used two strategies called text segment and in vivo coding to come up with the themes. Text segment coding happens

when sentences or paragraphs that relate to each other are given a single code. Creswell (2012) describes in vivo codes as codes that are created by using participants' actual words. Using text segment coding and in vivo coding allowed for the researcher to focus on coding pieces of information to ensure that the data guided the discovery of findings and not the personal beliefs or theories of the researcher. Text segment coding allowed for relevant themes to be found within sentences or paragraphs that otherwise could have been overlooked. Through this process, the researcher created a list of 25 codes (see Appendix C). The 25 codes led to the discovery of four themes that emerged from the coded data, which are discussed in Chapter 4: (1) support services and resources, (2) data driven accountability, (3) alignment of action plans and curriculum, (4) and optimism of positive impact.

Limitations

There are limitations to the current study that include a small sample size and interview pool. Approximately five administrators were interviewed in only one school district in California, in comparison to a larger sample size and interview poll of SED school sites throughout the State, which would have required additional resources and a longitudinal timeframe. In the following chapter, the researcher analyzes and interprets the data collected.

Chapter Four

Results/Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, an overview of the study and summary of the major findings is provided that address the research question: Are the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) monies responding to issues of adequacy and equity among socioeconomically disadvantaged students in secondary schools? This chapter presents four themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview transcriptions: (1) support services and resources, (2) data driven accountability, (3) alignment of action plans and curriculum, (4) and optimism of positive impact.

Theme I: Support Services and Resources

The first theme to have emerged from the data analysis was support services and resources, as all the participants communicated that with school site implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), it allowed school sites to address socioeconomically disadvantaged student needs via support services and resources. Under LCFF all the participants shared that it allows for additional targeted support services and resources provided for the special populations of low-income, English learners, and foster youth (see Table 1).

Table 1

Listing of Support Services Provided Through LCFF

Participant	Support Services Provided
Mr. Lopez	Instructional supports (AVID LTEL program & ELD LTEL), technology support (Eloquence and Rosetta Stone), Foster youth program, foster youth tracker, free waivers for AP (advance placement)

	exams, math boot camps, extra classes, extra tutoring, swimming coach
Mr. Hanson	AP (advance placement) tutoring, additional AP classes, computer support, technology upgrades, open educational resources, Saturday academy for English learners, technology support (Rosetta Stone), tutoring after school, language academy, personal items for foster youth, counseling services
Mr. Johnson	Additional tutoring outside regular school day, Saturday tutoring for English learners, academic supports, individual student support
Mr. Thomson	Technology supports, teacher professional development, classroom instruction, up to date pedagogy
Ms. Castro	Support personal, summer school, intervention groups, parent trainings, guest speakers, student university visits, career paths, Academic Enrichment Saturday Tutoring program, English Development Academy, tutoring services before, during, and after school, counselors for each targeted student populations (foster youth, homeless, low-income students), field trips, University of California counselor, Advance Placement classes

Offered support services and resources for low-income students. The

participants each communicated what support services and resources were provided to

low-income students at each of their school sites, per funding obtained via LCFF.

Participants also indicated that if their school site was also classified as a Federal Title I

school, LCFF funds had a greater impact to serve low-income students via school-wide

projects. Moreover, the participants communicated what the processes were to determine

how each school site allocated support services and resources to address the individual needs of low-income students via community input.

To illustrate, Mr. Lopez categorized how some of the significant issues of low-income students were being addressed at his school site through school-wide support services and resources provided under LCFF funding and Federal Title I funds.

So roughly about 88% of our students are Free and Reduced Lunch, so essentially that's why when you talk about school-wide project, we're talking about the entire school where we're dealing with lower socioeconomic status. Essentially we're dealing with that school-wide and that is our program now where we are focusing on every student will not only graduate, but also be two and four-year college ready and accepted, or that were eligible to continue, significant into a career pathway.

This indicates that school leaders with LCFF monies are developing high-expectations and a college going culture or career pathways for students at each of their school sites. It is important for school leaders to create inclusive spaces for SED students who are living in poverty to ensure that they have opportunities to achieve the highest level of academic achievement, instead of hindering their access to rich academic curriculum. Under Mr. Lopez' school-wide project LCFF funds are being utilized for technology, instructional, and counseling support services and resources. In addition, Mr. Lopez's school-wide program allows students to have access to additional support services and resources, which helps students struggling to academically achieve their goals of going to college or pursue a career path after graduating high school. Moreover, Mr. Lopez' school-wide project indicates that LCFF funds allows school administrators

to assist SED students to pursue their education or career goals following completion of their secondary education.

Offered support services and resources for English learner students. All the participants stated that at each of their school sites LCFF funds were earmarked to ensure the improvement of academic efforts for English learners. For instance, Ms. Castro stated that funds were used for "interventions," also known as support services and resources to assist English learners, and she provided the following examples.

So the funding is being allocated with providing some types of intervention. We have our Saturday AEST, which is Academic Enrichment Saturday Tutoring Program, then we have our ELD [English Language Development] Academy, and we have tutoring during the day, in the morning, and after school.

Other participants also indicated that the support services and resources provided to English Leaders consisted of technology, instructional support, and resources. That indicates that LCFF funds allows for English Learner students to be provided resources to academically achieve or advance in their academics and education. Additionally, the resources indicate that the opportunities of English learner students to learn are greater or have expanded with LCFF funds.

Offered support services and resources for foster youth students. All the participants acknowledged that at each of their school sites the number of foster youth were minimal compared to their general student population, but that LCFF funds allowed them to provide foster youth with emotional, technology, instructional, and individual support services and resources. For example, Mr. Hanson described the support services being provided to foster youth the best.

We have a small percentage of foster youth, and that's another area where we are

looking at how do we support them. Just the other day we had somebody who,

actually, she's homeless. And [a staff member] had to go out and get her some

personal items, very basic stuff… these things, a toothbrush, toothpaste, and

things at the bottom level. But, yeah, from there on up, whatever their needs are

and each need is individual. One of the things we are going back to school site

council here next week is to see if we can reallocate some funding to counseling.

Some of these foster youth are the ones that seem to need a little more of that

emotional and social kind of counseling.

This further illustrates that LCFF funds allow school administrators to address the

individual needs of struggling foster youth in times of difficult economic and social need.

In addition, LCFF funds help to address the psychological needs of students, which

ensure emotional support for students to succeed and overcome daily struggles. When

school administrators assist students to overcome their daily struggles, it then translates

to student personal and academic achievement. Furthermore, it indicates that LCFF funds

allow school administrators to support, as well as provide needed remedies for students.

The provided remedies help to address external obstacles that impact the daily lives of

students at each of their school sites.

Theme II: Data Driven Accountability

The second theme to have emerged from the data analysis was data driven

accountability, as all the participants communicated that with school site implementation

of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), each school site and the district were held

more accountable to how funding was allocated by community stakeholders through the development of data driven Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

LCFF and LCAP lead to community stakeholder accountability. Mr. Thomson described the community stakeholder accountability action development process as follows.

> So, now with LCFF there has to be parent community stakeholder input, and there needs to be a clear action plan. The action plan needs to be based off some type of assessment. Full student profiling assessment data, survey data, walk through data. And there needs to be a clear analysis of that data, and then trends from that data need to be discussed, and need to be implemented into an action plan where we have areas of weakness where we need to grow in and develop smart goals for each target student population.

This showcases that the implementation of LCFF has given local communities and parents a voice to advocate for the needs of their children, when, historically, SED communities and parents have been neglected, and not involved within the process of school site funding allocation. In addition, LCFF allows local communities and parents to hold school district and school site administrators accountable to student success and school site performance with data that is disaggregated.

LCFF and LCAP lead to data driven accountability. In addition to community stakeholder input, every year the LCAP has to be drafted and updated to identify student needs and goals, data tracking metrics for student progress, and adjustments or improvements to support services and resources allocation for each target population. Mr. Thomson further stated,

We list the goal, how we're going to get there, the people responsible. A clear

measure of success, so as we're progress monitoring and we do progress

monitoring and we do progress monitoring every month, in our school site council

meetings, in our department meetings, and our leadership meetings. We look at

data, and we say, "Are we meeting these goals?" Because now with LCFF you

have to show achievement or discussion, or analysis of these goals, where before

money was just spent by our Principal on anything they wanted to, without doing

any of that.

This quotes demonstrates that implementation of LCFF has required school

officials to tie funding to goals and to strategically plan out best student services and

instructional practices to support successful student outcomes. If there are no academic

improvements or positive impact from support services and resources, according to the

data analysis of school officials, administrators have to discuss and attempt to explain

why in their LCAP. The administrators then have to determine if a change in student

services or instructional practices should be implemented. Change is developed on

theoretically proven research of best student service or instructional practices to improve

student academic performance for each targeted student populations. Moreover, the data

specify that to try to meet the needs of SED students and to measure success, school

administrators embedded multi-assessment measures and disaggregated data to monitor

the progress of each target student population at each of their school sites.

For example, Mr. Johnson stated,

And to see how they're doing academically, we look at their grades, we look at

their attendance rates, we look at the kind of the whole child…we also look at

common formative assessments or, kind of assessments we use dipstick

[alternative formative assessment (AFA) strategies] to see how students are

learning, and we disaggregate the data.

Under LCFF, monitoring student progress with disaggregated data allows school

officials to track what has worked and what has not worked for each student-targeted

population. In addition, if resources or student services are not assisting students,

administrators have the power with community input to change the course of services

being provided. When data is disaggregated it allows administrators to get to the root

issue or problem to student achievement.

Theme III: Alignment of Action Plans and Curriculum

The third theme to emerge from the data was the theme of alignment of action

plans and curriculum. All participants stated that LCFF and the LCAP requirements for

funding helped ensure that all of their local district and school site action plans aligned

with the eight priorities from the state as described in chapter two of the study. With the

implementation of LCFF, school officials are required to create an LCAP with

community input. As a result of the LCAP requirement, school officials correlated their

school and action plans to address the eight state priority areas: student achievement,

student engagement, other student outcomes, school climate, parental involvement, basic

services, implementation of common core standards (CCSS), and course access.

School officials implement an alignment of action plans. To meet the

requirements under the eight state priority areas, school officials aligned all of their

institutional educational plans to indicate how their school site funds were to be spent in

student services and resources.

For example, Mr. Johnson stated,

> However, the idea behind and the connection behind student services and what
> we're going to be measuring in regards to the eight state priorities, I think is very
> important. It gives direction as to how spending should support those eight state
> priorities. And so it kind of creates alignment between, you know, whether it's
> our school site plan, our LCAP, our WASC plan, you know we have all these
> plans as educational institutions that sometimes are not connected. However, the
> LCAP, really, because it's connected to funding, really kind of forces all our plans
> to be in sync with one another and aligned to help students.

The alignment of action plans addresses the need for school officials to be
organized and focused on the delivery and impact of student services that are student and
community centered. That translates to school officials' strong focus on ways to improve
student outcomes to ensure that all of their action plans align to funding and accreditation
accountabilities. That in turn holds school officials accountable to funding that is
provided to their local school sites and districts.

Moreover, the participants indicated that the funding from LCFF allowed their
school sites to align curriculum. The importance of the alignment of curriculum is that it
brings teachers together to develop best teaching practices and rich curriculum. In
addition, alignment of curriculum develops accountability between teachers throughout a
school site to ensure that all students are provided a rich, high-expectation curriculum
that expands students' opportunities to learn.

School officials' implement an alignment of curriculum. Implementation of
LCFF and LCAP by school officials led the participants in the study to describe the

performance of each of their school sites to move toward an alignment of curriculum school wide. By an alignment of curriculum school officials stated that LCFF allowed them to fund professional development for teachers at their school sites. Mr. Hanson described how LCFF funds empower the move for schools in the district to align curriculum. Mr. Hanson acknowledged,

> It really opens up certain things like PD [professional development] and collaboration time, being able to fund those things. One of the things we're really trying to work on is getting our teachers to collaborate, and we have it built into the schedule. But also, beyond that, on how important are assessments, common curriculum, making sure that we're aligned as a group at each grade level, and what does that look like at each grade level. And perhaps that's one of the big things, is making sure every student has a guaranteed viable curriculum.

When teachers collaborate and are provided professional development, it assists teachers to improve instructional methods within school site classrooms for all students. That improves and advances shared teacher approaches to assist struggling students with the opportunity to achieve within high-level academics. In addition, the power of alignment of curriculum is that it allows for school officials to promote inclusion of all students to ensure access to high-expectation curriculum at each school site. That can help to eliminate some teachers' assumptions that students in SED school sites need low-level curriculum, and expand teachers' abilities to challenge student learning and achievement.

Theme IV: Strong Optimism of Positive Impact

The fourth theme to have emerged from the data was the strong optimism from all

the participants that LCFF is and will have a strong positive impact for SED students,

their families, and their school sites' academic success of students. The optimism of

positive impact from school administrators highlights how California's new funding

formula will have an encouraging influence on SED students and their communities.

From the voices of the school site administrators, LCFF allows them to create college

going and career pathways cultures at each of their school sites for SED students that in

the past have not been the case. Therefore, the opportunities for SED students have been

enhanced for them to seek a higher education or career pathway that lends a hand to

improve their socioeconomic mobility in our society. An SED student's ability to be

challenged to excel or aspire to pursue a future in academic work is possible through the

high-expectation curriculum that is provided to a student. If students are struggling then

school officials have developed student support services and resources to aid students

with LCFF funding. LCFF has forced school officials to think outside the box and to

develop goals for their students that hopefully will transpire into success for students'

academics and their families.

School officials' optimism that LCFF will have a positive impact on students'

academics and families. Participants in the research study all shared optimism that

LCFF will have a positive impact on students' academics and on families within the

community. LCFF allocation of funds, setting them aside for students' academic success,

ensures a responsible move to help students with academic improvement and community

participation. The participants in the study indicated optimism for improved academics at

their school sites. Ms. Castro shared her optimism that LCFF would have positive

benefits for students by stating,

> I think that it will have a huge impact, because it all goes to students' academic
>
> success. It goes to making sure that students have what they need, making sure at
>
> this level that students are reaching those college writing requirements and goals
>
> that we have, that the district has, because of LCFF and LCAP. The benefits are
>
> going to be enormous, because we have this funding that allows for the services to
>
> support our students and their families.

The statement by Ms. Castro showcases how each of the participants indicated

their optimism regarding the positive impact of LCFF responses to academic equity

issues of SED students at each of their school sites, and within their communities. The

LCFF funds help SED students become college prepared, which can motivate and inspire

SED students to attain a higher education in the future.

School officials' optimism that LCFF will have a positive impact to address

equity. The power of LCFF funds addresses the equity needs of SED students, and also

allows educators to take into consideration the external factors that suppresses a student's

ability to learn. Knowledge of external factors that impact students translates to the

empowerment of community members and empowers school leaders to address the needs

and concerns of the communities that each school site official serves. LCFF and LCAP

require school officials to monitor and address performance issues for targeted student

populations under the allocation process of funds. In addition, it allows for school

officials to be data driven to monitor and implement best student services and resources

to assist students who are struggling. That gives school officials optimism that LCFF will

have a positive impact to transpire education equity for SED students. Mr. Hanson describes the shared optimism that LCFF funds will have a positive impact on equity as it addresses the issues and needs of SED communities with first hand input. As a result, LCFF allows school officials to obtain better knowledge on how to address their students' and communities' needs and issues. As Mr. Hanson explained,

> I think it's going to be a positive impact, we're going to have that local input, and we're hoping for more places to become involved with it. And really address the needs of what the communities would like to see. As educators, we see what we think should happen, but what does the community think should happen? And we are discussing the data and services, and asking is that being impactful? We are trying to find out what the issues are, and working to address them…I'm going to make sure our students have access to services that will help them be successful.

> When working in SED communities it is highly important for school officials to address equity issues of students to ensure that students have access to the opportunities that would not otherwise be available to SED student populations. School officials must be aware of the external needs and issues of the populations they serve to truly impact positive change and success at a school site.

Conclusion

To recap, the four themes that emerged from the data analysis of the interview transcriptions were: (1) support services and resources that address SED students' needs and allows additional targeted support services and resources to low-income, English learners, and foster youth, (2) data driven accountability that allows community stakeholders a voice to hold school officials accountable for funding allocation and

require school officials to be data driven to monitor and tie funding to goals, and to strategically plan best student services and instructional practices, (3) alignment of action plans and curriculum that align local district and school site action plans to correlate with the eight state priorities: student achievement, student engagement, other student outcomes, school climate, parental involvement, basic services, implementation of common core standards (CCSS), and course access; alignment of curriculum allows the delivery of rich, high-expectation curriculum that holds teachers accountable to provide all students opportunities to learn and eliminates tracking and ability grouping of students, and (4) strong optimism of positive impact: LCFF allows school administrators to create positive impact for SED students, families, and school sites' academic success with the development of college-going and career pathway cultures; and addresses equity for SED students and communities to seek social and economic mobility.

The following chapter further discusses the findings with the application of the theoretical lens of social justice education theory. In addition, the chapter discusses recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five

Discussion

In this last chapter, the findings are discussed using the theoretical lens of the study and suggests new questions for future studies.

Discussion

Pedro Noguera (2011) stated, "Concentrated poverty and accompanying adverse social conditions create barriers for student learning" (p. 10). The statement holds true for SED students living in poverty and disadvantaged communities. When looking at achievement, student success, graduation, and higher education attainment data for SED students, SED students underperform and under excel when compared to affluent students in wealthy communities across the United States. SED students living in poverty are more likely to attain below basic levels in math and reading compared to affluent students (Marling & Marling, 2015). Additionally, SED students are less likely to graduate from high school and attain a higher education degree compared to affluent students. Noguera and Akom (2000) stated,

> Explaining why poor children of color perform comparatively less well in school is relatively easy: Consistently, such children are educated in schools that are woefully inadequate on most measures of quality and funding. This is particularly true in economically depressed urban areas, where bad schools are just one of many obstacles with which poor people must contend. (p. 29)

Further literature correlates student success in academics and career with students' access to student support services, as well as to resources provided from funding. California's bold move to change a 40-year-old funding formula to a new one

with the hope that it addresses equity in California school sites has brought extreme attention and speculation to the world of education finance. Education leaders and state officials have pondered if the LCFF truly addresses adequacy and equity among socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

The voices of the five participants indicate that LCFF monies do address equity issues for SED students, their families, and their communities that each administrator serves.

The Local Control Funding Formula Addresses Equity

Theoharis (2007) states, "leaders for social justice guide their schools to transform the culture, curriculum, pedagogical practices, atmosphere, and schoolwide priorities to benefit marginalized students" (p. 221). When applying the theoretical lens of social justice education, it is clear that all of the school officials who participated within this study serve as social justice leaders within their school sites and communities. From the experiences that each school official illustrated within this study, as described in the following paragraphs, LCFF monies do respond to equity issues for SED students in the schools represented in this study.

Each administrator under LCFF is tasked to guide their school site to transform the culture, curriculum, pedagogical practices, atmosphere, and school-wide priorities to benefit marginalized students. Each of the administrators does so with the development of the Local Control Action Plan (LCAP) and having community stakeholders (parents and the community) involved in the process of highlighting the needs of SED students and their communities. In addition, each social justice leader allows their prospective community stakeholders to develop agency to advocate for the needs of SED students

and facilitates the development of measureable goals for achievement. That translates to targeted support services and resources that lend a hand to meet the needs of low-income, English learners, and foster youth students. Furthermore, it presents the community stakeholders with the capacity to hold the social justice leaders accountable to measure impact and achievement of students. Social justice leaders are held accountable with data driven accountability requirements under the LCAP. In return the data driven accountability requirements give power to community stakeholders at the local level to echo their voices. Stakeholders' voices are echoed within the process to hold school sites accountable for the allocation of funds. The LCFF and LCAP also guarantee a requirement from school officials to employ data driven monetization. The data driven monetization is strongly tied with measureable goals, and require officials to develop strategically planned best student services and instructional practices.

It is incredibly clear that local social justice leaders are guiding their campuses to transform their curriculum and setting high-expectation goals for their students. The school officials are mastering the transformation of curriculum via the alignment of their action plans and curriculum. The alignment is done so with the local district and school site action plans correlating to the eight state priorities of student achievement, student engagement, other student outcomes, school climate, parental involvement, basic services, implementation of common core standards (CCSS), and course access. The emerged alignment of curriculum at each school site delivers a rich and high-expectation curriculum to all students. That holds teachers accountable to provide all students with the same opportunities to learn and moves towards the elimination of tracking and ability grouping of students. According to these social justice leaders, they indicated a strong

optimism of positive impact where LCFF allows school administrators to create positive impact for SED students, families, and school sites' academic success. The transformation that these social justice leaders are conducting on each of their campuses suggests that LCFF funds will have a positive impact on SED students. The positive impact is estimated to be derivative from the development of college going and career pathway cultures at each school site within the district. The equity for SED students and communities are addressed by LCFF to seek social and economic mobility. Therefore, it allows the researcher to suggest that the LCFF monies do address equity issues for SED students, because they provide the additional aid and opportunities that SED students need to achieve academic success.

The Local Control Funding Formula Addresses Adequacy

When it comes to the portion of the research question that asks whether LCFF monies are responding to issues of adequacy among socioeconomically disadvantaged students in secondary schools, the voices of the participants in the study indicated that it is, to some extent. Participants stated that LCFF has a greater impact on addressing adequacy issues for SED students when their school sites also receive Federal Title I funds. As a result of increased funds from additional revenue levels from Federal Title I school sites can provide additional support services and resources for SED students.

Federal Title I funds are grants that are provided to school sites with a large population of low-income students to help students meet academic achievement. According to the United States Department of Education, "Title I…provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet

challenging state academic standards" (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, Program

Description). According to the participants, Federal Title I funds in combination with

LCFF currency allows their school sites to provide larger schoolwide programming that

contributes to an even greater impact in responding to the issues of SED students. When

the researcher was recruiting participants, a school site principal within the school district

even declined to participate in the study due to the fact that the principal's school did not

receive Federal Title I funds. The principal stated via email that at his school site that

responding to issues of SED students would be greater next year when the school site

attained Title I status.

Therefore from the experiences shared by the participants in the study and with

the non-participant's perspective described above, the researcher suggests that LCFF

funds are partially responding to the issues of SED students. When LCFF and Title I

funds are combined it provides larger capacity, additional aid, and opportunities for SED

students to be provided with greater support services and resources to mediate the

"adverse social conditions [that] create barriers for student learning" (Noguera, 2011, p.

10). The problem of school sites that do not obtain adequate funds to ensure SED

students success echoes findings from a previous study by Ikpa (2016), who argued that

federal and state reform initiatives in education require adequate funding to be fully

implemented and sustained. The researcher strongly agrees with the statement and

argument of Ikpa, as described in Chapter 2. Therefore, the researcher advocates that the

federal government should faithfully undertake action to also guarantee adequate funds to

address the issues of SED students. If policymakers and education leaders truly care

about student success, leaders should provide every child (regardless of socioeconomic

status) with equity to reach their highest potential. Leaders should maintain and advocate for adequate funding to support SED students and school sites at every level (local, state, and national).

Recommendations for Future Research Studies

The researcher recommends future studies to be conducted statewide in SED school sites that employ long-term methods to examine the impact of LCFF on SED students and their communities. In addition, the researcher recommends for researchers to compile and compare best student support services and resources statewide with each other, in an effort to share local school districts' best practices for SED student success and achievement throughout the State. The best practices will better serve education leaders as they address equity and adequacy issues of SED students and their communities. Future researchers should also compare SED achievement, student success, test scores, graduation, and higher education attainment data before and after the implementation of LCFF in California. The California Department of Education as of Fall 2017 has published the California Dashboard that demonstrates how school districts and schools are performing on test scores, graduation rates, and other measures of student success (CED, 2018). Future researchers should monitor future data from the dashboards and compare previous data of SED students under California's past funding formula for education. Lastly, researchers should conduct research studies that monitor the impact of SED students and school sites that are allocated, and those that are not allocated Federal Title I education funds in addition to LCFF dollars. Through the conclusion of this study, new lines of inquiry for conducting research have come to light. The researcher believes that a long-term quantitative research project should be conducted in the State of

California, as an effort to quantify the impact of LCFF. In addition, a new line of inquiry into the shared experiences of community stakeholders' input in LCFF allocation and LCAP design should be investigated. The researcher wonders whether community stakeholders also agree with the school site leaders' optimism that LCFF will have a positive impact.

Conclusion

"Educators overwhelmingly do not have a clear, accurate, or useful understanding of the degree of inequity present in their own schools and school districts" (Skrla, McKenzie & Scheurich in Theoharis & Scanlan, 2015, p. 187). The results of this study indicate that for the five participants in the study, under LCFF implementation the above statement does not hold true in present day. The findings suggest that with the implementation of LCFF the five participants in the study are now more in tune with the inequities present in their own school sites and communities. Additionally, the participants are working to address the inequities of SED students and their communities with accountability from the State. As a result of LCFF implementation, the five participants must engage with their communities on a daily basis to develop goals to meet the needs of SED students. Therefore this study proved to be a useful one, in that it highlighted the experiences of five school officials who directly administer LCFF funds and develop goals for SED students under the LCAP. Moreover, the study provided an insightful glimpse into the work that has been done to ensure positive outcomes for SED students, as the research questions for the study examined what type of support services and resources LCFF funds have been used for by a local school district in an effort to address equity of SED students in the State. Some state policymakers have posted

concerns about accountability of the administration of these funds by local school sites. The study is a useful one, as it provides a benchmark for policymakers and education leaders to determine the impact of equity and adequacy that has transpired from the adoption and implementation of LCFF in California. To address educational inequity issues of SED students, it is important to note that experiences from the participants in the study indicated that LCFF monies are responding to student equity needs. Yet, LCFF monies do respond to adequacy issues of SED students, but to some extent.

The future impact of LCFF on SED students across the State of California is uncertain. The voices and experiences of the five participants in the study echo their optimism of positive impact, but time will only be able to tell if they are right.

References

Affeldt, J. T. (2015). New accountability in california through local control funding

reforms: the promise and the gaps. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *23*(23),

2-20.

Bandaranayake, B. (2013). Formula-Based public school funding system in victoria:

an empirical analysis of equity. *International Journal of Educational

Leadership Preparation*, *8*(2), 191-207.

Bell, L. A. (2007). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In *Teaching for

Diversity and Social Justice* (pp. 25-38). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bingham, W., Jones, T. B., & Jackson, S. H. (2007). Examining equity in Texas public

school funding. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*,

2(1), 1-84.

California Department of Education. (2017) California school dashboard. Retrieved from

https://www.caschooldashboard.org/#/Home.

Canfield, J. (2013). A brief history of california school funding. *Leadership*, *42*(5), 26-

28.

Creswell, J.W. (2012). Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating

quantitative and qualitative research. (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson,

Merrill Prentice Hall.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2015). The flat world and education: how America's commitment

to equity will determine our future. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Growe, R., & Montgomery, P. S. (2003). Educational equity in america: is education

the great equalizer?. *Professional Educator*, 25(2), 23-29.

Ikpa, V. W. (2016). Politics, adequacy, and education funding. *Education*, 136(4), 468-

472.

Dudley-Marling, A., & Dudley-Marling, C. (2015). Inclusive leadership and poverty. In Theoharis, G. & Scanlan, G., *Leadership for Increasingly Diverse Schools* (pp. 65-83). New York, NY: Routledge.

Jones, E., Johnson, J., Bell, G., & McFarley, G. (2002). School funding inequities: a statistical analysis examining the adequacy of funding for capital outlay in North Carolina schools. *Research for Educational Reform*, *7*(1), 24-45.

Kozol, J. (1991). Savage inequities: children in america's schools. New York, NY: *Crown*.

Noguera, P. A., & Akom, A. (2000). Disparities demystified. *The Nation*, 270(22), 29-31.

Noguera, P. A. (2011). A broader and bolder approach uses education to break the cycle of poverty. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *93*(3), 8-14.

Reed, D. S. (2001). Not in my schoolyard: localism and public opposition to funding schools equally. *Social Science Quarterly*, *82*(1), 34-50.

Verstegen, D. A., Venegas, K., & Knoeppel, R. (2006). Savage inequalities revisited: Adequacy, equity, and state high court decisions. *Educational Studies*, 40(1), 60-76.

The State of Higher Education in California- Latino Report. (2015). The Campaign for College Opportunity. Retrieved from http://collegecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2015-State-of-Higher-Education_Latinos.pdf.

Theoharis, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *43*(2), 221-258.

U.S. Department of Education. (2015,October 5) Program description. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html.

Wolf, R., & Sands, J. (2016). A preliminary analysis of California's new local control

funding formula. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(34), 2-39.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Johnny Garcia Vasquez, who is a graduate student in the Master of Arts, Educational Leadership program at California State University Channel Islands. The results of this study will contribute toward my thesis. You were selected as a potential participant in this study because you are a school principal/ administrator in the XXXXXXX School District.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to research and evaluate the impact of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) on socioeconomically disadvantaged students and their school sites. In this study, the researcher will interview various principals/administrators to find parallel themes amongst their implementation of LCFF at their school sites.

PROCEDURES
Agreeing to participate in this study requires you to participate in a one-on-one recorded interview. You will answer questions about the implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) at your school site. The interview will occur in your office located at your school site, and will take 30 minutes to complete.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
You may experience mild discomfort relating to the questions regarding your personal and educational experiences implementing Local Control Funding Formula at your school sites. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go to the next question without any negative consequences. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, keep in mind this interview is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the interview. You have access to the Johnny Garcia Vasquez and Dr. James Martinez should any issues arise

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
Although you are not expected to benefit directly by your participation, it is hoped that the results will offer guidance to educational leadership professionals and policymakers, so they may assist to evaluate the impact of the Local Control Funding Formula on socioeconomically disadvantaged students and their school sites.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION
There will be no payment or compensation for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Any information that is obtained in association with this study and that can be identified with the participants or school site will remain confidential. Pseudonyms for participant names, school district, and names of individual schools will be used for confidentiality. Consent forms and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home for three years. Audio electronic recording files will be kept on a flash drive separate

from any recording device or personal computer. Audio electronic recordings will be destroyed immediately after they are transcribed and analyzed. Consent forms and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home for three years. The researcher and his thesis advisor will be the only individuals who will have access to the data collection materials.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
You can select whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any type. You may also refuse to answer any questions you wish not to answer and still stay in the study.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS
If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me, Johnny Garcia Vasquez, at 805-XXX-XXXX or my thesis advisor, Dr. James Martinez at 805-XXX-XXXX.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS
You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. For questions or issues regarding your rights as a subject, please feel free to contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) **at 805-437-8496 or via email at irb@csuci.edu**

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT
I understand the procedures and conditions of my participation described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

☐ By selecting this box, I agree for the interview to be audio recorded.
☐ By selecting this box, I do not agree for the interview to be audio recorded.

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject Date

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE
Identifying Pseudonym:_____
PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW:

QUESTION 1:
What were the general financial obstacles of your school prior to the implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)?

QUESTION 2:
What information, support, or trainings were provided to you to understand the implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)?

QUESTION 3:
How significant was a change in the state's new funding formula (LCFF) at this point in your school? When you have fully implemented LCFF, to what degree will it have a positive or negative impact on your school?

QUESTION 4:
To what degree are you involved in writing or developing your district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)?

QUESTION 5:
To what degree at your school site, do you have budget and/ or spending flexibility? Describe.

QUESTION 6:
How is LCFF funding being allocated from the District to your school? How are you allocating this funding at your school?

QUESTION 7:
At your school site with LCFF funding, how are the specific issues of English Learner students' supports being addressed? How about low-income students? Foster youth?

QUESTION 8:
How are you measuring the successes of these students from the LCFF funding for English Learner students? How about low-income students? Foster youth?

QUESTION 9:
How is this affecting your ability to support your general population students?

QUESTION 10:
How effective does the new Local Control Funding Formula compare to the past categorical funding model?

QUESTION 11:
How do you foresee the future of using LCFF funding?

APPENDIX C: LISTING OF CODES

Table 2

Listing of in Vivo Codes for Data Analysis

Codes
Community Input
Metrics
Goals
Meeting Goals
Success
Achievement
Funding Flexibility
Student Needs
Technology Driven
Access
Accountability
Success Rates
Data Driven
Action Plans
Equity
LCAP Alignment
Processes
Success Rates
School Plan Alignment
Curriculum Alignment
Support Services
Resources
Interventions
Positive Impact
Outcomes