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School finance and accountability: the phenomenology of secondary school leaders

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SCHOOL FINANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY:
THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEADERS

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DEDICATION

To my loving family for cheering me on through this great adventure and the many to come.

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore the lived experiences of secondary school leaders serving in districts with an Unduplicated Pupil Percentage (UPP) of 55% or higher and receiving supplemental and concentration funds during the early implementation of Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). The complexity of the multifaceted K-12 public funding system on the daily work of school leaders managing budgets, and the limited amount of research on this phenomenon and school leader's own perspective guided this study. The Response to Intervention (RTI) framework was used to address the new multi-tier funding system for LCFF and to analyze the participants lived experience. Common themes included setting and implementing ambitions goals, using stakeholder input to prioritize funding at the site level, and taking advantage of budgetary flexibility to meet student need. The themes provided a logical progression of the secondary school leaders' actual lived experience of implementing LCFF and LCAP. This study had three conclusions in response to the research question. The first conclusion, creating authentic experiences to gather stakeholder input, can help school leaders cultivate a collaborative environment. The second conclusion, gathering stakeholder input, provides school sites with valuable information about what their local community considers important. The final conclusion, utilizing funding flexibility, allowed school leaders to focus on creating more personalized opportunities for the school community.

Chapter I

Background of the Study

School Finance is a complex subject. The multifaceted K-12 public school funding system across the United States depends on federal, state, and local sources. Throughout the United States, differences exist among states' funding systems and funding formulas used to allocate monies to districts. Such differences include funding levels, funding distributions, state spending and state' fiscal capacity, and the proportion of students participating in K-12 public school systems across states. Moreover, differences in funding levels have created wide disparities among states. In their report, *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card*, Baker, Sciarra and Farrie (2015) found that "funding levels ranged from a high of $18,507 in New York to a low of $6,369 in Idaho" (p. 6). School Funding discrepancies among states have been in existence since the beginning of public K-12 education in the United States, as states are solely responsible for developing schooling systems. The Tenth Amendment relinquishes the responsibilities of education systems to the states. The amendment simply reads, "The power not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people" (U.S. Const. amend. X, 1791). Each state's finance systems have their own unique historical, political and economic challenges which influence funding systems for K-12 public.

During the 1950's, the United States Department of Health and Welfare did not exercise much oversight over funding and management of education systems across states, given the expected responsibility of the states (Townley, Schmieder-Ramirez, & Wehmeyer, 2014). In the 1960s, education systems experience a shift across the country as issues of fiscal inequities emerged in districts leading to the courts becoming new political actors in K-12 education

(Odden & Picus, 1992). In 1965, under President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was enacted. The purpose of ESEA was to provide financial support to public education; this established Title I, to help with the cost of helping disadvantaged students. The enactment of ESEA established a role of federal government in public school education (Klein, 2015). By the 1970's, due to these fiscal inequities, efforts focused on reducing financial disparities throughout the nation. Leading court cases such as, *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) in California, *Robinson v. Cahill* (1972) in New Jersey, and *Horton v. Meskill* (1977) in Connecticut, focused on creating greater equity (Kemerer & Sansom, 2013; Reed, 1996). According to Odden and Picus (1992), they describe this decade as a turning point marking a "decline of educators in setting state public school fiscal as well as program policy" (p. 246). This shifted the government roles pertaining to education. In the 1980's, the National Commission on Excellence in Education was directed to examine the quality of education in the United States by Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell. By 1983 the commission published the report, *A Nation at Risk*. The report highlighted schools as failing institutions and made predictions about the future of our nation. Shortly after the report was released schools became the center of attention and the business community became a new political actor in education. The impact of education in the 1980's and school finance reform set forth by the stimulus of what they considered the trigger event, *A Nation at Risk* resulted in states becoming the lead funder of public education in the United States (Contreras, 2011; Odden & Picus, 1992).

Consequently, in the late 1980's and early 1990's, this trigger event highlighted on the achievement gap and the development of *standards-based education* in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2008; Wong, Guthrie & Harris, 2004). In the 1990's, during President

Clinton's presidency, Congress enacted the *Improving America's Schools Act* (1994), which required states to develop state academic-content standards and assessments. Then, followed by the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994), which allocated federal funds to aid states in writing those content standards. During the shift, accountability and mandates for public schools connected to funding began to develop across the country. The federalization of education policy was at the forefront of public education in the United States (Wong et al., 2004). During the new millennium, the federalization of education policy, which included school finances continued to evolve and the standards-based education reached new levels. President George W. Bush called for more educational reform at the federal level, resulting in the reauthorization of ESEA and the enactment of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001; NCLB). Under NCLB, public school districts were expected to ensure all students reached a proficient level in standardized testing by 2013-2014. The law created federal government targets which directly connected to school finances, and districts that did not participate ran the risk of losing Title I funds (Klein, 2015).

Today, we are in early implementation of the Common Core State Standard Initiative, a movement focused on high-quality standards in mathematics and English language arts literacy across the nation. According to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), 42 states voluntarily adopted the *Common Core State Standards* (2010). Each state developed their own action plan for implementation, as well as allocated implementation funds. For example, in the State of California, the passage of Assembly Bill 86, Section 85 of the Budget Act of 2013, established specific funds for implementation for the new adoption of content standards across the State (California Department of Education, 2014).

The multifaceted K-12 public school finance system in the United States continues to vary state-by-state, and finance formulas continue to evolve as education quality and educational equity continues to be at the forefront of public education (Ely & Fermanich, 2013; Odden, Picus, & Goetz, 2010; Verstegen, 2015). For example, in the 2013-2014 California state budget packet, Governor Jerry Brown introduced the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The new funding formula, commonly referred to as LCFF, focuses on local control of funding and accountability of school districts by providing equal funding per student with adjustments based on grade levels and additional supports for high-need demographic (i.e., low-income, English learner and foster youth students) through concentration and supplemental funds (WestEd, 2014). In 2013, Governor Brown considered this a revolutionary approach to school finances by "bringing the government closer to the people, to the classroom where real decisions are made, and directing the money where the needs and the challenge is greatest" ("Governor brown signs," para. 2). With LCFF, funding is still tied to student demographic characteristics, but focuses on decreasing state control and providing appropriate accountability measures through the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) (Gelsomini & Ishida, 2014). Local Education Agencies (LEAs), who are in the early stages of reform implementation across the state of California, are exploring how to use the funding formula to meet the targeted needs of students.

Problem Statement

The Great Recession, which started late December of 2007, was classified as the severest labor market downturn since the Great Depression (Katz, 2010; Sum & Khatiwada, 2010). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), unemployment rates across the states varied from Nebraska and South Dakota at the low end with a 5.2% unemployment rate to a 10% + rate in states like Nevada and California. Moreover, there was a loss of taxable income leading to a greater loss in state general fund revenues (Baker, 2014). The impact of the 2007-2009 Great Recession had major implications for public education finances due to the loss of state general funds (Baker, 2014). With California's high unemployment rate and crumbling housing market, the general fund revenues were greatly reduced the general fund revenues (Baker, 2014). Townley et al. (2014) state that, "a major factor in funding for state's educational programs is the wealth of that state" (p. 31). As reported by the California Department of Education (2015), public education is the largest program funded by the state budget accounting for more than 40% of the state budget (Education Budget). With the reduction of state general funds, California's state budget did not allocate the 40% or more that it had provided in previous years. During the 2008-09 fiscal year, K-12 public education only received 32% of the state's budget, the first of six consecutive years where K-12 public education would experience cuts (Department of Finance, 2008). According to the Legislative Analyst's Office (Taylor, 2012), California's public school districts have faced many financial challenges, including reduction of instructional days, elimination of programs, and thousands of teacher layoffs. Budget cuts in California caused over 32,000 teacher layoffs since the 2007-2008 school year (Martinez, 2013). These financial challenges in education are important in a time at which our country needs to produce workers and scholars with high-level technical and analytical skills to complete in a global society (Podesta & Brown, 2008).

The financial challenges throughout California have created hardship for the K-12 public education system. In effort to improve the financial system for education, California policymakers have implemented a new funding system for education, called LCFF focused on base grant funding. This new funding formula replaces the previous categorical funding procedures implemented throughout K-12 public school system in California, while still providing additional financial support by offering supplemental and concentration funds for high-need students (i.e., low-income, English learner and foster youth students). Additional support for LCFF shifts the spending decisions from the state to the local districts with the intent to enable districts to be able to use their base funding, as well as their supplemental and concentrations funds according to their needs (WestEd, 2014). The new funding formula is being accompanied by a local accountability plan called, the LCAP. This accountability plan must be adopted by LEAs in order to receive state funding and is intended to support LEAs to create annuals goals within eight specific areas known as the State Priorities for Funding (Cabral & Chu, 2013). The plan must include district-wide goals to support significant student groups identified pursuant of Education Code section 52052.

Currently, districts across the state of California are working through the phase-in of LCFF with many questions. Although, LCFF is expected to have positive impacts on education by increasing funding, the world of public education across California is experiencing many other simultaneous changes (Ed-Data, 2015). In California, standardized testing is experiencing a transitional phase as the State moves away from the California Standards Tests (CSTs) into the Smarter Balanced Assessments, which are intended to align to the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics and English Language Arts. The CCSS were adopted by the state of California in 2010 and began full implementation during the 2014-2015 school year with new frameworks and textbook adoptions. The state of California is also participating in the transition to the new Next Generation Science Standards. New teaching standards, new standardized testing assessments, new standardized testing protocols, new accountability plans for districts, and a new funding formula for public education are all changes aimed to align to the needs of the 21st century and improve education. Site leaders must nevertheless operate their sites and the programs they oversee to ensure student and staff success.

School finances reform in California is headed in a direction of less centralization of funds at the state level, giving LEAs more flexibility, transparency, and accountability control of their monies (WestEd, 2014). In a letter addressed to all County Superintendents, District Superintendents, and Direct-Funded Charter School Administrators, Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the California Department of Education and Michael W. Krist, President of the California State Board of Education, consider LCFF a major shift in funding for LEAs stating, “LEAs will receive funding based on the demographic profile of the students they serve and will be expected to meet enhanced accountability requirements” (personal communication, August 7, 2013). School leadership and management of school finances under the previous revenue system in California was strictly state controlled leaving districts with very limited options, increasing the funds they receive or the ways they could be spent (Edsource, School Services of California, & Stanford University, 2006). Today, school leadership and management of school finances under LCFF is expected to promote more local decisions, more site-based decisions, and higher standards which specifically focus on targeted allocations and management of funds (California State Board of Education, 2014; California Togethers, 2015; Fuller & Tobben, 2014).

Under the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSELs), school leaders are expected to operate through a democratic philosophy by promoting a fuller understanding of how political and economic systems and processes impact schools (WestEd, 2003). Presently, school boards, superintendents, district administrators, and site administrators all share the challenges of new education reform, as they shift away from categorical program funding, begin to redefine leadership and management of school leaders, and the new demands of LCFF and LCAP. While educational leaders are operating their school sites and programs in the midst of the new funding formula, these new changes are creating new challenges and experiences for school leaders. Therefore, further research is needed to understand how educational leaders manage these financial changes while seeking to ensure effective leadership and management of their respective sites. The overall goal of this study is to explore the lived experiences of these educational leaders during this period of financial transition.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experience of secondary school leaders as it relates to the implementation of the LCFF and the LCAP during the early stages of reform implementation across the state of California. This qualitative, phenomenological study will cross-sectionally examine the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of secondary school leaders through in-person interviews. A phenomenological study to understand the role of secondary school leaders during the early stages of implementation of a new educational financial system was best suited to study this problem because phenomenology seeks to understand the essence of the lived experience of those engaged in the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Importance of Study

LCFF is a major change for California school finance after having the revenue system in place for over 30 years (Ed-Data, 2015). This is a current phenomenon; a void in the literature currently exists related to the leadership of secondary school leaders during the implementation of financial reform that is driven my local flexibility and accountability. Moreover, few studies relating to the leadership of secondary school leaders have included school leader's own perspective of the phenomenon (Day, 2000). Crow et al., (2002), suggest that future studies focus on school leadership should include the principal's own view:

> The changing nature of the work and larger society in which schools exist is affecting how principals enact their role and how they are being pressured to change role. But any discussion of how the principal's role is being or should be reshaped, also must acknowledge that the principals' themselves in their daily routines, conversations, and actions shape and reshape their role. Reshaping the principal's role involves principals themselves in the process. (p. 190)

This study will help address the void in the literature around the new funding formula in California, the essence of the lived experiences of secondary school leaders during this period of financial transition. The results of this study could be used as a resource for County Offices of Education (COEs) and LEAs when developing professional develops related to educational finance. The findings of this study could also be used to inform colleges and universities that offer principal certification programs about the specific needs of principals as they relate to budgeting and management of resources. The result of this study could inform state policymakers of the emotions and professional support needed during the implementation of finance-related reforms as the state focuses more on local control and accountability.

Definition of Terms

Key terms.

County Office Education (COE). County educational service agencies across the state of California that provide services to school districts statewide including the responsibility to examine and approve school district budgets and expenditures (California Department of Education, 2015).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). This law was signed into effect in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson. ESEA provided federal grants for LEAs who served low-income students as well as grants to states educational agencies for improvement purposes of elementary and secondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

High-Need Students. For the purpose of this study, high-need students are classified as English Learners, low-income as measured by free or reduced-price meal eligibility, or foster youth (California Department of Education, 2015).

Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP). A three-year plan created by an LEA pursuant of Education Code sections 47606.5, 52060, or 52066. The plan identifies goals and measures progress for student subgroups. This plan is updated annually and is an important component of the California's funding system (California Department of Education, 2015).

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). LCFF is California's K-12 finance system introduced during the 2013-2014 state budget package. This funding formula is intended to move away from a categorical program approach and uses a base, supplemental, and concentration grant approach. The LCFF finance system also adopted LCAP, which must be submitted by LEAs for funding (California Department of Education, 2015).

Local Education Agencies (LEA). LEA is used to refer to public board of education or other public authority such as public school districts, county offices of education or charter to have administrative control or direction of elementary or secondary schools. The responsibilities of an LEA include operating schools' systems, creating and maintaining accountability plans, and distributing funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This an active law in the United States that covers K-12 public education, it amends the ESEA (1965). The NCLB (2001) was signed by President George W. Bush. NCLB legislation established requirements for yearly testing of student performance, state standards for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), academic progress goals, school report cards, changes to funding allocations to LEAs and a strong focus on reading (Library of Congress, 2001). Congress is currently reforming NCLB under the Obama administration (White House, 2015).

Secondary level. Secondary Level refers to school serving student population of 6th grade through 12th grade.

School leaders. For the purpose of this study, a School Leader is a principal or assistant principal operating a secondary school. School Leaders are responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operations including school finances for their respective site (NAESP, 2013).

School districts size. For the purpose of this study, school district size will be based on Cullen's (2012) definition. School district will be labeled small-size, when it contains 100 to 1,599 students; moderate-size, refers to a school district with 1,600 to 9,999 students enrolled; and large-size ascribes to school districts with an enrollment of 10,000 students or more.

State priorities for funding. Under the new funding formula in California, LCFF, LEAs are required to develop annual goals for eight specific areas when writing their LCAP. These eight areas are considered state priorities for funding k-12 public education (Taylor, 2013). These eight state priorities for funding include student achievement, student engagement, school climate, basic services, implementation of CCSS, other student outcomes, parent involvement, and course access (California Department of Education, 2015).

Operation Definition

Lived experience. In 1985, Dilthey (as cited in Van, 1990) suggests a lived experience is "our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life: a reflexive or self-given awareness which is, as awareness, unaware of itself" (p. 37). For the purpose of this study, the researcher will describe the lived experience of school leaders in secondary level schools setting engaged in school budgeting.

Phenomenology. An approach to qualitative research in which the researcher attempts to understand the lived experience of the participants in a study (Moustakas, 1994).

Purposeful sampling. Creswell (2002) describes purposeful sampling as a qualitative sampling approach used by the researcher to intentionally select participants and sites to explore the central phenomenon because of they are information rich.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher will approach the study from an Interpretivist theoretical perspective to engage in an exploratory orientation of the lived experience of school leaders with the phenomenon, LCFF and LCAP. The research-based Response to Intervention (RTI) framework as defined by the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI) (2010) will be used to interpret the new multi-level school funding formula, as well as the lived experience of school leaders in secondary level schools engaged in school budgeting process. Both the theoretical perspective and theoretical framework will be briefly discussed in this section and then expounded upon further in Chapter II.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

The researcher will use RTI framework to interpret the effects of LCFF and LCAP on the lived experience of school leaders implementing the new reform in secondary level schools. RTI framework is defined as a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) that seeks to address the needs within interventions tiers that vary in intensity with effort to maximize capacity and resources (NCRTI, 2010). RTI is focused on four essential components: (a) Screening, (b) Progress monitoring, (c) Data-based decision making, and (d) Multi-level prevention system. (NCRTI, 2010). According to O'Meara (2011), the framework provides a catalyst to move educational systems forward to continue ongoing efforts to enhance systems. Riley-Tillman, Burns, and Gibbons (2013), describe RTI's overarching goal as "the ideal manner to provide intervention services to children" (p. 6). For the purpose of this study the multi-tier system, will be used to interpret LCFF allocations of monies to LEAs and COEs (see Figure 1). At Tier I, there is Base Grants, these grants are allocated to all LEAs as well as COEs and it is differentiated funding distributed by grade level groups as followed: grades K-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-8, and grades 9-12 (California Department of Education, 2015). The focus at this Tier, is to provide adequate funding for the entire student body attending K-12 public education system across the state of California. Tier 2 are Supplement Grants and these grants are intended to provide more financial support for high need students. LEAs and COEs are allocated Supplemental Grants, the grants provide 20% more funding for each student classified as a high-need student. The tertiary tier delivers Concentration Grants, which provides additional funds for LEAs and COEs who have 55% enrollment of high-need students. This multi-tiered system of RTI will help guide the study of the lived experience of secondary school leaders implementing LCFF and LCAP.

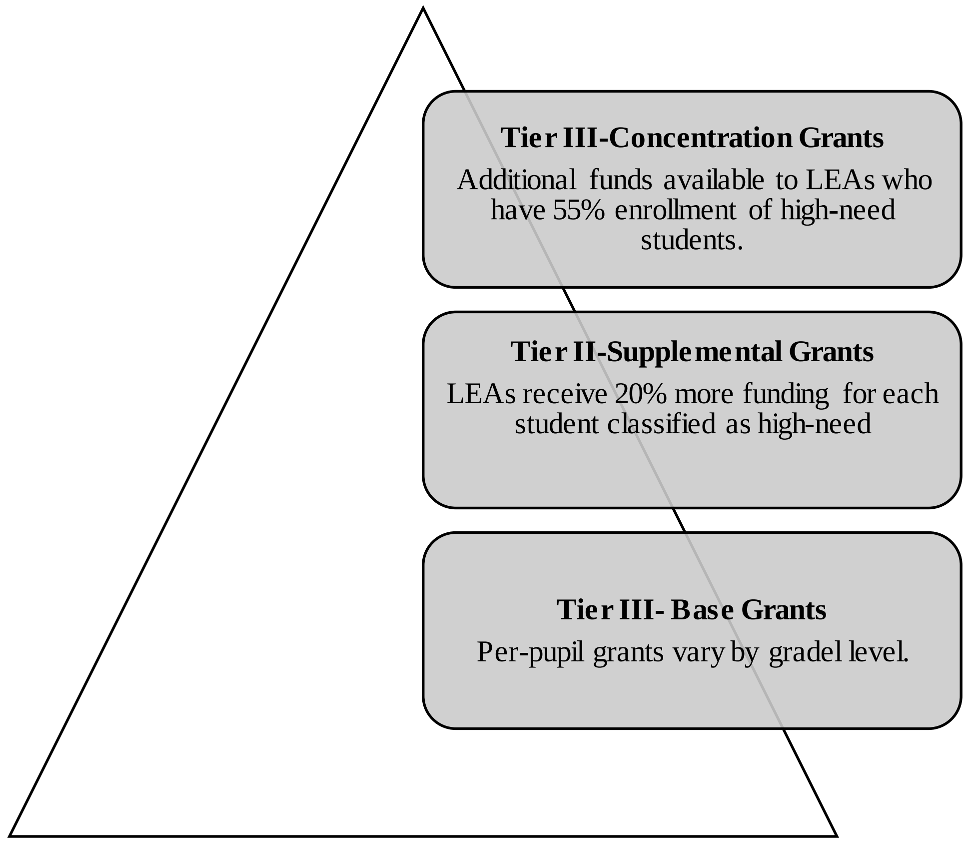

Figure 1 The RTI triangle for LCFF

Research Question

The following question will guide the present study:

> What are the lived experiences of secondary school leaders who are currently implementing the LCFF and LCAP?

Limitations

Limitations are described by Ellis and Levy (2009) as an uncontrollable threat to the interval validity of the study. Creswell (2005) considers limitations as “potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher” (p. 198). For this particular study there are four limitations. First, this study is phenomenological in design and focus on the lived experiences of school leaders in the face of the central phenomenon, new financial and accountability reform. Second, the demands of a principal or assistant principal job may limit time or impact desire of identified school leaders to be active participants in the study. Third, there is a risk that the parameters developed for a purposive sample may not generate enough participates in one district. Finally, this study is limited geographically in that participants are school leaders in Southern California.

Delimitations

Simon (2011) describes delimitations as "those characteristics that limits the scope and define boundaries" (p. 1). Ellis and Levy (2009), state that delimitations can "impact the external validity or generalization of the result of the study" (p. 332). The study will be delimited to five school leaders who lead secondary level schools and work with school finances in two counties in Southern California. Participants interviewed for the study will be delimited to school leaders including principals and assistant principals who assume a leadership role in the implementation of LCAP and LCFF. Finally, participants must have at least 5 consecutive years as active school leaders.

Assumptions

There are three assumptions for this study. First, the researcher of this study is a practicing school leader who assumes school leaders currently engaged with school site budgets are affected by the new changes in California's school finance system and need additional support with finances at their site. Second, the researcher assumes approached school leaders will be willing to participate in the study because they want to share their lived experience and perceptions of the phenomenon. Third, the participants in the study are assumed to be honest and accurate in all interview responses. Dishonest statements or inaccurate responses would not provide an accurate representation of the effects of implementing LCFF.

Organization of Study

This study is written in a five-chapter format. The first chapter of this study provides the reader with background, problem statement, research question, theoretical framework, importance of study, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions, along with key terms for the study. The second chapter is a literature review that synthesizes California's historical, contextual, and political dynamics in regards to school finances, as well as the role of secondary school leaders in school finances. The third chapter discusses the methodology used for this study, including the setting, subjects and instrumentation to be used. The fourth chapter presents the results of the study. Lastly, the fifth chapter provides the reader a summary of the entire study, along with a discussion of the findings, a conclusion, and recommendations for further research in school finance and school leadership related to school finances.

Chapter II

Introduction and Organization of Chapter

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of secondary school leaders implementing LCFF and LCAP. The chapter provides an examination of the literature which supports the research question: What are the lived experiences of secondary school leaders who are currently implementing the LCFF and LCAP?

The organization for Chapter II begins with a discussion of the main theoretical basis for this study, the RTI Framework as a school finance improvement strategy. Leadership is discussed through the lens of this framework which is based on a multi-tiered approach, such as the new school finance system in California. Next, the chapter will follow with a discussion of relevant literature, beginning with a historical overview of school finances for public K-12 education in California, followed by a synthesis of the role of school leaders in the 21st century school finances. The literature review also includes the variables of this study: (a) the Local Control Funding Formula, (b) the Local Control and Accountability Plan, and (c) the lived experience. Lastly, the chapter provides a summary of the literature and themes that emerge from the literature review.

Theoretical Framework

RTI framework as a school finance improvement strategy will interpret the effects of LCFF and LCAP on the lived experience of school leaders implementing the new reform in secondary level schools. RTI framework is defined as MTSS that seeks to address the needs within interventions tiers that vary in intensity with effort to maximize capacity and resources (NCRTI, 2010). The three-tiered system aligns to the shifts of the new funding system as it moves away from categorical funding into grant based funding. The RTI framework sets the foundation for a multi-tiered approach that seeks to provide equitable services for all students through Base grants, Supplemental grants, and Concentration grants.

California Public K-12 School Finances and Adequacy

California School Funding system has evolved over the last three decades by an embodiment of court cases, legislative actions, voter-approved initiatives, and government regulations (EdSource, 2000; McFadden, 2006; Townley et al., 2014; Carroll, Krop, Arkes, Morrison, and Flanagan, 2005). The combination of all of these efforts has influenced and fundamentally transformed California's' school funding system (Carroll et al., 2005).

Serrano v. Priest (1971). The *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) court case marks the first major shift in school finance reform by the court system in California related to financial equity across districts (Downes, 1988; Townley et al., 2014). Prior to the Serrano suit, the California K-12 public education finance was funded by approximately 60 % of local property taxes while 35 % came from state sources and the rest came from federal sources (Timar, 2004). According to Kemerer and Sansom (2013), the major problem with the school finance system was that, even with "high tax rates, districts across the state with low assessed evaluation could not match spending levels of property-rich school districts" (p. 102). For example, the California Department of Education Selected Statistics for 1968-1969 (as cited in *Serrano v. Priest*, 1971) demonstrated the amount spent per pupil across Los Angeles County varied drastically, in Baldwin Park Unified the total was $577.79, in Pasadena Unified School District the total amounted to $840.19, and in Beverly Hills Unified School District they spent $1,231.72 per pupil. The wide range of per pupil funding totals we a result of the impact of dollar value assigned to properties in the state per child, in Baldwin Park assessed valuation totaled $3,706, in

Pasadena, assessed valuation was $13,706, while a high wealth community like Beverly Hills totaled $50,885.

The Court ruled in favor of the plaintiff and classified the existing system of school finance in California unconstitutional. The Courts made a reference to the equal protection clause of the state constitution and requested that the state legislature establish a system that provided equal opportunity for all student to learn (Odden & Picus, 1992). The state legislature responded with Senate Bill 90 (SB90), this legislation established revenue limits, a set dollar amount a district could receive per pupil (Weston, 2010). Mc Fadden (2006) asserts, that this shift was centered on the concept of equity creating a complete reconfiguration of the state's K-12 finance structure. The revenue limits were based on the local property taxes from 1972 and would consider an annual adjustment based on inflation (Timar, 2006).

Consequently, the inequities between districts across the state, the Serrano ruling followed by the voter-driven Proposition 13 in 1970 shifted local control of California's public school districts, and initiated an era of a centralized school finance system with the intent to make the overall system more equitable.

Proposition 13 (1978). Proposition 13, passed by California voters in 1978, helped to evolve the school finance system by adding Article XII A to the California Constitution (Carroll et al., 2005; Timar, 2006). With the passage of Proposition 13, a statewide system for assessing property value introduced a 1% limit of general purpose tax rate, this rate was calculated based on the 1975-76 value of the property, as well as a maximum of 2 % annual inflation increase (Townley et al., 2014). In addition, along with the passage of Proposition 13, voters also passed Proposition 4, knows as the Gann Limit (Article XII B of the State Constitution). The Gann Limit imposed the state to compensate local governments for all state mandated costs (Timar, 2006). Kemer and Sansom (2013) consider Proposition 13 a significant setback to school finance in California because it centralized school finances, which slowed funding growth per-pupil when California was expanding and experiencing demographic changes. Furthermore, Townley et al. (2014), assert the major challenge for K-12 school education was that Proposition 13 shifted financial dependency on fluctuation in the state economy, rather than a more dependable property tax. In other words, any type of negative impact to state revenues would affect the state's responsibility to fund K-12 public education across the state. In summary, with the passage of Proposition 13, K-12 public education experienced a shift in school finance decisions making from local control to the state.

Proposition 98 (1988). Proposition 98 was approved by voters in 1988. The main feature of this proposition was to give K-12 as well as higher education a constitutionally-based minimum guaranteed funding source from the state (Timar, 2006). The proposition also presented certain funding provisions to guarantee growth each year, which were determined by specific formulas or tests (Manwaring, 2005). The proposition contains 3-test system to determine minimum base funding for K-14 public education.

- *Test 1* provides K-14 public education with at least 39 % of General Fund revenues as in 1986-87.
- *Test 2* provides K-14 public education with at least prior year's funding from both state and property taxes adjusted for statewide Average Daily Attendance (ADA) increase and inflation.
- *Test 3* provides K-14 public education with the same criteria as Test 2, but defines inflation as the growth in per capita General Fund revenues plus ½ %. This test was

added by Proposition 11 in 1990 and is generally used when General Fund revenues fall or grow slowly.

The overall goal of the three tests is to not only guarantee funding, but provide a predictable funding amount for school finances under different economic conditions (Timar, 2006). These tests would allow legislatures to modify spending based on state revenues. In addition, the proposition gives legislatures the ability to suspend the guarantee with a two-thirds vote for one fiscal year and allocate any level of K-14 funding (Manwaring, 2005). The second feature of Proposition 98, is the Maintenance Factor, also known as the funding gap. When the state experiences revenue deficits and is unable to provide the proper K-14 funding, this feature accelerates spending in future years (Timar, 2006). As a result of Proposition 98, K-12 education funding is dependent on the state's revenue and the Legislature's allocation decisions.

Williams v. California (2004). The *Williams* case was a class action lawsuit filed in 2000 against multiple educational agencies and the state of California. The basis of the lawsuit was that these educational agencies, as well as the state were not giving equal access to K-12 public school students to a variety of resources and conditions. These included inadequate instructional materials, lack of permanent or qualified teachers, lack of space, and deteriorating school facilities with cooling or heating issues (Glen & Picus. 2007). Multiple researchers (Glenn & Picus, 2007; Guthrie & Springer, 2005; Powers 2004; Timar, 2005) consider the *Williams* case different from other lawsuits addressing equity based on the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, as well as the state constitution because this particular case was not only "about equity or adequacy of resources, but about the state's systems of oversight that assures students adequate resources to benefit from the education provided them" (Timar, 2005, p. 129).

The *Williams* case was first opposed by Governor Gray Davis, but would eventually be settled under Governor Schwarzenegger's administration in 2004 (Glen & Picus, 2007). The settlement between both parties was composed of additional funding and five new pieces of legislation: Senate Bill (SB) 6, SB 550, Assembly Bill (AB) 1550, AB 2727, and AB 3001 (California Department of Education, 2015). The settlement called for approximately $1.2 billion in additional funding to support the new legislation which dealt with three overarching issues: facilities maintenance and repair, instructional materials, and teacher assignments and qualifications. A large bulk of the funding allocated under the settlement was given to facilities repairs. According to Glen and Picus (2007), facility issues dominated the parties' agreement leading legislatures to allocate the largest bulk to facilities repairs, by providing $800 million to repair schools in the below 39th percentile of the API in 2003. The School Accountability Report Card (SARC), which was introduced under Proposition 98, was modified under the *Williams* case settlement by requiring additional reporting requirements relating to (a) any needed maintenance to ensure good repair of school facilities, (b) the number of teacher misassignments and vacant teacher positions, and (c) the availability of sufficient textbooks and other instructional materials (California Department of Education, 2015, "*Williams* Settlement and the SARC," para. 2).

While the *Williams* case targeted issues of equity as defined by 14th Amendment of the Constitution and adequacy of resources the case also focused on the current state's system of oversight with education. Hatami (2006) asserts that the *Williams* case raised several questions about how the state could hold schools accountable to meet the state mandated high standards without the adequate inputs from the state. Several researchers (Chamber & Levi, 2006; Glenn & Picus, 2007; Hatami, 2006) consider the case to be a frame for ongoing discussion about the challenges California public schools have faced with inadequate funding under revenue limits funds and highly regulated categorical programs.

Proposition 30 (2012). The passage of Proposition 30 in 2012 brought forth a temporary increase to sales taxes for four years and an increase to personal income taxes rates for the upper-income taxpayers for a total of seven years to help restore the fiscal health of public schools across the state of California. The new revenues generated by the proposition are incorporated into the calculations of Proposition 98 minimum guarantee. These funds are currently raising the minimum guarantee by billions of dollars each year. Additionally, the new revenue that is being used to support higher school funding has been placed in a new state account called Education Protection Account (EPA). At the moment, 89% of the revenue is allocated for K-12 education and 11% is allocated to community colleges. Currently, the funds are distributed the same way that unrestricted funding are allocated, however LEAs are receiving no less than $200 in EPA funds per student and community colleges are receiving no less than $100 in EPA funds per full-time student.

Old Structure of School Financing in California 1972-2013

As stated previously, as a result of the court cases, legislative actions, voter-approved initiatives, and government regulations, the legislature established the revenue limit formula and a minimum funding level for California public education through the 2012-2013 fiscal year. Although the state guaranteed a minimum funding level under this structure of school financing, the state Legislature and the governor were responsible for deciding the amount of funds that would be allocated to LEAs based on state's fund revenue. Moreover, the state Legislature and the governor lead the decision making regarding how funds would be spent in K-12 public education. The funds were allocated to either general purpose funding (unrestricted) or targeted categorical funding (restricted). To better understand the lived experience of secondary school leaders as it relates to funding and accountability, an overview of old structure of school financing in California is necessary.

The state of California's income is generated from multiple sources, which include taxes, from the sales of bonds, and federal government. The General fund revenues also consist of multiple sources, but the three largest are personal income taxes, sales and use taxes, and corporate income taxes (California State Controller's Office, 2014). These sources have a large impact on the general fund revenues that support K-12 public education. Under this system public education is at the mercy of the state revenues because it is solely dependent on the state's revenue.

As referred to earlier, California's school finance system receives its largest portion of funding from the state, however it also receives revenue from other multiple resources. These sources include federal, state, property tax, lottery, and other local miscellaneous. As reported by EdSource (2009), prior to LCFF the federal government contributed approximately 10% of fund to the educational budget and the state government contributed 60% of the education budget. Per Weston (2011), from the funds allocated from the federal and state government one third of those funds are earmarked for specific use. In California funding allocations for public education were allocated into two sets of funds: general purpose funding, which were considered unrestricted or targeted categorical funding, which were classified as restricted. For example, during the 2012-2013 fiscal year, K thru 12 public education received $68.4 billion dollars, from those funds $37.9 billion dollars we allocated for the General Fund and $30.5 billion dollars were allocated for other funds.

General purpose funding. General purpose funding includes revenue limits, a portion of state lottery revenues and other local funds allocated to LEAs per ADA and are considered unrestricted dollars (Weston, 2011). LEA's across the state have complete control of these unrestricted dollars, as well control how much of those funds are used to fund schools (Timar, 2006). According to Kaplan (2012) from the California Budget Project (CBP), unrestricted funds are used for day-to-day operating expenditures, which included employee salaries, employee benefits, instructional and non-instructional supplies, textbooks, and maintenance. Moreover, Kaplan (2012) reports the 2010-11 statewide spending for K-12 public education unrestricted funds consisted of 83.5% of funds supported salaries and benefits of teachers and other staff, 12.2% of the funds were spent on day-to-day operations, and 4.3% of funds were allocated towards books and supplies.

Categorical aid funding. Categorical aid funding are restricted funds, these monies must be used for state designated purposes (Timar, 2006). According to EdSource (2009), one third of state's allocations and all federal allocations are considered to be categorical aid for LEAs. Timar (2006), highlights four types of categorical programs: entitlement, incentive, discretionary grants, and mandated cost reimbursement. Entitlement programs receive funds based on a formula for the district's student characteristics including English learners, socio-economic level, students with disabilities (Timar, 2006). These programs acknowledge certain groups of students need additional resources and supports, entitlement programs seek to provide additional funds to districts that have greater needs based on student characteristics and demographics. An example of entitlement program would include all special education programs, as well as language instruction for English learners. Incentive programs focus on supporting state policy objectives by means of additional categorical funding (Timar, 2006). For example, the K-3 Class-Size-

Reduction program, allocated additional funds to districts with the focus on reducing class sizes for K-3 grade to 20 or lower per class. Another example of an incentive program under state categorical funding was the English Language Acquisition Program, which provided an additional $100 dollars per student that participated in English language instruction in grades 4-8.

Discretionary categorical aid also referred to as competitive grants was accessible to LEAs bases on a grant application process to receive additional funds (Timar, 2006). This particular category ranges in types and size of programs significantly. Discretionary programs from outreach programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), to High Priority School Grants Programs (HPSGP) and Intervention/Underperforming Schools Programs (II/USP), which main purpose is to support low-performing schools. The fourth category is mandated cost reimbursement, this type of categorical aid is provided to LEAs across the state under California Constitution (Article XIIIB, Section 6), which requires the state to provide reimbursements to LEAs for the cost of new programs or higher level of service mandated by the legislature or any state agency. The Controller's Office oversees the Mandated Program, an annual process by which the Controller's Office receives, reviews and audits Mandated Cost claims. In the 2003 and 2004 Budge Act, the legislature deferred mandated reimbursements to all LEAs (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2006; Timar, 2006). According to the Legislative Analyst's Office (2006) throughout this deferred period LEAs were required to maintain the mandated programs in full operations, with an understanding that funding to cover the mandated cost would be allocated at some unspecified future time.

Categorical funding is the result of a combination of court rulings, legislative enactments and a series of propositions (Carroll et al., 2005; Timar, 2004). Several researchers (Jimenez-

Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013; Timar, 2004) have explored the growth of categorical program funding in California as it relates to equity, programs and student achievement. In 2004, Timar conducted a study to assess the categorical programs funding in California along with the changes, the cause of those changes and the importance of those changes as it related to capacity of schools to provide high quality services. Timar (2004) specifically focused on nine different components when he assessed the structure of school finance and growth of categorical funding: equity, adequacy, flexibility, and choice, efficiency, predictability and stability, rationality and accountability. This study revealed a dramatic change in funding between restricted and unrestricted funds. Figure 2 Changes in the Share of Restricted to Unrestricted Funding: 1980-2000, demonstrates the decline in unrestricted funds, as well as the shift of those funds to increase categorical funding. In his study, Timar (2004) reported an 8% decrease to unrestricted funds, while restricted funds increased by 165% overtime. This shift in funds over time illustrates how the growth of categorical funds has taken financial power of LEAs and more categorical programs have been mandated over time. According to Timar (2004), in 2001-02, there were 124 categorical programs active in California comprising $13 billion in funding. Timar argues this "governance structure of education hobbles schools with myriad regulations and limitations: schools have little control over allocation of resources, but are expected to produce outcome" (p. 17).

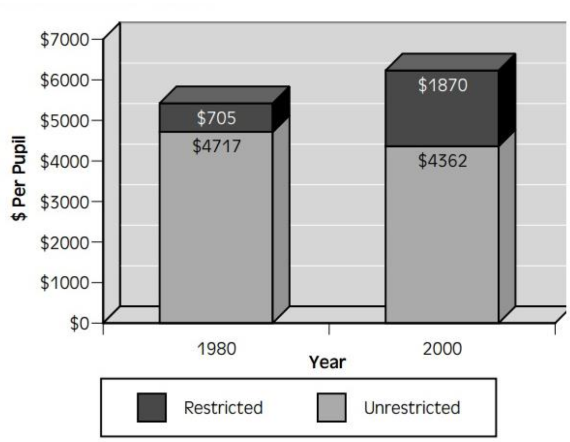

Figure 2 Changes in the share of restricted to unrestricted funding: 1980-2002
Adapted from "Categorical School Finance: Who gains, who loses" by T. Timar, 2004, p. 6. Copyright 2004 by Policy Analysis for California Education. Reprinted with permission.

Categorical aid programs are designed to focus funding on particular student populations and the challenges they may experience based on historical levels of academic achievement (Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013; Timar, 2004). In 2013, Jimenez-Castellanos and Okhremtchouk, completed a case study to analyze the allocations and expenditures of funds from two categorical entitlement programs—Title III, a federal program and Economic Impact Aid (EIA), a California state aid program—to support the needs of English Learner in California. They studied three different schools in one California LEA, which included an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school. In their district level analysis, the researchers' findings explained how this LEA determined the categorical aid distribution among schools. First, the superintendent's cabinet discussed what administrative expenditures the district office would need to keep the systems operational, then allocations were made to district driven expenditures such as professional development provided by the district, California English Language Development Test (CELDT) program implementation expenses, and consulting services for English learners' efforts. Once they maximize the categorical aid to cover district level operations, then decisions were made about what portions of the aid would be allocated to each school. At the school level, their analysis the findings demonstrate that all three schools used the funding allocated from Title III and EIA very differently. According to Jimenez-Castellanos and Okhremtchouk (2013), at the elementary level, they had one expenditure from EIA funds, which were allocated for the Tungsten Test Preparatory computerized program and materials for a total of $46,327. In the middle school setting, they invested $11,195 in personnel salary and benefits, allocated $4,159 for books, $259 for conferences, and $545 towards technology for a grand total of $16,157. Lastly, at the middle school level, the administration allocated $1,128 for personnel salary, $2,305 on office supplies, $8,068 for books and $2,056 for conferences totaling $13,560. The study uncovered two findings: (a) the entitlement categorical funds, which are intended to be a supplement for English Language Learners (ELL) programs and services, at times were used for general purchases at the school level, and (b) Only half of the entitlement funds were allocated to schools and they all ended the school year with a least $20,000 in unspent funds. Based on their findings, Jimenez-Castellanos and Okhremtchouk (2013) highlight effective expenditures practices, which "included diversification of expenditures, engagement of parents in fiscal decision-making and development of strong knowledge base of the entitlement categorical funding programs" (p. 32).

Categorical funding poses challenges for LEAs and school districts because of the shift of the unrestricted fund to restricted funds (Timar, 2004). The growth of restricted funds has limited funds and districts need to manage ways to continue to funding systems that are working locally (Jimenez-Castellanos & Okhremtchouk, 2013). Both Jimenez-Castellanos and Okhremtchouk (2013) noted that if the overall goal of categorical funding is to provide additional supports and supplements for diverse populations of students to reach high levels of academic achievement, special attention needs to be given to the allocation of funds, as well as to the impact of resource allocation and use to the guarantee that these funds are reaching the overall goal of categorical aid.

New Structure of School Financing in California 2013-Present

In 2013, during Governor Jerry Brown's leadership in his third gubernatorial term, school finances experienced a drastic change with the introduction of the LCFF and the LCAP. In January 2013, during a state of the state address, Governor Brown (as cited in Strauss, 2013) called for more local control of school issues and finances by recognizing the diverse needs of the students in California and declaring that, "equal treatment for children in unequal situations is not justices" (para. 3). With the Governor's leadership, California policymakers designed a new funding formula focused on acknowledging the needs of students with additional academic needs by providing additional financial resources to receive improved or increased services. LCFF is intended to provide more local flexibility for decision making by requiring LEAs to prepare LCAPs to describe how they intent to meet their annual goals for all pupils by addressing the eight state and local priorities. While the LCFF paradigm shift for California's education system is still in its infancy, the intent of LCFF seems to be promising as it attempts to entrust local leaders with the solemn responsibility to increase and improve services for low income students, English Learners (ELs) and foster youth (Armas, Lavadenz, and Olsen, 2015).

Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The 2013-2014 was the first year of implementation of California's LCFF, which seeks to provide a more equitable school finance system by giving LEAs local flexibility and the power to decide how funds should be spent. The new formula replaces a complex, inefficient and inequitable finance system for K-12 public education and attempts to bring justices to serves all students ("Governor Brown Signs," 2013).

After the LCFF was signed in to law, the Senate President pro term Darrell Steinberg, celebrated with these words,

> Our disadvantaged students deserve more resources to overcome the extra obstacles they face, and this formula does just that. At the same time, we're investing more resources in all our students, and building on proven programs of career technical education and partnership academies to keep our students engaged and give them better preparation for college and careers. ("Governor Brown Signs," 2013, para. 4)

LCFF is a multi-tier funding system that provides three types of grants, which include Base Grants, Supplemental Grants, and Concentration Grants (see Figure 3). At Tier I, Base Grants are allocated to all LEAs as well as COEs, representing differentiated funding distributed by grade level groups as followed: grades K-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-8, and grades 9-12 (California Department of Education, 2015). The focus of Tier 1 is to provide adequate funding for the entire student body attending K-12 public education system across the state of California. Tier 2 funds are Supplement Grants and these grants are intended to provide more financial support for high need students (i.e., low-income, English learner and foster youth students). LEAs and COEs are allocated Supplemental Grants, which provide 20% more funding for the unduplicated percentage of high need students. The tertiary tier delivers Concentration Grants, which provides additional funds for LEAs and COEs which have 55% or more enrollment of high-need students.

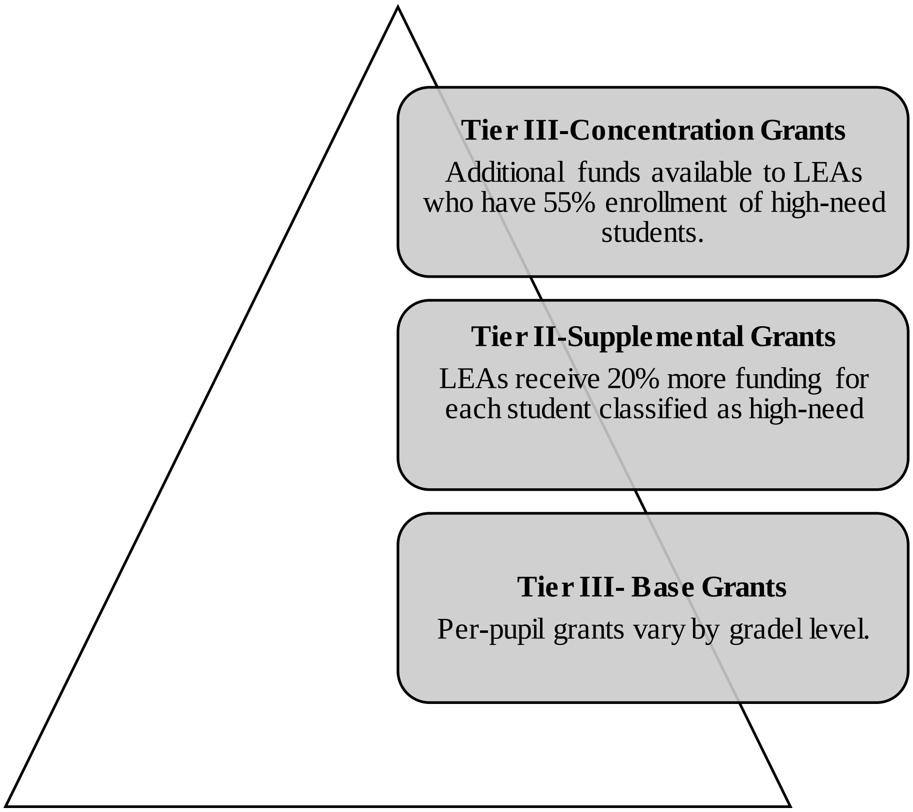

Figure 3 The multi-tier system of LCFF

Per the California Department of Education (2016), districts meeting the threshold receive equal to 50% of the adjusted base grant multiplied by ADA and the percentage of high need students exceeding 55% of a LEAs enrollment. LCFF accountability is measured by a three-year LCAP template adopted by the California State Board of Education (SBE).

While LCFF is still in its infancy stage of implementation, many COEs and LEAs across the state highlight LCFFs potential to shift school finances from a compliance exercise activity to an activity focused on addressing the need of their students (Humphrey et al., 2014). In addition, Humphrey et al. (2014) explain that LCFF focuses on meaningful engagement of parents, pupils, and other stakeholders to analyze the needs of their students to complete the LCAP and the new budget process.

Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). LCAPs are the accountability component of LCFF budget process. The LCAPs are three-year plans created by individual LEAs pursuant of Education Code sections 47606.5, 52060, or 52066. These accountability plans are intended to be completed in collaboration with parents, pupils, and other stakeholders to identifies goals in each of the 8 areas of state priorities (see Figure 4), as well as measure progress for student subgroups. These plans are updated annually and are a critical component of LCFF new system because they are intended to guide spending decisions (California Department of Education, 2015).

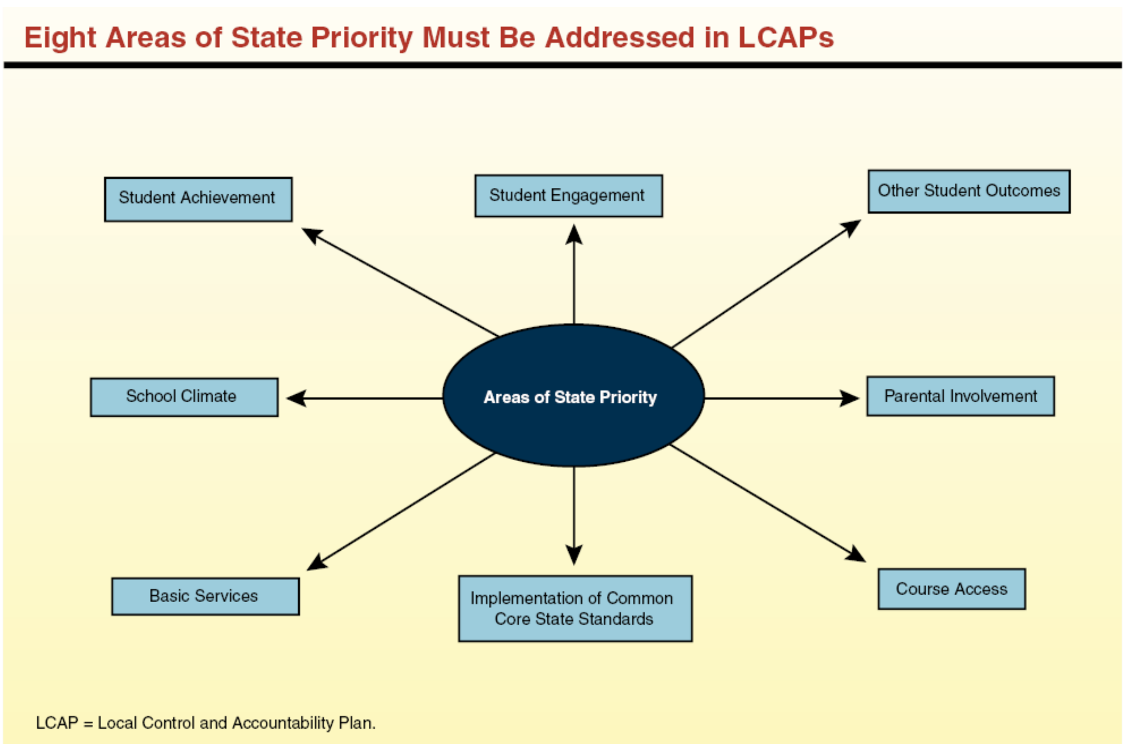

Figure 4 Eight areas of state priority must be addressed in LCAPs
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Resource Allocation and Use

In California, the K-12 student population is becoming progressively diverse. Table 1: California Student Demographics demonstrates a continuous shift in the student population. At the national level, the National Center for Education Statistics (2011) reports the projections for Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islanders and students of two or more races will be higher in 2022, while the projections of White and American Indians/Alaskan Natives will decrease. Districts across the state are responsible for meeting the needs of diverse populations and meeting mandates provided by the state and federal legislatures. The continuous shift in the K-12 student population, along with the legislatures control over finances, makes resource allocation and its use a critical point of discussion. Per the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), across the nation public elementary and secondary education expenditures are projected to increase by 27% from 2009-10 to 2022-23.

Several researchers (Butler, 2006; Druitt, 2011; Guerrero, 2011; Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gross, 2003) have continued to explore the correlation between allocation of education resources and student achievement. Butler (2006) conducted a study to examine the relationship between resource allocation patterns in school districts and student achievement. This study concluded that there was not a significant relationship between district level expenditure funds and student achievement. Butler (2006) concluded these results not to be surprising “due to the fact that these district level funds are so far removed from the day to day occurrences in classrooms” (p. 62). He argued that districts would benefit from an expenditure report that focused on developing a correlation between resource allocation and use to student achievement. Butler (2006) suggest that districts use Odden et al. (2003) model for reporting expenditures to gather information about resources allocation and student achievement.

Table 1

California Student Demographics

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	3,197,384 (51.43%)	3,236,942 (52.03%)	3,282,105 (52.71%)	3,321,274 (53.25%)	3,344,431 (53.64%)
American Indian/ Alaska Native	43,552 (0.70%)	42,539 (0.68%)	40,414 (0.65%)	38,616 (0.62%)	36,755 (0.59%)
Asian	529,510 (8.52%)	535,829 (8.61%)	536,970 (8.62%)	542,540 (8.70%)	545,720 (8.75%)
Pacific Islander	35,787 (0.58%)	34,944 (0.56%)	33,958 (0.55%)	32,821 (0.53%)	31,513 (0.51%)
Filipino	159,038 (2.56%)	157,640 (2.53%)	154,891 (2.49%)	151,745 (2.43%)	158,224 (2.54%)
African American, Not Hispanic	416,098 (6.69%)	406,089 (6.53%)	394,695 (6.34%)	384,291 (6.16%)	373,280 (5.99%)
White	1,655,598 (26.63%)	1,626,507 (26.15%)	1,589,393 (25.52%)	1,559,113 (25.00%)	1,531,088 (24.55%)
Two or More Races	112,788 (1.81%)	130,947 (2.10%)	149,806 (2.41%)	167,153 (2.68%)	175,700 (2.82%)
None Reported	67,247 (1.08%)	49,556 (0.80%)	44,757 (0.72%)	39,119 (0.63%)	38,809 (0.62%)
Total Enrollment	**6,217,002**	**6,220,993**	**6,226,989**	**6,236,672**	**6,235,520**

*Source: California Department of Education 2015

Odden et al. (2003) model for reporting expenditures, is a school-level expenditure structure with a specific focus on school's spending that highlights key factors of instructional delivery. This school expenditure structure focuses on improving previous reports based on three specifics: (a) reports school-level expenditures, (b) promotes a schools within schools organizational model by differentiating spending within a single school building, and (c) the structure aligns to current expenditures elements that reflect effective instructional strategies, as well as resources deployment. Odden et al. (2003) developed this framework to highlight important expenditure elements based on the research centered on high performing schools and school improvement focused specifically on curriculum and instruction, school site organizational structures, and professional development. The framework for the school expenditures structure is composed of two distinct sections, the resource indicators and the expenditures structure. The first, the resource indicators, are a set of indicators that provide more information and details about the school site's instructional priorities and strategies. The second, the expenditures structure are nine elements that are classified as instructional or non-instructional elements. The nine elements are defined as followed: (a) core academic teachers, (b) specialist and elective teachers/planning and preparation; (c) extra help; (d) professional development; (e) other non-classroom instructional staff; (f) instructional materials and equipment; (g) student support; (h) administration; and (i) operational and maintenance (Odden, et al., 2003). Table 2: School Expenditure Structure and Resource Indicators, provides a chart of Odden et al. expenditure structure.

Odden et al. (2003) describe all the core components in detail for instructional and non-instructional:

> Core academic teachers: This category is constructed of credential teachers whose responsibility is to teacher the school's core classes, which includes reading/English/language art, mathematics, science, and history/social studies. At the secondary level core teachers also included ESL/bilingual teachers.

Table 2

School Expenditures Structure and Resources Indicators

School Resources Indicators	
School Building Size	Length of Reading Class (Elementary)
School Unit Size	Length of Mathematics Class (Elementary)
Percent Low Income	Reading Class Size (Elementary)
Percent Special Education	Mathematics Class Size (Elementary)
Percent of ESL/LEP	Regular Class Size (Elementary)
Expenditures Per Pupil	Length of Core* Class Periods (Secondary)
Professional Development Expenditures Per Teacher	Core Class Size (Secondary)
Special Academic Focus of School/Unit	Non-Core Class Size (Secondary)
Length of Instructional Day	Percent Core Teachers
Length of Class Periods	
	*Math, English/LA, Science, & Social Studies
School Expenditure Structure	
Instructional	**1. Core Academic Teachers** -English/ Reading/Language Arts -History/ Social Studies -Math -Science
	2. Specialist and Elective Teachers/Planning and Preparation -Art, music, physical education, etc. -Academic Focus with or without Special Funding -Vocational -Drivers Education -Librarians
	3. Extra Help -Tutors -Extra Help Laboratories -Resources Rooms (Title I, special education or other part-day pullout Programs) -Inclusion Teachers -English as a second language classes -Special Education self-contained classes for severely disabled students (Including aides) -Extended Day and Summer School -District-Initiated Alternative Programs
	4. Professional Development -Teacher Time-Substitutes and Stipends -Trainers and Coaches - Administration -Materials, Equipment and Facilities -Travel & Transportation -Tuition and Conference Fees
	5. Other Non-Classroom Instruction Staff -Coordinators and Teachers on Special Assignment -Building Substitutes and Other Substitutes -Instructional Aides
	6. Instructional Materials and Equipment -Supplies, Material, and Equipment -Computers (hardware, software, peripherals)
	7. Student Support -Counselors -Nurses -Psychologists -Social Workers -Extra-Curricular and Athletics
Non-Instructional	**8. Administration**
	9. Operations and Maintenance -Custodial -Utilities -Security -Food Services

Modified from Odden et al., 2003

Specialist and elective teachers: This group of credential teachers teach non-core classes and in some settings, provide core teachers the opportunity to have planning and preparation time for their core classes. Additionally, examples of specialist and elective teachers include:

- Specialist teachers such as art, music, and physical education teachers.
- Teachers who provide instruction in a subject are that distinguishes an academic focus area for a school. For example, a fashion entertainment or visual communication teacher at a design and architecture magnet.
- Vocational education teachers who teaches occupational programs such as agriculture, business and office, or technical education.
- Driver's education teachers.
- Credential librarians or media specialist.

Extra help: This category consists of credential teachers who by design support the students who are struggling academically or students with special learning needs. These teachers provide supplemental support to the regular day to day instruction. Example of these types of teachers may include:

- Tutors who are certified teachers and provide one-on-one support to students. These services are typically more common in elementary settings.
- Extra help centers on campus structured to provide extra support for students, especially struggling students in the areas of reading and mathematics. Typically, this type of extra support is used at the secondary level.

- Resources rooms provide students w/extra help such as remedial reading and/or remedial mathematics in addition to their instructions students are receiving in their core classes.
- Inclusion teachers support and collaborate with general education teachers to assist with mainstreamed special education students.
- Teachers of English as a second language (ESL) who provide extra help for non-English speaking students to develop their English skills.
- Self-contained special education classroom. These classes generally support severely disabled students for most or all the school day.
- Extended day or summer school programs usually are available for struggling students.
- Districts alternative programs serve students who have difficulty learning in a traditional classroom setting. These programs are often administratively and instructionally separate from the host school site.

Professional Development: This element focuses on the fund spent of professional development at the school level. These expenditures included cost of teacher time for professional development; trainers and coaches; professional development administration, materials equipment and facilities; travel and transportation, and tuition and conference fees.

Other non-classroom instruction staff: This includes credential teachers and classified instructional staff who supports school's instructional programs. For example, program coordinators such as curriculum coordinators, magnet school coordinators, and technology coordinators. This cate also includes substitutes and instructional aides. However, this exclude aides who work in self-contained special education classrooms.

Instructional materials and equipment: This expenditure element includes books, instructional supplies, materials, equipment and computers hardware, and software for all instructional programs.

Student support: Included here are counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, attendance monitors, or parent liaisons. This category also includes expenditures for extra-curricular activities and athletics.

Administration: This element is non-instructional expenditure. This element is constructed of all expenditures pertaining to administration, which included principals, assistant principals, and clerical staff. This category also includes administrative office supplies, equipment and technology and school funds.

Operational and maintenance: This category is non-instructional and it includes the cost of staff, supplies, and equipment for custodial services food services, and security, as well as utilities and building and ground maintenance charged to the school site.

Odden et al. (2003) conducted a study with this expenditure structure and resource indicators for two elementary schools and two secondary schools that differed in budgets, instructional programs, and student populations. The research at these school sites enabled the researchers to develop an in-depth analysis of how resources are allocated at school sites for both instructional and non-instructional purposes. The researchers found major differences in staffing and other resource allocations between a school who had undergone considerable reform and a more traditionally structured school. The study also found the expenditure structure was useful for an analysis of multiple schools as well as single schools. According to Odden et al. (2003) study, these analyses provide insight to the educational strategies behind a school's use of resources and school's organization structure. For example, the expenditure structure captured a variety of strategies such as differential emphasis on core academic strategies, class-size reduction, and variation of usage of staffing.

Resource allocation and resource reallocation are important to the current position of K-12 public education where they want to improve student performance substantially on a standards-based agenda (Odden & Archibald, 2001). In 2011, Guerrero (2011) completed a case study focused on the allocation of educational resources to improve student achievement of four non-Title I schools in Southern California. In her study, she used Odden & Picus's (2008) Evidence Based Model (EBM), which takes the School Expenditure Structure and Resource Indicators framework developed by Odden et al. (2003), to another level by incorporating essential school level components for delivery of high quality education program and placing a price on individual components and aggregating those into total cost, which will be discussed in a greater detail later in this chapter. Guerrero (2011) argues the financial crisis has made policymakers and educational practitioners more concerned about how much is spent and how resources are allocated. Guerrero (2011) explained the findings of the study about resource allocation suggest the EBM for all four model schools was severely underfunded and often principals had to employ a variety of research-based strategies that cost relatively little.

Another similar study was conducted in Southern California to explore the correlation between resources allocations at district level using the EBM as well as school site level to improve student achievement (Druitt, 2011). This study had a specific focus on six schools with a minimum of 60% participation in the free and reduced lunch program as well as serve a minimum of 60% Hispanic student population. The findings from this study suggest that while principals at the sites experienced challenges due to budget cuts during the Great Recession, they demonstrated a strong commitment to finding effective ways to improve student achievement. During these financially difficult times the principals had to be creative with spending in the six sample schools they reported a strong commitment to formative assessment/data-based decision making, extended learning time for struggling students, using time efficiently and effectively, as well as ongoing professional development. The usage of Odden et al. (2003) expenditure structure allowed the researcher and the six sample schools to capture essential information to explore the growth in student achievement based on the utilization of their resources to support school programs.

Druitt (2011) and Guerrero (2011) provided a series of recommendations for the allocation of education resources to help reduce the achievement gap an increase student achievement. One recommendation was that schools must schools must implement research-based strategies to increase student outcome. Another suggestion insured that allocations are made towards professional development that has a strong focus on both teachers and administrators to continue promoting the implementation of those research-based strategies. Furthermore, Odden and Archibald (2001) recommended the examination of resource and reallocation of them to the most effective strategies for boosting student performance is essential to ensure continuous evolution and improvement of professional and performance-oriented schools.

Reducing the Achievement Gap & School Budgeting Leadership

The achievement gap in K-12 public education refers to the persistent disparities among various groups of students in academic performance (NCES, 2015). The achievement gap is reflected in a range of success measures such as course grades, course enrollment, standardized test scores, high school completions rates, college completion rates, and even suspension rates.

Closing the achievement gap became a central focus after the passage of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Education Week, 2011).

The relationship between school spending and student achievement has been part of an ongoing debate to improve public education (Contreras, 2011; Lip, Watkins, Fleming, 2008). Multiple researchers argue that simply allocating more funds does not always create a positive correlation with student achievement (Aud, 2007; Contreras, 2011; Lip et al., 2008). According to Lip et al., (2008) increasing funds may not necessary yield tangible improvement for student achievement. Overall, leading researchers in the field of school finance highlight that there is a direct link between per-pupil expenditures and how money is spent, not how much money is allocated (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine 1996; Hanushek, 1996; Lip et al., 2008).

The relationship between school spending and improving academic achievement requires relational leadership from school leaders (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2013). Sorenson and Goldsmith (2013), define exceptional school leadership as focused on vision and strategic planning to guide improving student achievement. Sorenson and Goldsmith (2013) assert, "these leaders recognize that effective strategies must be an integrated approach incorporating team planning, visionary leadership, and data analysis to establish instructional priorities for necessary funding" (p. 12). Per Sorenson and Goldsmith (2013), reducing the achievement gap requires strategic planning and the use of an integrated budget model.

The Sorenson-Goldsmith Integrated Budget Model consist of eight different components, which included: a) Defining Stakeholders, b) Stakeholder Selection, c) Data Gathering (Needs Assessment), d) Data Analysis, e) Needs Prioritization, and f) Goal Setting. Each of the components plays a vital role in the process of school budgeting and school leadership, as well as correlate to student achievement. Sorenson and Goldsmith (2013) suggest school leaders must be visionaries who invest in relationships and communication as they assist and lead their school sites.

Improving student achievement studies have focused on districts and schools who have increased student performance for over two decades (Marzano, 2003; Odden & Archibald, 2009; Sammons, Hillman & Mortimore, 1995; Schmoker, 2011; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Many these studies have highlighted effective school practices for improving student achievement, which include topics such as curriculum and instruction, goal driven, needs focus approach, professional development, leadership, parent & community partnerships, and use of data.
Table 3: Comparing Effective School Practices for Improving Student Achievement Across Researchers, summarizes the four different studies that will be discussed in this section by topic. Additionally, the four different studies highlight the important role school leadership plays towards improving student academic achievement through their effective budgeting and demonstrate how the Sorenson-Goldsmith Integrated Budget Model is an essential factor to reducing the achievement gap.

Curriculum and instruction. Curriculum and instructional programs are often viewed as a core educational issues that educators can change (Odden & Archibald, 2009). A synthesis of a variety of studies related to school effectiveness and increase in student achievement by Marzano (2003) pointed to guaranteed and viable curriculum as the single most significant key feature of increasing student performance. He defined guaranteed and viable curriculum as a clear guidance from states and districts to teachers concerning content to be addressed by course and by grade level. He argues that schools must focus on prioritizing to identify essential versus supplemental content, as well as ensure the essential content is sequenced properly. Marzano (2003) suggests administrators need to work closing with teachers to ensure the essential content is covered and instructional minutes are protected. Sammons et al. (1995) review of literature regarding key characteristics of effective schools describes maximizing student learning time has positive correlation with student achievement.

Table 3

Comparing Effective School Practices for Improving Student Achievement

Topic	Marzano (2003)	Sammons et al. (1995)	Togneri & Anderson (2003)	Odden & Archibald (2009)
Curriculum & Instruction	Guaranteed & viable curriculum	Concentration on teaching and learning Purposeful teaching	Develop system wide approach to improve instruction	Change the curriculum program and create a new instructional vision
Goal Driven	Challenging goals & effective feedback	Shared vision and goals High expectations	Instilled a vision that focused on student learning and guided instructional improvement	Set ambitious goals
Needs Focus Approach			Acknowledge poor performance and the will to seek solutions	Understand the performance problem and challenge
Professional Development	Engage staff in meaningful staff development activities	A learning organization A learning environment	Usage of research-based principles of professional development to guide their work	On-going, intensive professional development Professional and best practices
Topic	Marzano (2003)	Sammons et al. (1995)	Togneri & Anderson (2003)	Odden & Archibald (2009)
Leadership	Develop strong leadership team	Professional leadership	Redefined leadership roles	Collaborative professional culture Widespread and distributed instructional leadership
Parent & Community Partnerships	Parent and community involvement	Home-school partnerships	Use of a range of practices to engage parents in instructional reform efforts	
Use of Data		Monitor progress	Use data to guide decision-making	Formative assessments and data-based decision-making

Togneri and Anderson (2003) study of five high-poverty districts making strides to increase student achievement reported positive effects on student achievement when districts focused on clarity on what to teach and cohesion from school to school. They reported three of the five high-poverty districts used curricular reform as a system wide approach to develop cohesion in their districts. Curriculum development led these districts to engage in lengthy dialogues regarding essential content aligned to state standards and district goals. Schmoker (2011) argues, "a content-rich curriculum, sound lessons, and authentic literacy would wholly redefine what public schools can accomplish with children" (p. 11). He also describes simplicity, clarity, and priority as interconnected components that support coherent guaranteed and viable curriculum. The teachers in Togneri and Anderson's (2003) study reported they had significant pedagogical freedom within the framework the districts provided for curriculum and were encouraged to use their professional judgement to best support the needs of their students.

Odden and Archibald's (2009) work demonstrated that over time the systematic approach to changing curriculum and instructional programs had a variety of benefits. For example, Monroe School District in Wisconsin focused on increasing the percentage of proficient and or advanced students on the math portion of a state test by implementing a new curriculum. During the 2000-2001 school year 68% of their 4th graders scored proficient or advanced. Over time, the district saw consistent growth in scores and by 2005-2006 school year, there was a 19% growth and growth in achievement with 87% of 4th graders scored proficient or advanced. Additionally, Odden and Archibald (2009) report that while math teachers were succeeding at teaching computation, algebraic reasoning and understanding mathematical processes were still an ongoing challenge. Choosing a new curriculum not only provided strong benefits for students, but created a new view of instruction collaboratively and collectively with the usage of professional learning communities (PLC) (Odden & Archibald, 2009). For example, a group of teachers from Monroe School District focused on reviewing literature and best practices to reduce the challenges and develop common language to teach and talk about math instruction across the district. They also scheduled regular grade-level meetings in which they were intentional about using the common language. Curriculum and instruction was a critical element of improvement of student performance at the elementary level for Monroe School District and their focus on student achievement (Odden & Archibald, 2009). Collectively, these researchers (Marzano, 2003; Odden & Archibald, 2009; Sammons et al., 1995, Schmoker, 2011; Togneri & Anderson, 2003) point to curriculum and instruction as key factor that has been seen to have positive relationship with school effectiveness and increase in student performance helping reduce the achievement gap.

Sorenson-Goldsmith Integrated Budget Model considers performance objectives critical to developing school budgets and must be driven by a focus on student performance (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2013). A systematic approach driven by performance objectives can have a positive impact towards impacting curriculum and instructional programs to help reduce the achievement gap (Odden & Archibald, 2009; Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2013). Performance objectives are valuable to school budgeting process, secondary school leaders must ensure that performance objectives in the school action plan are “measurable if the school is to be data driven in its planning” (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2013, p. 93).

Goal driven. The research literature about school effectiveness and increases in student achievement (Marzano, 2003; Odden & Archibald, 2009; Sammons et al., 1995, Schmoker, 2011; Togneri & Anderson, 2003) makes the argument that a goal driven culture, which districts are setting ambitious goals, are linked to positive student achievement. According to Odden and

Archibald (2009), ambitious goals must be set regardless of the student demographics. In an effort to reduce the achievement gap, Odden and Archibald (2009) describe three things districts must consider to create that goal driven culture: a) set very high goals and strive; b) ensure all goals apply to all students, regardless of student demographics; and c) recognize improvement made toward goals and continue the work that needs to be done.

Marzano (2003) and Sammon et al. (1995) work explains how setting goals is critical. Goals must be challenging, and it is essential that these high expectations must be communicated directly to the students. Sammon et al. (1995) argues that high expectations alone will do little to increase student achievement. He explains a strong focus on academic achievement, progress monitoring, as well as an environment promotes learning can help increase student achievement. Another critical aspect of setting ambitious goals is ensuring they are monitored and effective feedback is available (Marzano, 2003). Marzano (2003) states, “effective feedback is specific and formative in nature” (p. 39).

In Togneri and Anderson’s (2003) study, four of the five districts revisited their shared vision and created a strategic vision for instructional reform. The districts focus on instilling a vision centered on student learning and guided instructional improvement. Consequently, the superintendents made it clear that the district’s vision was to drive programmatic and financial decisions at every school level of the system. Per Togneri and Anderson (2003), districts that demonstrated success in promoting their vision to guide their actions with a strong focus at the administrative level.

Goal setting is a vital component of the Sorenson-Goldsmith Integrated Budget Model. During the budgeting preparation process Sorenson and Goldsmith (2013), suggest school leaders be sensitive when initiating the process of developing data-driven goals because of stakeholders might become uneasy during the process due to data results. They suggest to "avoid pointing their digital finger to strengths and weaknesses at the site and focus on academic integrity to develop appropriate school goals" (p. 91). Furthermore, they suggest school leaders must promote the school goals to all stakeholders through multiple means.

Needs focus approach. When schools take a needs-focus approach, they can engage in much needed conversations to improve student performance (Odden & Archibald, 2009; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Districts and schools who engage in this approach begin by acknowledging poor performance and discuss possible solution in a collaborative manner (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). In Togneri and Anderson's (2003) study, the districts stakeholders were encouraged to discuss and acknowledge poor performance to seek new strategies to improve teaching and learning. Districts who engaged in the needs focused approach felt that acknowledging poor performance was critical to developing the will to change to improve student performance. District and school leaders engaged in facilitating the discussion about student performance by questioning practices with all stakeholders, urged stakeholders at all levels to implement and support data-driven goals and strategies to support student achievement.

In Odden and Archibald's (2009) study, schools and districts that doubled student performance engaged in the needs focused approach to develop an understanding of their performance situation. These districts and schools did not invest time criticizing the test or blaming systems, instead they analyzed student performance and gathered relevant data to engage in improving their systems. According to Odden and Archibald (2009), a valuable outcome from engaging in a needs focused approach:

> They analyzed student performance data on the assumption that what schools did largely impacted student academic performance and that to improve performance, a

> sophisticated understanding of the extant performance condition of the school and districts was an essential first step. (p. 61)

Professional development. Efforts to provide continuous professional development support and opportunities for teachers is a factor that impacts reducing the achievement gap (Marzano, 2003; Odden & Archibald, 2009; Sammons et al., 1995; Togneri & Anderson, 2003) According to Sammons et al. (1995), schools and districts must engage in shaping the environment to promote a learning organization. Sammons et al. (1995) suggest professional development be tailored to meet the needs of the staff and embedded professional development that nurtures collegial and collaborative planning should be routinely shared. Marzano (2003) adds that meaningful staff development focused on content and opportunities for active learning are critical to teacher development that impacts student achievement.

In Togneri and Anderson's (2003) study, districts focused on developing and implementing coherent, district-organized strategies to improve instruction. All five school districts invested heavily in building networks of instructional experts to lead professional development. The districts used those experts to create more experts among the teachers and principals. The traditional one-time workshop approach shifted across districts to focus more on building capacity and fostering continuous learning among teachers and principals. The districts also focused on the role of principals. The principals were "expected to create environments conducive to reflective and rigorous teaching" (Togneri & Anderson, 2003, p. 25). School finance allocations were also allocated strategically by school boards, superintendents and principals. Prior to making any financial allocations, they focused on maximizing dollars to address instructional needs to improve student achievement. Togneri and Anderson's (2003) findings that when financial decisions were strategically aligned to a vision focused on instructional improvement, schools experienced success in student achievement. These five districts demonstrated success in student achievement both in reading and math as measured by tests scores over three or more school years (Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

Leadership. Leadership is an important aspect of effective school reform and improving student achievement (Marzano, 2003; Sammons et al., 1995; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Sammons et al. (1995) explains that leadership is critical, but it goes beyond just the quality of the individual leader. They state, “the role that leaders play, their management style, their relationship to the school vision, values, and goals, and their approach to change” (p. 9) is critical to effective school reform (Sammons et al., 1995). Sammons et al. (1995) suggest successful leadership is linked to three characteristics: a) strength of purpose, b) effort to involve other stakeholders in the decision-making process, and c) the level of engagement in the process of teaching and learning. Marzano (2003) has also highlighted this set of characteristics as “a necessary condition for effective reform related to school-level change” (p. 172).

Leadership is an important component of effective school reform. Togneri and Anderson (2003) in their study of what districts can do to improve instruction and achievement in all schools stressed the importance of leadership by highlights how districts redefined leadership roles. Districts redesigned the role of principals and expected principals to align to the vision and reach the goals by acting “as the primary instructional leader at their school site and provide significant support” (Togneri & Anderson, 2003, p. 7). The district in the study provided training which included classroom observations, providing instructional feedback, and use of data. The district in the study also reassigned some responsibilities to the network of experts, specifically to help with professional develop to support principals engage a larger network of stakeholders. In the process of redefining leadership roles districts placed a greater focus on developing collaboration efforts by bringing principals together on a regular basis to discuss challenges, victories, and exchange strategies (Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

Successful schools who double student performance demonstrated strong instructional leadership both at the school site and central office by developing a culture of decision making at the school-level (Odden & Archibald, 2009). For example, Odden and Archibald's (2009) study of districts who doubled their student performance demonstrates that leadership at the school-level who focus on developing environments where shared decision-making was a priority increased their student performance. Marzano (2003) likewise noted positive effects when share decision-making was a focus. He also found that leadership hold a critical role in the process of reform and change, leading him to develop three research-based principles. Marzano (2003) describe the three principles:

- Principle 1. Leadership for change is most effective when carried out by a small group of educators with the principal functioning as a strong cohesive force.
- Principle 2. The leadership team must operate in such a way as to provide strong guidance while demonstrating respect for those not on the team.
- Principle 3. Effective leadership for change is characterized by specific behaviors that enhance interpersonal relationships.

Marzano (2003) indicates that principals must consider these principles and focus on building personal relationship "that are conducive to effective reform efforts" (p. 176). Clearly, leadership plays an important factor and principals must practice optimism, honesty, and consideration to continue implementing new reform and improve student performance (Marzano, 2003).

Parent & community partnerships. The notion that parents and schools share responsibility for educating children has been around for years (Ammon, 1999; Epstein, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Swap, 1993). Several studies have shown the importance of effective student parent & community partnerships with school and their impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2003; Odden & Archibald, 2009; Sammons et al., 1995; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). When parent and community partnerships are actively involved they can contribute significantly to the school's resource base (Marzano, 2003). However, those benefits begin with efforts of school leaders as they are responsible for initiating communication with families and other community stakeholders, as well as establishing an environment that welcomes open communication.

Supportive relationships and a collaborative approach between these partnerships creates positive effect on school's performance (Sammons et al., 1995). By providing these partnerships opportunities to be at the table helping shape the vision at the district-level and school-level allows leaders to learn more about their concerns and ideas (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). When redefining the role of these partnerships, Togneri and Anderson's (2003) study suggest school leaders should include parents in leadership committees, provide proactive communication, and conduct events that create opportunities for parents, students, and teachers to engage. One challenge that leaders highlighted in the study was the struggle with the engagement piece with parents and day-to-day schooling issues.

Use of data. The use of data has become increasing popular in the world of education as accountability to improve instruction continues to develop and the connection to student performance on standardized testing continues to growth (Tucker & Stronge, 2005). School finance reform has become highly dependent on data that tracks student performance for accountability purposes. Some researchers argue the use of data is being misused and the accountability plans heavily focused on high-stake and high-pressured requirements that place constraints on the ways that data could help inform instruction (Hargreaves & Braun, 2013). Although high-stake and high-pressure accountability may hinder the use of data, maximizing the use of data to help improve instruction is valuable to improve student achievement (Odden & Archibald, 2009; Sammons et al., 1995; Togneri & Anderson, 2003).

The use of data to drive decision making and improve instruction is linked to doubling student performance. For example, Togneri and Anderson's (2003) study of successful districts indicated that these districts focused on increasing their use of data to move forward decision making and improve instruction. At the school-level principals and teachers increased their use of data by reviewing student work to gage student learning. Their findings noted that district not only engaged in conversations about data, but used data to guide the decision-making process regarding teaching and learning. In their study principals referred to data to inform decisions making process regarding budget allocations, resource allocations, teacher hiring process, and identifying achievement gaps within their site to improve instruction. Togneri and Anderson's study makes three recommendations to school leaders: a) systematically gather relevant data, b) build a multi-measure accountability system to assess student and school process, and c) use date to drive the decision-making process.

Summary

The literature review regarding school finance, resource allocation, and the achievement gap are all relevant to California's current situation, as school across the state of California are transitioning to a new financial program that focused on local control and accountability. For this study, the literature review focuses on State's role in funding and decision making for K-12 education, the finances in California, and the corresponding resources as well as exploring the effective strategies to reduce the achievement gap.

The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of secondary school leaders implementing LCFF and LCAP. The study aims to describe the lived experience of secondary school leaders during the implementation of new state policy mandates related to the funding in K-12 public secondary education. The RTI framework as a school finance improvement strategy will be used to analyze the lived experiences of the school leaders implementing the new reform in secondary level schools. The following chapter will discuss the methodology used in this phenomenological study.

Chapter III

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of secondary school leaders as it related to the implementation of the LCFF and the LCAP during the early stages of reform implementation. This qualitative, phenomenological study cross-sectionally examined the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of secondary school leaders through in-person interviews. The study was guided by one essential question: What are the lived experiences of secondary school leaders who are currently implementing the LCFF and LCAP?

Overall the study sought to explore and understand the current experience around the phenomenon of LCFF and LCAP with respect to students in grades 6-12. The chapter content and organization begins with a brief introduction of the study, by highlighting the purpose of the study and research questions. The chapter is then followed with a detailed discussion of the research methodology and rationale for the usage of phenomenology to capture the essences of the given experience with LCFF and LCAP for secondary school administrators. Next, the chapter presents an overview of the setting, population, sample, and sampling procedures of the study. Lastly, this chapter discusses the human subject considerations, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data management, and data analysis for the study.

Research Methodology and Rationale

The study sought to capture the experience of secondary school leaders working on school budget systems under LCFF through a qualitative phenomenological research study. The study used a qualitative non-experimental design to explore the experience of seven secondary school leaders who were implementing LCFF through their LCAPs. Face-to-face interview process was used to capture and solicit about the experience of secondary leaders as they implement LCFF. The interview process consisted of five broad opened questions.

Phenomenological approach. The research methodology used was Phenomenology to capture the essence of the lived experience of the phenomenon among secondary school leaders. This qualitative approach was selected for this study to depict a detailed perspective from the school leaders engaged in the experience. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenology is dedicated to descriptions of an experience not explanation or analyses. With phenomenology, the researcher intended to study people's conscious experience of their life-world, that is their everyday life and social action (Schram, 2003). Through the usage of phenomenology, the researcher captured the perspective of secondary leaders who are invested in the day to day activities of school site budgets.

The intent of this study was to add to the existing body of knowledge about school budgeting, as wells as new reform implementation to assist policymakers and school leaders working through the new challenges emerging through LCFF and LCAP policies. Although there are several resources that discuss school budgeting for principals, there was little literature about the day-to-day challenges and victories of school leaders experience at their sites with regards to school budgeting and resource allocations. To gain access to a deeper understanding of the day-to-day experience of school leaders with the phenomenon a phenomenological study was necessary. This study used phenomenology to "understand the common experience in order to develop practices or policies or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). Van (1990) explains that phenomenology does not offer prospects of effective theory that can help explain or manage situations, but it provides "possibilities of plausible insights that brings us in more direct contact" (p. 9) with the phenomenon. The researcher sought to develop a deeper understanding of the human experience and unveil the common themes among participants' experience with the phenomenon.

Phenomenology consists of two main approaches: hermeneutical and transcendental (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Van, 1990). Hermeneutical phenomenology in centered on the lived experience of the participants, however, it allowed the researcher to use their background and/or experience to develop meaning of the participants' experience (Van, 1990). Moreover, Laverty (2003) states this approach enables the researchers to engage in the process of self-reflection, which embeds their biases and assumptions into the interpretive process of the study. In contrast, transcendental phenomenology focused less on the researcher's self-reflection or interpretation and more on the description of the participant's experience and perception (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). This approach to phenomenology, required the researcher to bracket or set aside their experience or knowledge with the phenomenon in the interpretive process of the study. For the purpose of this study, a transcendental phenomenological approach was selected to ensure attentiveness solely was given to the experience and perception of the secondary school leaders.

This approach supported the overall goal of the study by capturing the common experience of the five secondary school administrators and their understanding of the essences of their pure experience. In a transcendental phenomenological study, the researcher sought to determine "what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehension of it" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). Furthermore, a phenomenological study enabled the researcher to access direct perceptions, observations, and intuitions of the participants. Moustakas (1994) asserts that the most significant understanding that one can experience is from their own direct perceptions, observations, and intuitions. The researcher used textural and structural description to "convey an overall essence of the experience" (Creswell, 2013, p. 80).

Setting

The setting for this transcendental phenomenological study consisted of secondary public schools in Southern California, which include middle schools and high schools with sixth grade through twelfth grade enrollment. The identified secondary schools were selected based on their corresponding districts receiving both supplemental and concentration funds (i.e., enrollment of 55% or more of unduplicated high-need pupils—English Learners, low-income as measured by free or reduced-price meal eligibility, or foster youth). Given the significant amount of additional funding to the districts, in the form of supplemental and concentration monies, these schools would potentially receive significant site-based funds or targeted programs to address student need. Under LCFF, LEAs and COEs who had 55% or more enrollment of high-need students receive Concentration Grants.

School leaders have an important responsibility to school finances and budgeting, as they are responsible for ensuring "equity issues and fiscal consequences associated with school budgeting as well as the relationship between educational goal development and resource allocation management" (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2013, p. xi). Moreover, Sorenson and Goldsmith (2013) assert that school budgeting and allocation of resources is critical to student success and achievement. LCFF focuses on a less centralized approach to school finances and promotes more local control of school finances to school leaders. Therefore, since secondary school leaders are engaged in day-to-day site budgeting activities, they are ideal participants for this phenomenological study using in-person interviews.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures

For the purpose of this study the researcher solicited secondary school leaders working within a larger Southern California county based on purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling involves a "series of strategic choices about with whom, where, and how one does one's research" (Palys, 2012, p. 698). The study employed a combination of homogenous and criterion sampling in that all participants met the same criteria. The secondary school leaders were selected per the percentage of Unduplicated Pupil Percentage (UPP) attending the school district and who had more than 5 years of tenure as school leaders. School leader referred to site based leadership, which included principals and assistant principals. This purposive sample was randomly selected in that the first five participants who responded to the invitation to participate in the study were selected.

The eligibility for the participants was collected via California Department of Education website, www.cde.ca.gov, DATAQUEST, data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/, Ed-Data, www.ed-data.org/, Local Control Funding Formula Reports, http://ias.cde.ca.gov/lcffreports/, district and school websites, and phone calls to districts and schools. After the list of qualifying participants was generated, their district offices were contacted through email (see Appendix A) and phone call to gain permission to invite them to participate in this phenomenological study. Once district approval was provided, the researcher sent an email invitation (see Appendix B), an explanation of the study, and a description of the qualifications to participate in the study was sent to all secondary school leaders in Southern California who had more than 5-year of tenure as school leaders.

For this phenomenological study, the first five respondents were considered for the research process. According to Onwuegbuzi and Leech (2005), qualitative studies typically involve the use of small samples, however they consider sample size an important consideration because the sample size determines the extent to which the researcher can make any of the four types of generalizations of qualitative research—case-to-case transfer, analytical generalization, external statistical generalization, and internal statistical generalization. As noted by Creswell (2013), the sample size of a phenomenological study “may vary in size from 3 to 4 individuals to 10-15” (p. 78), while Morse (1994) suggest at least six individuals this particular type of study.

Human Subject Considerations

In preparation for the phenomenological study, the researcher completed and passed the Graduate School Education and Psychology (GSEP) Education Division online training curriculum focused on Social & Behavioral Educational Research with human subjects (see Appendix C) required by Pepperdine University. The researcher provided all participants with a written document that included an outline of the purpose of study, the requirements for participants who voluntary to be part of the study, as well as a section to obtain participant’s consent (see Appendix D). The participants were reassured their anonymity during the study, their right to withdraw from the study at any given time during the study. Pseudonyms were used in place of school district’s real names or participant’s real names to protect anonymity. The researcher notified the participants that the key for pseudonyms and the data obtained were secured in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home and the data will be destroyed after fourth year of the study’s publication date.

Risk of harm in this research study was minimal. While there was no physical harm or economic risks for participants, there was a minimal risk psychologically or socially. All participants in this study selected the meeting location for their interview. The study did not cost the participants any money, therefore there was no economic risk. Although phenomenology is considered noninvasive, there was invasion of participants’ psyche as they share their experience through interviews (Munhall, 1994). Therefore, due to the nature of this phenomenological study, while the participants engage in their interviews and discussing their experience may have triggered unpleasant or stressful memories of their job duties. These triggers could have caused psychological distress that could impede the participants' social and/or professional lives. Additionally, legal risk for participants could be connected to their responses that reveal the participants' identity about their school site or district. However, the researcher minimized this risk by using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of all participants. The overall benefits of this study outweighed any minimal risk to participants. The outcomes of the study provided valuable information for leadership school-wide, district-wide, and/or inform statewide polices that focus on school finances and services of high-need students. Secondary school leaders across the state can used the shared experience of participants to strategically support their work with the LCAP and LCFF process.

The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study from Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology School's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the research review teams for the individual districts with qualifying secondary school candidates for the study. The researcher provided a remuneration to demonstrate appreciation to the participants for donating their time and for sharing their experiences through in-person interviews. The only possible conflict of interest anticipated was the potential participation of secondary school leaders in the researcher's current district.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used for this phenomenological study consisted of in-person semi-structured interviews with secondary school leaders who met the qualifications for the study. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher sought to collect detailed information for the participants in somewhat conversational manner by using guiding questions and topics that needed to be covered (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Harrell and Bradley (2009), also emphasized the semi-structure interview process which enabled the researcher to have some discretion about the order of questions, as well as the need to probe to ensure the necessary questions and topics get covered in the process. Seidman (2013) explains that interviews allow researchers to obtain access to complicated social and education issues, he states, "social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experience of people" (p. 7). The interview process enabled the participant to tell their story as "they select details of their experience from their stream consciousness" (Seidman, 2013, p. 7).

The phenomena in this study focused on the lived experience of secondary school leaders who had experience with the implementation of LCFF and LCAP. Consequently, the interview instrument consisted of five open-ended semi-structured interview questions focused on capturing the essence of the participants' experience with the phenomena. The use of open-ended questions established a territory to be explore, as well as enabled the participant to take any direction they want to explore (Seidman, 2013). Seidman (2013) recommended that the researcher encourage the participants "not to remember their experience, but rather to reconstruct it" (p. 90). Each of the five open-ended questions sought to reconstruct and correlated with the research question guiding the study. The five open-ended questions were accompanied with several probing questions (see Appendix E). Table 4 represents the relationship between the research question, interview questions, and researchers that influenced the study.

The interview questions for the semi-structured interview were craft from the review of related literature. The questions were piloted with a secondary school administrator at a secondary school with similar demographics as the participants in the study. A mock interview was conducted with a secondary leader to collect feedback concerning the interview questions.

Table 4

Correlation Between Research Question, Interview Questions, and Researchers

Research Question	Interview Questions	Researchers
What are the lived experiences of districts and school site leaders who are currently implementing the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)?	1. What has your experience been with LCFF and LCAP?	Cummins (1986) Humphrey and Koppich (2014) Odden & Archibald (2009) Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gross (2003) Odden & Picus, (1992) Odden & Picus (2008)
	2. Recall the process of short-term and long-term fiscal planning at your school site. Describe the steps taken and the resources used to create the school fiscal plan in relation to LCFF and LCAP goals?	Butler (2006) Druitt (2011) Guerrero (2011) Odden & Archibald (2009) Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gross (2003) Odden & Picus, (1992) Odden & Picus (2008) Sammons, Hillman, Mortimore (1995) Schilling & Tomal (2013) Schmoker (2011)
	3. When you think back to your experience of managing your site budget under LCFF and LCAP, what would you identify as the most significant barriers or challenges faced during implementation?	Druitt (2011) Humphrey and Koppich (2014) Marzano (2003) Odden & Picus, (1992) Odden and Picus (2008) Schilling & Tomal (2013) Togneri & Anderson (2003)
	4. What feelings were generated by the experience of implementing LCFF and LCAP?	Butler (2006) Druitt (2011) Guerrero (2011) Humphrey and Koppich (2014)
	5. How did student need if at all help influenced the implementation?	Marzano (2003) Odden & Archibald (2001) Odden & Archibald (2009) Sammons, Hillman, Mortimore (1995) Togneri & Anderson (2003) Zavadsky (2010)

All feedback was considered and any necessary revision were made to interview questions to ensure interview questions are worded in a way that would truly capture the essence of the lived experience of secondary school leaders with LCFF and LCAP.

Validity. The researcher focused on ensuring validity of the phenomenological study by providing the participants the proper space and questions to be able to "truly express the intuited essence" (p. 14) of the experience with the phenomena (Söderhamn, 2001). Söderhamn refers to validity as "the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring" (p. 12). Söderhamn (2001) suggest through the methodology of reduction, the researcher can search for the essence in phenomenological research. The researcher engaged in validation strategies, which include: (a) clarification of researcher bias, (b) member checks, and (c) peer review.

Data Collection and Data Management Procedures

The researcher sought to conduct semi-structured interviews with seven participants between September and October, 2016. All participants received an email invitation (see Appendix B) in August 2016. Once participants had agreed to participate in the semi-structure interviews, all participants completed a 10 minute online survey to provide the researcher with background information about their career and experience in education. The online survey contained 10 questions regarding basic demographics, which include (a) job title, (b) type of degrees earned, (c) credential specifics, (d) number of years of experience overall in the field of education, (e) number of years of leadership experience, (f) number of years of leadership at the current site, (g) student enrollment at current site, (h) classified staffing numbers for current site, (i) certificated staffing numbers for current site, and (j) numbers of years employed at the current site (see Appendix D). The questions were open-ended and allowed participants to describe themselves without pre-scripted labels. Bound (2011), considers demographic data of the participants an essential part of the study because it is "important to understanding the nature of the data" (p. 7). A week prior to the interview process the researcher conducted a 5-10 minute initial check-in phone call and emailed the interview questions to all participants for their review. During the initial check-in phone call, the researcher provided the participants with a brief description of the research study, described the process for participant selection, reviewed the interview process, as well as explained how the data would be collected and analyzed.

The one-to-one in-person interview process was scheduled for a 60-90 minute session and took place in quiet, non-disruptive environment selected by the participants. Each participant received a hardcopy of the interview protocol prior to starting the interview process (see Appendix E). Before the interview begun, the researcher introduced herself and briefly share the purpose of the study. The researcher also ensured the participants of the confidentiality of the information shared during the interview process and their freedom to withdraw from their study at any time. Each interview was recorded with a digital tape recorder and transcription of data to text were completed after the interview for data analysis process. The researcher used a third party, web-based company called Rev (www.rev.com) for transcription. Copies of transcriptions were sent to all participants for review and edit prior to data analysis. All data including, audio recording of interviews, transcriptions and reflective journals were organized in a flash drive and stored in a locked filing cabinet for which the researcher is the only one with a key. The data will be destroyed after four year of the study's publication date.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis for this phenomenological study was done simultaneously with the data collection process, data interpretation and note taking process. The participants in the study completed the demographic survey prior to the interview and received a copy of their response to the survey prior to initiating the interview process. The use of semi-structured interviews guided the data collection process for this phenomenological study. Creswell (2013) suggest the following approach for phenomenological analysis:

- The researcher describes their personal experience with the phenomenon being studied.
- Develops a list of significant statements about how the participants are experiencing with the topic.
- Group statements into larger units of information or themes.
- Gather descriptions of the participants' experience with the phenomenon.
- Capture a description of how the experience happened.
- Write a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both the textual and structural descriptions. (p. 193-194)

The final transcriptions are reviewed by the participants and all modification or omission are completed they were uploaded into HyperRESEARCH, a computer software program designed for qualitative analysis. After the final transcripts were uploaded to HyperRESEARCH, the researcher inserted the variables and definitions for the study: (a) LCFF, (b) LCAP, and (c) the lived experience. The researcher used the software program to code examples of the experience with the phenomenon and analyze the themes. With phenomenology, the goal was to capture the essence of the participant's experience with the phenomenon. In the phenomenological data analysis process, Creswell (2013) suggest identifying significant statements related to the topic or themes (p. 82). Creswell (2013) and Moustakas (1994) call this process *horizontalization*. This process required that all data collected have equal value weight and that it was organized into clusters or themes (Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). The software program, HyperRESEARCH, was used to complete the horizontalization process for all participants.

Positionality

Moustakas (1994) indicates the importance of researchers setting aside their personal experience with the phenomenon and solely focusing on the participants' experience to ensure a fresh perspective with the phenomenon. Creswell (2013) adds that researchers must *bracket* themselves from the study by discussing their own connection and experience with the phenomenon. During this study the researcher was engaged with the phenomenon as a secondary school leader who works with LCAP and LCFF. The researcher used journaling as a strategy to process her own experience and maintain a sense of objectivity while capturing the essence of the participants' experience.

Summary

Chapter Three discussed the method use to solicit data in response to the guiding questions of this study. To better understand the lived experience of secondary school leader—and how they implemented LCFF and LCAP—it was important to select a research design that would allow the researcher to capture the essence of their experience. Phenomenology is a qualitative approach that is focused on better understanding how the others are making sense of the world, therefore, it made the most sense to use this research design to learn more about the experience of these secondary school leaders.

The instrumentation for this study was developed to help capture their experience, based on the literature review about school funding and reducing the achievement gap. The five open-ended questions were used to reconstruct and correlate with the research question guiding the study, to interview five interviewees. A one-to-one in-person interview process with a 60-90 minute session took place in a quiet, non-disruptive environment selected by the participants. This interview style was used to create an opportunity for participants to tell their stories.

The chapter discussed the data collection procedures. A survey was developed to capture the background information about the participants which included their career and experience in education prior to their interview process. The data that emerged from the research design that assessed through a detailed process analysis that included a coding by reading through the transcripts and field notes. Once an initial review was conducted, another coding opportunity was conducted by using computer software, HyperRESEARCH.

Chapter Four presents the data gathered using the data collection procedures discussed in this chapter.

Chapter IV

Introduction

This study was conducted to examine the lived experience of secondary school leaders during the implementation of the LCFF and the LCAP. New school finance reform in California has headed in the direction of less centralization of funds at the state level, giving LEAs more flexibility, transparency, and accountability control of their monies (WestEd, 2014). Because LCFF and LCAP are a new phenomenon presenting a major shift in school finances focused on local flexibility and accountability by LEA's and their respective schools (Ed-DATA, 2015), a need was found to examine school leader's perspective of the phenomenon (Day, 2000). This study sought to understand: What are the lived experiences of secondary school leaders who are currently implementing the LCFF and LCAP?

This qualitative study utilized a transcendental phenomenological approach. This chapter presents findings obtained from one-to-one in-person interviews conducted with five secondary school leaders implementing these reforms. The school leaders invited to participate in this study included school leaders working directly with secondary public school programs in Southern California, which included middle school and high school programs serving sixth grade through twelve grade. These leaders served in districts with a 55% or more enrollment of high-need students and receive base, supplemental, and concentration grants. Therefore, a purposive sampling procedure was used to recruit these participants. However, random selection was used in that the first five participants who responded to the invitation were selected for the study.
The purpose of selecting a qualitative approach was to obtain a detailed perspective from school leaders related to their experience with LCFF and LCAP in public schools in LEAs receiving base, supplemental, and concentration grants based on their UPP in Southern California.

The process for finding qualifying participants was extensive. The California Department of Education LCFF Funding Snapshot website (http://ias.cde.ca.gov/lcffsnapshot/lcff.aspx) was used to first identify LEAs with a 55% enrollment of high-need students in a Southern California COEs service area. Nine out of 20 school districts fit the criteria. The researcher used the California Department of Education School Directory website (http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/sd/) and school websites to obtain information regarding school site administrators such as tenure and contact information. However, most district and school websites did not include the number of school years of the principals' tenure, therefore a variety of methods were used to discover the length of the tenure for each secondary school leader in the eight school districts. These methods included: (a) a LinkedIn search that reviewed a business-oriented social networking service, (b) an internet search that used Google to find newspaper articles or any indications of when the principals were first hired at these school districts, and (c) follow up communication with local school districts that helped gather more information about the number of years of each principal's tenure.

All nine districts were invited to participate in the study, a total of 16 participants fit the criteria in these districts with a 55% enrollment of high-need students. The districts Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents received notification via email seeking district permission to contact qualifying participants (see Appendix A). Out of the nine districts, six districts agreed to participate in the study, three districts never responded to the request after multiple attempts, and one district requested a meeting to be scheduled with Superintendent. The meeting was scheduled and rescheduled twice by the Superintendent's office and eventually never scheduled again after multiple attempts. Based on six school district who provided approval to contact participants, the pool narrowed from sixteen to nine participants. All nine participants received an invitation to consider participating in the study (see Appendix B). While the intent of the study was to represent secondary programs in the sixth through twelve grades, the first five participants who responded to the invitation all happened to represent middle school programs in four different school districts in Southern California. Consequently, the study's focus narrowed to the lived experience of secondary school leaders working with middle school programs in districts with 55% of more enrollment of high-need students.

Demographics of Participants

Out of the nine participants who qualified for this phenomenological study, five agreed to be interviewed, three did not respond to multiple emails and phone call attempts, and one declined. The study was composed of five qualifying and willing participants. Pseudonyms were used in place of school district's real names or participant's real names to protect anonymity. The following pseudonyms were used to protect the participants: Andre, Becky, Clare, Eva and Diego. The study sought to focus on school leaders who had experience with school budgets systems, categorical funding, and LCFF. In Table 5 *Demographics of Participating School Leaders* provides an overview of their experience in the field of education and school budgets based on the survey leaders completed before the interview (see Appendix F). The range of experience in the field of education ranges from 14 to over 20 years of experience. Three of the five participants, Andre, Diego, and Eva had over 10 years of experience as school leaders. The other two participants, Becky and Clare only had three years of experience in their current roles as school leaders.

All participants had more than five years of experience working with school budgets in some capacity. While Becky and Clare did not meet the tenure as school leaders, they both had extensive experience in budgeting before LCFF and had the opportunity to experience both categorical and funding models. Becky had over three years of experience working with budgets will she served on a district budget committee. Clare was a lead teacher at a Pilot School within a public-school district that was part of a network of public schools, which was given autonomy over the budget, staffing, governance, curriculum and assessment, and their school calendar. The autonomies provided by the Pilot School system allowed Clare to experience the operations of the school budgets under the categorical program system. Because the pool of eligible participants decreased significantly, and the purpose of the study was to fill the void in the literature related to the leadership of secondary school leaders during the implementation of new financial reform that was driven by local flexibility and accountability, Becky and Clare's prior experiences with both school budget systems provides perspective of the phenomenon (Day 2000).

Table 5

Demographics of Participating School Leaders

	District A Andre	District B Becky	District C Clare	District D Diego	District E Eva
# of years of experience overall in the field of education	18	14	15	21	20+
# of years of experience in a leadership role	10	3	3	11	10+
# of years working with school budgets	12	5	6	12	14
# of years employed with this school district	2	14	4	4	10

All districts had a UPP of 80% or higher. The California Department of Education (2015) defines the UPP based on the following criteria: (a) are English Leaders, (b) meet the income eligibility for free or reduced-price meals based on the National School Program requirements, or (c) are foster youth. The total number of unduplicated counts of pupils is then divided by the total enrollment of the LEA, and that constitutes the UPP. Unduplicated students are considered high need students (i.e., low-income, English learner and foster youth students). The UPP used under the LCFF funding system to calculating supplemental and concentration grant amounts. For supplemental grants, LEAs receive 20% more funding for each student classified as high-need. Concentration grants are available for LEAs with 55% of high need students.

Table 6

Demographics of School Districts 2015-2016 SY

	District A Andre	District B Becky	District C Clare & Daniel	District D Eva
Unduplicated Pupil Percentage (UPP)	82%	83%	88%	88%
# of English Learners	50%	49%	55%	64%
# of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	76%	83%	87%	86%

*Note. Source: California Department of Education 2015

All school districts received both supplemental and concentration grants based on their UPP. Table 6 provides an overview of the demographic of school districts during the 2015-2016 school year. The districts' demographics demonstrates that they have similarities. For example, the enrollment of English Learners is at least 50% in each of school districts. The range of students classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged is between 75% and 85%. The school district Supplemental and Concentration Grant funding entitlement varied based on site and percentage of unduplicated students. The California Department of Education, School Fiscal Service (2016) defines the Target Entitlement as the funding calculation based on the LCFF funding model at full implementation. However, during the transition, most LEAs did not receive this level of funding. The LCFF Target Entitlement from the 2015-2016 demonstrates how much each of these districts would be entitled based on LEAs school demographics.

District LCAP Plans

Currently, all district across the state are in the process of writing their second three-year LCAP plan for 2016-2019 under a new template. For this study, the first LCAP plan and mid-term updates and modifications were used to guide the researcher during the interview review. The LCAPs are information available to the public and posted on each school district's webpage. The LCAPs provide background about each school district and the services they offer or intend to offer to their students. Table 7 District LCAP Goals provides the goals created by each district to guide accountability of spending on the new LCFF system. District goals were created based on the feedback and support received from consulting with parents, pupils, school personnel, local bargaining units as applicable, and the community. Engagement and collaboration among district varied slightly based on the needs of their school site and community. One commonality among participating school districts was their use of both District English Leader Advisory Committee (DELAC) and site English Leader Advisory Committee (ELAC) to obtain input and feedback on LCAP plans. Three of the four districts had an LCAP goal focused on parent engagement and partnerships. Academic achievement in content areas was a clear focus on all fours school districts.

Table 7

District LCAP Goals

	District A Andre	District B Becky	District C Clare & Diego	**District E** **Eva**
Goal 1	Increase student achievement in English Language Arts (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) and Math.	Improved student achievement at every school and every grade in all content areas	All Students will reach high standards, at a minimum, attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics	Prepare students for 21st Century learning
Goal 2	District will promote a respectful, responsible, engaging and inclusive environment for all students, staff, and parents.	Engage parents and other District stakeholders in the development of meaningful partnerships to support student learning	All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics. All low-income and foster youth students will reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics.	Provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students
Goal 3	The district will promote student maintenance of a healthy lifestyle including physical activity, healthy eating, and emotional well-being.	Create welcoming and safe environments where students attend and are connected to their school	All students will be taught by highly qualified well-trained professionals.	Provide a high-quality learning environment that includes well-maintained facilities, appropriate materials, and well-trained educators.
Goal 4	Improve district parent engagement strategies.	Prepare students to be college and career ready through technology and innovation that Facilitates collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication	All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug-free and conducive to learning	Increase parent involvement. Increase efforts to seek parent input and promote parental participation.
Goal 5	District instructional materials, facilities, and teaching assignment will promote excellence	Recruit, hire, train, and retain exemplary employees who are caring committed, collaborative, creative and critical thinkers.		

Findings

This section includes the analysis results from the interviews conducted with secondary school leaders. Narrative language from transcripts was used to explicate best findings and themes that emerged throughout the study. This study sought to understand: What are the lived experiences of secondary school leaders who are currently implementing the LCFF and LCAP? All districts involved in the study had a common vision to improve student academic achievement and provide adequate resources. The secondary school leaders shared their lived experience implementing LCFF and LCAP to reach their goals. Through the analysis of the five interviews, three themes emerged: Setting and Implementing Ambitions Goals, Using Stakeholder Input to prioritize funding at the site level, and Taking advantage of budgetary flexibility to Meet Student Need.

RTI was used as a framework focused on school finance (see Figure 5) was used in the process to analyze the lived experience of the secondary school leaders implementing LCFF and LCAP at the school site level. All participants experienced one or more of the essential components of the RTI framework: (a) Screening, (b) Progress, (c) Data-based decision-making, and/or (d) Multi-level preventions system.

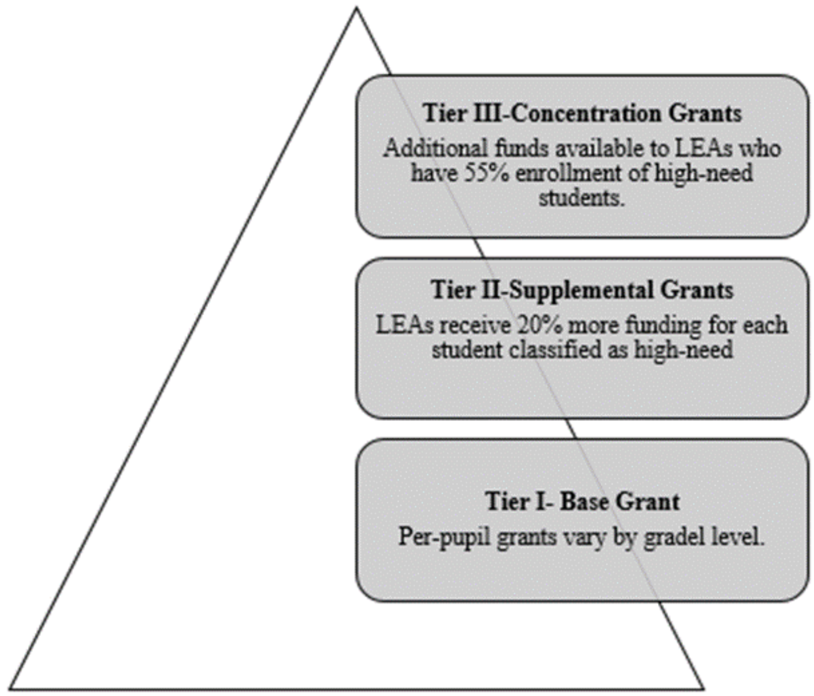

Figure 5 Theoretical framework: Response to Intervention (RTI)

Theme 1: Setting and implementing ambitious goals. The first interview question asked participants about what their experience had been with the implementation of LCFF and LCAP. As a follow-up to this question, participants were asked to recall the process of short-term and long-term fiscal planning at their school sites concerning LCFF and LCAP goals. All participants in the study discussed a collaborative effort to set and implement ambitious goals.

Andre. Andre described how he brought his team together to work on a short and long-term fiscal plan that supported student achievement.

> We bring everybody around the table to be able to influence what it is that we're going to use our funding for. A lot of it ... we used to in the past look at our academic standings; we would use a lot of data to find out where our needs where. The change that has transpired is that it brings all stakeholders together to be able to address what it is that we choose to use our funding for.

Andre explained that the LEAs LCAP goals have been a priority for him and spoke about the value of having goals and communicating them when he commented:

> What I want the teachers to internalize when I go through this binder with them is that there are goals that we're trying to achieve. What are they doing to reach these goals? For my new teachers, it is [part of the] process that I spend an afternoon with them to review the goals and the philosophy...

Andre described the LEA's LCAP goals guide the school site work to support students. He shared his effort to communicate the goals often and create conversation around the goals to make sure the site is internalizing the goals to help support student academic and social-emotional achievement.

Becky. Becky discussed how her site had done significant collaborative work around the LEA's LCAP goal focused on academic student achievement, specifically around literacy efforts. The district-wide effort on literacy had created a focus on Accelerated Reader and STAR. She explained the collective effort among their school site council to implement this goal.

> At the school site council, one of the things that we've done is meet, as far as what are some strategies or incentives we can use to raise the participation in the Accelerated Reader (AR). Our principal has started an initiative this year for each month, is an AR challenge. Beginning the school year, we had an AR goal of seven points, any student from the beginning of the school year which was August 26 to September 30; their goal was to reach the seven points. If they reach the seven points, then they get to participate in a Principal's Popsicle Ice Cream extended lunch. That was one of the ideas that came out of that.

Clare. Clare affirmed the effort among site leaders to set and implement goals in support of district LCAP plans. In her district, one of the main goals was to support all limited English proficient students in becoming proficient in English and reaching high academic standards both in mathematics and English. She shared the collective work with the ELAC, School Site Council and teachers.

> [We] advocate for two groups of kids. One is LTELs, our long-time English learners, who unfortunately have been in our district since they were in kindergarten, and they're still designated English language learners. We've put money into Saturday academies for them. We [invest] money on certain teachers to targeted intervention after school for those students.

In addition, Clare highlighted the collective effort during leadership meetings to support and implement the district and site goals for English Learners at risk of not promoting:

> The reason we had a Saturday academy last year was we were talking as a leadership group about what could we do for students who are not going to meet the promotion policy that the district sets? What can we do for them that maybe we could take away one of their F's? They could do something to clear one of their F's. It was a conversation that started in how to support those students, and then it went into this, "Okay, well, what if we did this eight-week Saturday academy, and all the eighth graders who went through it, it would cancel out one of their F's?" We'll target math. We'll target language arts. We'll also target ELD, so we're looking at our students who are ones, twos, and threes." We gave them opportunity to understand just like an ELD-targeted academy for eight weeks. That's how I've seen teachers advocate for it.

Diego. In Diego's district, one of the LCAP goals was also centered on all limited English proficient students becoming proficient in English and reaching high academic standards. He discusses his site's efforts to set and implement goals that supported the overall district's goals.

> English learners, in my mind, benefit the best by getting good instruction in classroom, good first instruction, and so I did do a Saturday English Learner program last year. I had two classes of students, and I'm sure there was some benefit, there.

Another one of the goals in Diego's district is focused on creating safe and drug-free environments conducive to learning. Diego and his administrative team conducted a school survey for parents both in English and Spanish about the district's priorities and goals to gather information for decision making. The results from the survey indicated that school safety was a priority at the site resulting in the funding of a campus assistant.

Eva. In Eva's discussion about goal setting and implementation under the new accountability and finance system she expressed feeling a sense of relief and flexibility. She explained that the district office, did a great job of keeping the focus on student impact and setting goals to support student achievement.

> When it was first being implemented, it was just like, "We have money and it's more flexible, let's get the world." They [the district leadership] are always bringing it back to, "How is this going to impact kids. How many kids is it going to impact? What are you looking to get out of by putting in this program or having this opportunity or whatever it is you're going to do?" That it's equitable.

Eva shared the effort her district made to push equity with the LCAPs goals. One of their district goals is focused on preparing students for the 21st Century. In her experience as a site leader her school has worked on implementing this goal by focusing on creating new opportunities for students such as fieldtrips.

> You don't want your lowest achievers in special education, "You guys get all this," and the kids who are in the middle, "Hey, you're in the middle so no field trips, no extension programs, nothing for you." That's our new focus is how do we create opportunities where everyone not only is invited, but everyone is welcome and that there will be something there for everyone? That we're not designing programs or services that are just targeting specific kids unless that is our intention. Like opening up the Museum of Tolerance field trip to all two

All five participants shared an experience that focused on setting and implementing ambitious goals to address the needs of students at their site. While participants did not mention any of the specific tiers of spending (Base, Supplemental, and Concentration grants) based on the RTI framework model for LCFF, evidence of the essential components of the framework were evident. For example, Becky, Clare, Diego, and Eva's shared experiences about goal setting focused on providing multi-level prevention support for students. In Becky's case, she discussed struggling readers and the focus on create supports to help that group with ambitious goals. In Clare and Diego's situation, they discussed a focus on one of the high—need groups, English learners.

Theme 2: Using stakeholder input to prioritize funding at the site level. All five participants shared an experience during their implementation process of LCAP and LCFF about stakeholder input and prioritization of funding to support high-need students at the site level.

Andre. Andre explains that he felt that under the old funding system for public education there were restrictions of budget allocations. He discussed how with the old funding system principals would select to fund certain resources for the following school year, which would mean those monies were already allocated for those specific services or resources. However, he shared that he felt that with LCFF and LCAP principals had more control of managing budgets and bring others to the table to make spending decisions.

> We would employ campus aides at one of my former schools I think we had 30 classroom aides. If somebody felt that we needed a certain software program or a certain thing, then that would all be outlined in here. Those monies would already be allocated for those specific causes. If I were to come in and say now, "Okay, I'm going to do away with the 30 aides", I could do so and then use it as a school site council function to vote them out and then reallocate that money to something else. Now it doesn't seem like it's that process. That process starts fresh every year with the money that we're doing and because it's not my idea that I'm bringing to the table, it's everybody's voice coming to the table, and that's how it's shaped.

Andre also noted that under LCFF and LCAP implementation the focus on generating discussion with stakeholders and promoting transparency were factors for site level budget prioritization.

> Every month I have DELAC meeting, and I have a school site council meeting and then all the parents that show up, we go over the LCAP in its entirety. We debrief about why it is that we're allocating certain funding for a certain thing, where that need comes up and how it presents itself. Why we find it's so important to, for example, allocate certain money to a software program that we think is going to be of benefit to students. How did we determine that we needed that? Show them the data; I show them where students are struggling. Once they see that they can see how it is that we're allocating that money towards that particular need.

Andre described how transparency during the meetings provided more awareness among parents. Their awareness also led to advocacy for additional services to help the district meet their goal to improve the district's parent engagement strategies. Families in the district began to request evening classes for parents. He attributed this to the ongoing debrief of allocation of funds and site needs.

Becky. In Becky's experience with the implementation of LCAP and LCFF, she also discussed how the monthly sharing of data and budget had created more awareness among stakeholders.

> There seems to be more awareness of how budgeting and funding happens at schools over the past three or four years. At least what I'm seeing in the conversations that are coming up. In the past, on other school site councils when I was on as a parent or as a teacher, yes, we talked about budgetary items, but it was more when you developed a school site plan, or how much you were going to spend for each initiative, and that was it. Where here, it's kind of an ongoing, every month we're bringing data to our school site council, sharing the budget, and things like that that wasn't happening as much on those other committees under the different ways.

Becky also described how parents asked more questions about certain allocations and it was necessary for the site administrative team to provide additional data to discuss those budgetary items, such as Accelerated Reader (reading program).

Clare. Clare also had a similar experience to Andre and Becky regarding decisions regarding spending and feedback from stakeholders.

> Are we making the best spending decisions when we're doing it at the last minute and very quickly? We've made some goals this year of more timeline of we want this amount spent by this, or we want this budget spent by this. The way that our budget usually is done is we bring it to our leadership team, and then we also bring it to our school site council. We give both of those groups of people full ... They can input anything in regards to where they want to see money spent, but as an administrative team, there are certain things that are important to us in regards to the budget.

Clare explained that although the administrative team had certain priorities, it was important to be transparent and discuss the priorities with the team. Her administrative team provided different pieces of data to share the importance of those priorities for high-need students. Furthermore, she discussed the value of creating opportunities for students and providing resources for high-need students.

> Field trips, all sixth graders go on a field trip, all seventh graders, all eighth graders, so that's totally in our budget. We provide all our students, and we've done this for the second year now. We provide all our students with three-ring binders, tabs, paper, pencil

> case, highlighters, colored pencils, pens, pencils. Then, as kids throughout the year need more stuff, teachers have extra so they can get it because we want every kid to have access to whatever it is that they need. That's been a change in our budget over the past couple of years.

Clare described these budget allocation as a positive change in the system structure because it provides more opportunity for the local decision.

Diego. Diego found that local decision of site allocations allowed his site to be able to focus on the needs of high-need students with a unique lens. He explained that under the new system's expectations they met the needs of the school community and hire new staffing to support the site priorities, such as school safety.

> Based on what we get from our different stakeholders, including teachers, we also survey students, parents, classified staff. We try to build our budget around sort of the prioritized areas. For example, this year school safety was one of the top 2 or 3 areas on the surveys, and so we have a very hefty amount of our discretionary budget which isn't LCAP money, but its part of the amount that's site controlled on hiring campus assistants. We've added 2 or 3 since I've been here.

For Diego having the opportunity to hire campus assistants allowed him to be able to meet the priorities and concerns of the stakeholders. Like Clare, Diego also mentioned the importance of transparency and his effort to be open to questions and concerns from stakeholders in the budget process.

> I've always tried to be very transparent in all the things I do, whether its master scheduling or I need to move people around the campus, I try to justify everything I do and leave myself open for questions and concerns. I think that the budget process, I do it the same way. I do come to them with something in there. I don't just come with a blank slate, but I come to them, and we discuss each item and decide if it's where we want to go. Like I said, I'll run it through those different groups. The school site Council is the group that officially approves the LCAP budget as part of the single plan and the other categorical funding, but we have that discussion with everyone.

Eva. Eva provides stakeholders with lots of different data when she meets with them to discuss funding allocations and resources. She considers her job to be one that is centered on listening and figuring out what stakeholders' value as she manages funding allocations.

> My role is really to take the data from all my stakeholders. When I'm looking at my parents and what parents what the school to provide students, when I survey my teachers to see what special programs or special supplies, when I look at our kids and we look at the test data and CELDT scores and all that kind of stuff and put it together and come up with plans and programs to meet their needs, whether it's master schedule or whether it's a tutoring program. Or I have a dual-language program. I have a learning academy. All those things play the role. My job really is to work with all the stakeholders to see what we want and then figure out with my funding sources what are the basics I need to run the school and what do I have to try to meet those needs outside of the basics.

The experiences shared by all five participants during their implementation of process of LCFF and LCAP with regards to using stakeholder input to prioritize funding at the site level demonstrates evidence of some of the essential components of the RTI framework used in the study. For example, all participants discussed experiences in evaluating the needs among stakeholders. Evaluating in an important element in the multi-tiered RTI framework.

Theme 3: Taking advantage of budgetary flexibility to meet student need. All five participants interviewed described their experience with LCFF and LCAP as more flexible in comparison to the prior state funding system to help meet student need. Each participant shared about a specific need among the student population and the modifications made to budgets and resources based on site needs.

Andre. Andre's school site had invested lots of support and efforts to increase student achievement in English Language Arts and Math. He explained that while academic achievement was a top priority, student's social and emotional needs were also an important priority. Andre and stakeholders reviewed the student data and noticed a need. The team made the necessary adjustments to the budget to allow the resources needed. He attributed the focus on ongoing planning and stakeholder involvement as key factors that make LCFF and LCAP more flexibility.

> Student need, that's first and foremost, that's in the forefront. We take a look at data; we take a look at all aspects of data when it comes to benchmarks when it comes to all of

> that. It's not only on that level it's also on a social and emotional level. One of the things that we did was we hired a counselor based on all the stuff that we generated. We noticed that there was a social and emotional need here at the school for our students. A lot of students needed somewhere to go to, to be able to deal with the stuff that academics doesn't bring out, a lot of the students were struggling. We saw a need to bring in a counselor.

Becky. While Becky has been working with stakeholders at her school site to meet the district-wide effort on literacy, she has also shared that she feels the system offers flexibility to meet the needs of students. The collective efforts to meet the LCAP goals with stakeholders has given the team a better understanding of student needs. During their brainstorming sessions about literacy and student engagement, they generated ideas to help meet the student need.

> Unfortunately, at this level, not all kids read at grade level, and because they are in middle school, they're somewhat embarrassed to read during SSR the books that are at their level. It's trying to bring in resources that won't identify the student as a low reader by reading a picture book, but at the same time providing them what they need. One of the things we're looking at is Nooks or something where the text can be digital so that not everyone is seeing that I'm reading, 'The Cat in the Hat.' Something like that.

Becky was the only participant who highlighted that while her site was provided more flexibility under the new finance system, her district had also acquired more responsibility for certain cost the district would typically pay for under the prior state funding system. For example, the AR program used to be pay at the district level, but that responsibility had now been allocated to the site.

Clare. Clare’s school site held a Saturday Academy because of the flexibility to meet student need with support of LCFF site funds. With the stakeholder team, they reviewed and discussed student need to developed additional resources and more services to students in need.

> At one of our leadership meetings, the reason we had a Saturday academy last year was we were talking as a leadership group of, what could we do for these kids who are not going to meet the promotion policy that the district sets? What can we do for them that maybe we could take away one of their F's? They could do something to clear one of their F's. It was a conversation that started in how to support those kids, and then it went

> into this, "Okay, well, what if we did this eight-week Saturday Academy and all the eighth graders who went through it, it would cancel out one of their F's?

Clare also shared that teachers at the site advocated for the high-need students, specifically English Learners. The teachers wanted to provide additional resources to support students in the lower level English Language Development (ELD) classes. Clare expressed that the transparency and focus on stakeholder input created flexibility under the new system.

> We'll target math. We'll target language arts. We'll also target ELD, so we're looking at our students who are ones, twos, and threes." We gave them the opportunity to create an ELD-targeted Academy for eight weeks.

In addition to the ELD-targeted Academy, the site provided personal support to meet the needs of students.

> For example, last year, we funded a three-day a week intervention support provider. She was coming in, and she was working with groups of students who were struggling in reading and math based on Star 360 data that we took three times throughout the year.

Diego. Diego expressed that provide his student opportunities to experience field trips is a priority and a need for the students in the community that he services. He felt students were limited to enrichment opportunities for various reasons outside of their school environment. For Diego, field trips were a priority, and he worked with his team to make sure they could provide these opportunities for the students. He attributes his ability to make this effort possible to the flexibility of the system.

> Well, I think that the priorities that the state has set force you to look at student need if you weren't doing it already. I mean, I like to think that I always was, but I can remember when I got here four years ago, there were no school-wide or grade-level-wide field trips, for example. It was just hit or miss. Some people went. Some people didn't. One of the things that LCFF helped me with was being able to create funding so that all of our kids can go on field trips, at least one every year.

Diego also expressed that he appreciated the opportunity to be able to operate this way under the new system. He suggested that the new system helped him to personalize resources based on the needs of the school site rather than only focusing on big districts initiatives.

Eva. Eva stated that she also felt that she had more flexibility to use funds to create opportunities and purchase resources that the leadership team considered necessary for their site.

> I, I mean my leadership team and I - have a lot more flexibility with purchasing supplies, sending people to conferences, providing special events or opportunities for our kids. It's just more open to meet the needs of the students we have now and spend the money where our students need the money spent on.

The use of the RTI model to analysis the theme taking advantage of budgetary flexibility to meet student need highlighted the efforts among participants to focus on creating multi-level of prevention system to support their high-need students. All participants expressed this sense of flexibility and shared an experience. For example, the feeling of increase flexibility among participants allowed them to personalize spending to meet the needs of their site. For example, in Clare's experience the budgetary flexibility allowed them to work with stakeholder advocating on behalf of English learners to create tiered supports of interventions.

Summary of Key Findings

Chapter Four provided a presentation of data gathered from the phenomenological study of secondary school leaders and their 'lived experience' implementing LCFF and LCAP. All participants represented public schools with a 55% of more enrollment of high-need students in Southern California. The five participants serviced at schools with a UPP of 80% or higher. The five participants were invited to participate in the study because they serviced a large population of high-need students (i.e., low-income, English learner and foster youth students) and received all three levels of funding under the new funding system, LCFF.

The study sought to understand the lived experience of secondary school leaders who were currently implementing the LCFF and LCAP. The data was presented sequentially per the interview questions asked by the researcher during the interview process. Findings emerged through the process of coding with HyperRESEARCH that lead to a variety of themes. With a focus on staying true to phenomenological theory, the researcher did not have any pre-established themes or patterns. As the researcher reviewed the content of the interviews, themes grew in numbers of code responses and, some patterns became more evident than others. Then, the most frequent themes were reviewed in more depth, noted, and member-checked.

A total of three themes emerged from the process. The themes provided a logical progression of the secondary school leaders' actual lived experience of implementing LCFF and LCAP. Furthermore, the themes were analyzed with the RTI framework's essential components of the multi-tiered system. The first theme, Setting and Implementing Ambitions Goals, all participants shared examples of their efforts to collectively set and implement ambitions goals with stakeholders. The second theme focused on using stakeholder input to prioritize funding at the site level, all participants share a commonality in setting budget priorities in collaboration with stakeholder to support high-need students. Lastly, third theme taking advantage of budgetary flexibility to meet student need, all principals shared the same feeling about the new system providing more flexibility to focus on student need at their sites in comparison to the previous categorical funding system. While participant did not specifically mention Base, Supplemental, or Concentration grants to discuss their goal development, or stakeholder input or budgetary flexibility it was evident that a multi-tiered system of support was used at the site level.

In Chapter Five, these themes are discussed in the context of past research, and possible implications for future action and research.

Chapter V

This final chapter of this dissertation is presented in six sections. The first section presents a brief overview of the study, including the purpose of the study, the research question and the design overview. The next section provides a discussion of the key findings based on the overarching research question and guiding questions used during the interviews to cross-sectionally examine the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of secondary school leaders. The third section highlights conclusions from the findings in response to the research question. In the fourth section, there is a description of potential policy and practice implications based on the study outcomes. The following section places this phenomenological study in a scholarly discussion and provides recommendations for future research about school finances and school based leadership. The final section articulates present a summary of the study the chapter.

Introduction

This study focused on exploring how secondary school leaders experienced LCFF and the LCAP implementation at the school site level. The study began with an introduction and a rationale for understanding how secondary school leaders experienced the phenomena. After 30 years of having the same school finance system in place (Ed-Data, 2015), the implementation of LCFF and the LCAP created a shift to focus on a decentralized approach to school finance in California. This historical change led me personally to wonder how local was the focus of decentralizing the decision-making process for LCFF and the LCAP and what kind of experiences secondary school leaders had experienced with the phenomenon. The research of other scholars' work about school finance led to convictions about the probability that secondary school leaders had experiences and perspectives about the phenomenon while seeking to ensure effective leadership and management of their respective sites, and thus worth exploring. The complexity of the multifaceted K-12 public funding system on the daily work of school leaders managing budgets, and the limited amount of research on this phenomenon and school leader's own perspective made a study of secondary school leaders focused on their experience with implementation LCFF and the LCAP an apparent and valuable choice for this study.

The study used RTI as a framework to interpret the experience of secondary school leaders with the multi-tiered funding system focused on addressing the needs of the students. The RTI framework, which was based on a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) focused on addressing the needs of students with intervention tiers that vary to meet the needs of students. The four essential components of the RTI framework included: (a) Screening, (b) Progress monitoring, (c) Data-based decision-making, and (d) Multi-level prevention system. The RTI framework was used to analyze the experience of the secondary school leaders.

Setting a foundation for the study began with a review of public school finance history in the United States, research was analyzed that focused on four areas. The first area of literature review focused on California's K-12 school finances and adequacy. This portion of the review highlighted an embodiment of course cases, legislative actions, voter-approved initiatives, and government regulations that evolved California's school funding system. The second area of the literature review explored the old structure of the school financing in California between 1972 and 2013. A third area of literature review focused on the new structure of school financing in California that was introduces in California in 2013. The fourth and final section of the literature review engaged in an analysis of reducing the achievement gap and school budgeting leadership. While there was existing literature that provided principals some guidance to school finance, the limited amount of research about the lived experience of secondary school leaders' experience with school finances led to validate the need for this study.

The study examined the impact of LCFF and LCAP on the daily work of secondary school leaders. More specifically, it studied secondary school leaders lived experiences with the implementation of LCFF and LCAP. The data was gathered through interviews of five secondary school leaders conducted at their respective sites. During the data collections process, phenomenology was used to be able to capture the human (secondary school leader) experience with the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) asserts that the most significant understanding that one can experience is from their own direct perceptions, observations, and intuitions.

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of secondary school leaders as it related to the implementation of the LCFF and the LCAP during the early stages of reform implementation across the state of California. While, school finances reform in California has headed in a direction of less centralization of funds at the state level, and giving LEAs more flexibility, transparency, and accountability control of their monies (WestEd, 2014), school leaders play significant roles. This new phenomenon required further research to understand how these leaders experienced the financial changes while managing their sites. The overall goal of the study was to explore the lived experiences of these educational leaders during this period of financial transition in education by asking: What are the lived experiences of secondary school leaders who are currently implementing the LCFF and the LCAP?

Discussion of Key Findings

The discussion of key findings is presented by themes which emerged from the interview process, one at a time. Each of the findings is linked to the literature and to the overall discourse about school practices for improving student achievement and educational leadership.

Research question. What are the lived experiences of secondary school leaders who are currently implementing the LCFF and the LCAP?

Theme #1: Setting and implementing ambitious goals. The secondary school leaders in this study emphasized a collaborative effort for setting and implementing goals. All five participants commented on their work with site goals alignment to the LEAs LCAP goals. Odden and Archibald (2009) described goal setting as a necessary ingredient for reducing the achievement gap. In the experience of the participants, goal setting was evident and part of their everyday work. All five principals discussed working with multiple stakeholders which included students, teachers, parents, and community organizations to create a collaborative environment for setting and implementing goals. Goal setting is a vital component of the Sorenson-Goldsmith (2013) Integrated Budget Model. The work of these participants aligned with the suggestions of Sorenson and Goldsmith (2013), about initiating a process for developing data-driven goals that promotes sensitivity from school leaders as stakeholders may not always be satisfied with the data results. Furthermore, Sorenson and Goldsmith (2013) also suggested school leaders must promote the school goals to all stakeholders through multiple means. The work these secondary school leaders have accomplished during the transition and implementation of LCFF and LCAP, demonstrates their effort to engage stakeholders in the process of guiding, setting, and implementing goals. This finding illuminates the leadership effort to help decentralize power and give more voice to the local community stakeholders.

Theme #2: Using stakeholder input to prioritize funding at the site level. Secondary leaders in this study saw the input from stakeholders as an added value to their work. The participants solicited input from stakeholders in multiple ways, including online and paper survey, committee meetings, and parent conferences. All participants described an experience with stakeholders, in which they could analyze the prioritization of funding at the site level to meet their needs. Marzano (2003) explained that there is lots of added value when community partnerships are actively involved in the decision-making process. He also suggested that those benefits can transpire if school leaders actively seek ways to initiate communication with stakeholders and establish a welcoming environment. All five secondary leaders in this study discussed the importance of transparency and their effort to always present stakeholders with data to make decision about prioritizing funding needs. When these opportunities to grown, partnerships driven a vision can help both district-level and school level leadership to discover other unique concerns or ideas (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Three of the five participants highlighted learning more about the priorities of the parent stakeholder group when they conducted outreach to survey families. As of result of their work to gather input from stakeholder these sites we able prioritize funding for school safety, parent engagement programs, and resource allocations for academic programs. This finding provides an example of how school leaders are exercising their local power and engaging with stakeholders.

Theme #3: Taking advantage of budgetary flexibility to meet student need. The five participants interviewed described their experience with LCFF and LCAP as more flexible in comparison to the prior state funding system to help meet student need. Each participant shared about a specific need among the student population and the modifications made to budgets and resources based on site needs. The research about reducing the achievement gap highlights the importance of taking a needs-focus approach to truly engage in student performance an improvement (Odden & Archibald, 2009; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). The fact that these secondary leaders experience a feeling of more flexibility and opportunity to support student need under LCFF and LCAP aligns in the directions of the research and theories of Togneri and Anderson (2003) as well as Odden and Archibald (2009), who found that when district engage in conversations that acknowledge needs, the districts focus on change. The research shows that the districts who engaged in the needs-focused approach felt that acknowledging poor performance was critical to developing the will to change to improve student performance (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). In the study, the secondary school leaders focused on having conversations centered on the needs of the sites and the children they serve every day. This finding demonstrates that LCFF and LCAP have the potential to help school sites focus on engaging multiple stakeholders and work towards improving their systems.

Conclusions

The findings from this phenomenological study produced three conclusions regarding the lived experience of secondary school administrators in public schools in Southern California and the implementation of LCFF and LCAP.

Creating authentic experiences to gather stakeholder input can help school leader cultivate a collaborative environment. All the secondary school leaders who participated in this study shared their efforts to cultivate a collaborative environment by being transparent and seeking input from stakeholders. For example, Andre focused on helping the district reach their LCAP goal focused on creating respectful, responsible, engaging and inclusive environments for all students, parents, staff and parents, as well as increasing parent engagement. He discussed how his efforts to gather input allowed him to develop more knowledge about his school site and parent community. By creating authentic experiences for parents during DELAC and school site council to understand the LCAP goals and the needs of students, the parents can learn more about ways to advocate for additional services. In Andre's experience, gathering stakeholder input cultivated a collaborative environment that lead to offering night courses for families in the community.

Creating authentic experience to cultivate a collaborative environment is an essential to the foundation of strong LCAP and LCFF. If the goal is to engage all stakeholders in the process, ensuring the experience are authentic and not superficial is key. Humphrey et al. (2014) explain that LCFF focuses on meaningful engagement of parents, pupils, and other stakeholders to analyze the needs of their students to complete the LCAP and the new budget process. Leadership then becomes a critical component in efforts to move forward effective school finance and accountability reform. Sammons et al. (1995) explains that leadership is critical, but it goes beyond just the quality of the individual leader. They state, “the role that leaders play, their management style, their relationship to the school vision, values, and goals, and their approach to change” (p. 9) is critical to effective school reform (Sammons et al.,1995).

Gathering stakeholder input provides school site with valuable information about what their local community considers important. While LCFF is still in its infancy stage of implementation, many COEs and LEAs across the state highlight LCFFs potential to shift school finances from a compliance exercise activity to an activity focused on addressing the need of their students (Humphrey et al., 2014). COEs and LEAs are responsible for engaging the community in the process of developing their LCAP that will guide the spending decisions. The secondary school leaders in this study all supported their districts in the process of the collecting feedback and input from families regarding the needs of their students. Additionally, all five school leaders gathered information from their stakeholders that provided valuable information. For example, in Diego’s case during the process of collecting input from parents he learned about their feelings concerning school safety. Parents expressed feeling the need for improvement in school safety area. Diego and the rest of this team, explored the issued and quickly made it a priority. Their collective work lead to the hiring of a campus assistant to support with school safety.

Gathering the stakeholder input and utilizing it to inform the decision-making process for LCFF is essential to meeting the intentions of the reform. By gathering input from stakeholders, school leaders access more knowledge about their concerns in the community and the needs of the student they serve. This type of knowledge allows school leaders to focus on spending their school level expenditure funds directly on student achievement and needs. Butler (2006) highlights that district and school would benefit from ensuring expenditure is correlated between resource allocation and student achievement and needs.

Funding flexibility allows school leaders to focus on creating more personalized opportunities for the school community. The lived experience of the secondary school leaders in this study, presented an agreement among all that they felt they had more flexibility with LCFF and LCAP in comparison to the prior funding system. They all described an experience with supporting personalized opportunities for their school community, as well as modifications they made to their budgets and resources based on those needs. Eva explained that with LCFF and LCAP, she experienced more opportunities to bring in stakeholders and evaluate the current school resources to focus in on student needs. The research by Odden and Archibald (2001) recommend examining resources and reallocations and effective strategies can help schools continue to evolve and improve professional and performance-oriented schools. This finding validates the intent of the LCFF legislation and regulations, as one important tent of the formula is that local need should be the driving force in the decision-making process with special attention to high-need students. Furthermore, this finding aligns with the RTI framework used to interpret the effects of LCFF and LCAP on the lived experience of school leaders implementing the new reform in secondary level schools (see Figure 6). The RTI model used focused on four essential components: (a) Screening, (b) Progress monitoring, (c) Data-based decision making, and (d) Multi-level prevention system. In the experience of the secondary school leaders, the LCFF and the LCAP tier funding has created opportunities to provide additional, personalized services to high-need students. However, based on the data gathered from the participants' lived experience, they did not directly make associations between goal setting, stakeholder input or budgetary flexibility to the different spending tiers under LCFF.

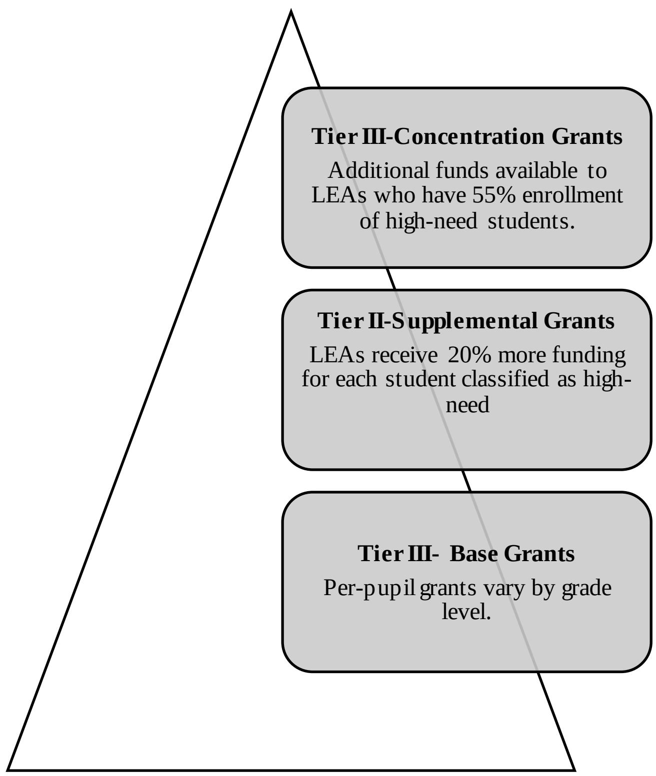

Figure 6 The RTI triangle for LCFF

Implications for Policy and or Practice

Implications for the findings and conclusions on current and future practices are offered, as well as suggestions for how school and district leaders, policymakers at the state might modify practice to continue to improve collaboration, communication, and decision-making for LCFF and LCAP.

School site level.

School site leaders must encourage and support a collaborative environment for stakeholder partnerships in the decision-making process. The second question in the interview process asked secondary school leaders to recall the process of short-term and long-term fiscal planning at your school site. All leaders in this study highlighted an experience working with multiple groups of stakeholders to gather input and set priorities for funding. There is well documented research that family and community partnerships engaged in instructional reform efforts are correlated with positive student achievement (Ammon, 1999; Henderson, 1981; Epstein, 2011; Swap, 1993).

A collaborative professional culture that is widespread among all stakeholders along with distributed instructional leadership can also help reduce the achievement gap (Odden & Archibald, 2009). School leaders can encourage a collaborative environment for all stakeholder by taking a couple of steps. First, they can explore the school ethnography to capture a better understanding about the school context, to help leaders facilitate a deeper understanding of families and other community partnerships. Second, leaders can create opportunities particularly for parents to increase their knowledge about schooling and their role in supporting and engaging in LCAP and LCFF. Finally, secondary school leader should be accessible and make building relationship a key component of their effort to encourage and support collaborative environments that will enrich the LCAP and LCFF process.

School site leaders should consider the redefinition of their leadership role in relation to LCFF and LCAP. As LCFF and LCAP continue to evolve it is imperative that school site leaders keep informed of the ongoing modifications and efforts to improve the reforms. The old finance system allocations were organized differently and created spending limitations due to restricted, unrestricted and categorical dollars. However, under the new finance system, all LCFF funding is accounted for as an unrestricted resource. These changes to the funding system are intended to provide districts with more flexibility and opportunities to focus on the needs of their needs. While these changes are progressive and supportive of the needs of the community and the high-need students, they serve, it is important for school leaders to understand their role in the new system.

LCFF and LCAP reform created an opportunity for school site leaders to focus on personal redefinition of their roles. Cummins (1986) argues that the major reason why previous education reform focused on improving the system have been unsuccessful is because the relations among student and teachers, school and communities have not changed. The implementation of change will be dependent on the extent to which people redefine their roles individually and collectively as it connects to the policy reform (Cummins, 1986). School leaders need to critically analyze their role as well as understand the policy to better serve their communities. Aside from redefining their roles, school leader can focus on staying informed by signing up for mail-servers for LCFF and LCAP from California Department of Education. Leaders can seek to engage in by Stakeholder Engagement Session provided by the California Department of Education to provide feedback regarding policies, regulations or resources related to LCAP and LCFF.

School site leaders must acknowledge the needs of the school and focus on using dollars generated by high-need students to increase and/or improve services for those students. Under LCFF, the LCAP serves as the accountability plan and LEAs are expected to work with stakeholders to gather input around the eight state priorities and craft goals. All five participants shared an experience during their implementation process of LCAP and LCFF about stakeholder input and prioritization of funding to support high-need students at the site level. Sorenson-Goldsmith Integrated Budget Model considers performance objectives critical to developing school budgets and must be driven by a focus on student performance (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2013). A systematic approach driven by performance objectives can have a positive impact towards impacting curriculum and instructional programs to help reduce the achievement gap (Odden & Archibald, 2009; Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2013). School site leaders must focus on developing school goals that are supportive of the LEAs LCAP, as well as develop performance objectives for ongoing evaluation and analysis.

District level.

District offices should encourage and support opportunities for site leaders to network with peers in efforts to develop collaborations with respect to LCFF and LCAP. In the process of redefining leadership roles districts who placed a greater focus on developing collaboration efforts by bringing school site leaders together on a regular basis to discuss challenges, victories, and exchange strategies experience a positive correlation with student achievement (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). District offices can consider covering the cost for principals to join a professional organization of their choice that will support their development to help the district continue to develop strengths among the district's principals. Moreover, district may consider partnerships with their County Office of Education (COE) or local advocacy organizations to sponsor networking events, workshops and other opportunities that bring school site leaders together. This event should not be limited just to one district only. Districts should consider outreach to promote networking with school leaders from other districts and regions. Collaboration with respect to LCFF and LCAP among districts and school site leaders should also focus on defining the tier-spending system created under LCFF and discussing the RTI model for LCFF provided in this study. Investing in defining the different grants under LCFF for school site leaders can support in the decision-making process. Additionally, by creating these types of opportunities, the districts send out a powerful message to school site leaders about importance of personal growth and redefining roles.

State level.

Policy makers at the state level should consider reviewing current LCFF regulations to ensure flexibility spending continues to support high-need students. The experiences shared by secondary school leaders in this study, described LCFF to be more flexible than the previous finance system. While flexibility is part of decentralizing funds to give local district, schools, and communities more power to make decisions regarding spending, flexibility can also create challenges that impact high-need students. For example, the Public Advocates and youth leadership organization Californians for Justice conducted in-depth reviews of LCAPs and determined that districts across the state had significantly underspend supplemental and concentration dollars. One of the challenges facing high-need students under the new systems is that flexibility has led some districts to not meet the Minimum Proportionality Percentage (MPP) obligation to its high-need students. Under LCFF regulations, all LCFF funding is accounted for as an unrestricted resource. This gives much flexibilities for districts to allocate funds as they may like. Additionally, it raises questions about what happens to supplemental and concentration grants that are not spent. Are supplemental and concentration dollars not spent maintained under those grants or do they become part of unrestricted dollars with even more spending flexibility? These are important issues to consider, as principals express experiencing much more flexibility. While all the secondary leaders in this study used funds to support high-need students and flexibility for local control can be powerful, LCFF regulations pose interesting concerns that impact high-need students. One suggestion for state policy maker is to focus on developing model practices for the multi-tier funding system be used by LCFF. By using the RTI model for LCFF offers a foundation for creating model practices that can support the LCFF priorities and provide resources for school level leadership.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this section, recommendations for how to take the results of this study and add to them with future research about LCFF and LCAP related to school site leadership. Proposals are presented in a numbered format and listed in a priority order.

1. **Explore the process of stakeholder input more in depth.** All the secondary leaders who engaged in this study, discussed an experience with stakeholders. Their experiences included stakeholders input from surveys and structured meetings for committees. Stakeholder input and engagement in the LCAP process are critical components of drafting plans. The overall purpose of decentralizing funds through LCFF, is to engage local communities to assessing the needs of their school and making local decisions. Therefore, further research would benefit from a deeper analyze of what are effective strategies district and school are using to build partnership with stakeholders and how they are developing engagement sessions that give stakeholder a voice. One new research question that might lead to fruitful study is what are key factors to establish effective stakeholder engagement in the decision-making process?

2. **Explore some of the lived experiences among secondary school leaders serving in LEAs with a UPP of 54% or lower.** This study solely focused on school leaders serving schools in districts with 55% UPP or higher. These schools had a high concentrations of high need students, per the definition of LCFF regulations. Further research would benefit from conducting the same study with a school leaders serving in district at have a UPP of 54% or lower and do not meet the requirements to receive concentration and supplement grants the

district in this study received. It would be interesting to see who their lived experience differs from the leaders whose districts are receiving additional grants to increase or improve services for high needs student.

3. **Explore the lived experience of district office leadership with the implementation of LCFF and LCAP.** This study sought to explore the lived experience of school site leaders during the early implementation of LCFF and LCAP. The researcher wanted to explore how local were the efforts to gather stakeholder input and what school site leaders had experienced during this new phenomenon. Further research exploring the lived experience of crafting the first LCAP from a district perspective would be a benefit. Currently LEA's are crafting their second LCAPs and it would also be interesting to capture the experience of district leadership teams who have had the opportunity to use the original LCAP template and the updated LCAP template for 2017. Capturing their experience might inform policy makers and California State Department about impact of LCFF and LCAP regulations.

4. **Explorations of other research methods to grow the understanding of LCFF and LCAP.** This study took a phenomenological approach to capture the essence of the experience of secondary school leaders at their sites. Further research could possibly consider a mixed approach utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data to do a comparative analysis of schools who are achieving Blue and Green across the state indicators in the new California Accountability Model & School Dashboard. The study could review LCAP plans, resource allocations, site expenditures, as well as capture the experiences of school site leadership.

Summary

This phenomenological research study sought to capture the experiences of secondary school administrators serving in districts with a UPP of 55% or higher and receiving supplemental and concentration funds during the early implementation of LCFF and LCAP. Five secondary school site leaders participated in the study and were interviewed using an open-ended interview protocol. The use of open-ended questions establishes a territory to be explored, as well as enabled the participants to take any direction they wanted to explore (Seidman, 2013). The interviews were analyzed in depth and several themes emerged. The school site leaders shared experience about their work during the implementation of LCFF and LCAP, three key themes emerged: set and implement ambitions goals, input from stakeholders and prioritization of funding at site level, and flexibility to meet student need. The themes provided a logical progression of the secondary school leaders' actual lived experience of implementing LCFF and LCAP.

The three themes generated three conclusions in response to the research question guiding the study. The conclusion, creating authentic experiences, can help to gather stakeholder input and assist school leaders cultivate a collaborative environment. The conclusion, gathering stakeholder input, can provides school sites with valuable information about what their local community considers important. The conclusion, funding flexibility allows school leaders to focus on creating more personalized, can help create opportunities for the school community.

The key themes and conclusions that emerged from the study have implications for school and district leaders, policymakers at the state regarding the collaboration, communication, and decision-making surrounding LCFF and LCAP. School site leaders must encourage and support a collaborative environment for stakeholder partnerships in the decision-making process. District offices should encourage and support opportunities for site leaders to network with peers in efforts to develop collaborations with respect to LCFF and LCAP. Policy makers at the state level should consider reviewing current LCFF regulations to ensure flexibility continues to support high need students.

Lastly, four recommendations for how to take the results of this study and add to them with future research about LCFF and LCAP related to school site leadership were provided. These recommendations focused on continuing to explore LCAP and LCFF. Some of the recommendations include exploring the process of stakeholders input more in depth and exploring some of the lived experiences among secondary school leaders serving in LEAs with a UPP of 54% or lower.

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APPENDIX A

Email Request for District Permission to Contact Qualifying Principals

Dear (name of school district personnel in charge of IRB),

My name is Mayra Vega-Manriquez and I am Assistant Principal of De Anza Academy of Technology and the Arts (DATA) in the Ventura USD and I am also a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University in the Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy Graduate program. The subject of my dissertation is "exploring the lived experience and interpretation of secondary school leaders implementing LCFF and LCAP" and I would like to recruit secondary school leaders, with more than 5 years tenure, at a secondary school in Southern California. (*potential candidate name*), Principal of (*school name*), fits the criteria for this phenomenological study in (*district name*).

Currently, I am in the process of applying to Pepperdine's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I must submit approval from school districts where potential interview candidates are employed allowing me to contact those qualifying principals to see if they would agree to be participants in my study. All participants' identities will remain confidential and there will not be any identifying descriptions that link (*potential candidate names*) with (*school name and district name*).

Through my study, I intend to capture the essence of the lived experience of secondary school leaders who are in the midst of implementing new financial and accountability reform through LCFF and LCAP. My goal is to add to the evolving body of knowledge regarding LCFF and LCAP since its recent implementation. In my research, I have discovered that while there is extensive literature regarding school finance, equity and adequacy of resources, there are few studies that discuss the leadership journey and experience of school leaders. This study will highlight the lived experience of secondary school leaders' experiences in their journey to implement new financial school reform.

I believe the results of this study will help school districts and administrator preparation programs better provide professional development and support to emerging school leaders in reform implementation. I hope (*name of the school district*) will allow me to contact (*name of potential candidate*) and ask if (*s/he*) would be willing to participate in my phenomenological study.

If you are not the person to whom I direct my inquiries, I would appreciate you pointing me in the right direction. Thank you so much more time.

Sincerely,

Mayra Vega-Manriquez

APPENDIX B

Email Invitation to Qualifying Participants

Dear Principal,

My name is Mayra Vega-Manriquez and I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University. I am conducting research that explores the lived experience of school leaders who are leading during the implementation of the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in California and how school leaders interpret and implement policies such as LCFF and LCAP. My goal is to add to the currently developing body of research about LCFF and LCAP, especially to capture the experience of secondary school leaders.

In my research, I have learned that there is extensive literature regarding school finances and resources that benefit students as well as school sites, there have been very few studies done that document the leadership journey, specifically in regards to the challenges and barrier school leaders face with new reform implementation while ensuring to sustain adequate supports for high-need students. This dissertation study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my dissertation and have received district consent to recruit you for this study (See attached Superintendent Authorization).

I am personally inviting you to participate in a phenomenological research study. As part of this research study, I am asking that you participate in one 60-minute face to face interview to better understand what lived experiences you encounter as a school leaders during the implementation of LCFF and LCAP. Prior to meeting, I will ask that you complete a 10-question biographical/demographic questionnaire, detailing your education, experience and basic demographic information about your school site, which we will debrief in our face-to face meeting. The questionnaire will take approximately 8-10 minutes to complete online via Google forms.

Your participation in this study is confidential and voluntary (pseudonyms will be used to code your answers and all identifying information will be removed upon completion of the data collection process). Should you decide to participate you may elect to stop your participation at any time and without any consequence. Job status or review will not be affected by refusal to participate or withdrawal from this study. This research protocol has been approved by the Pepperdine University Internal Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Christopher Lund, Adjunct Professor, at or Dr. Judy Ho, Graduate and Professional Schools (GPS) IRB Chairperson.

Thank you for your consideration of this invitation to participate in this study, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, please email me.

Mayra Vega-Manriquez, doctoral candidate
Pepperdine University

APPENDIX C

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI PROGRAM)
Coursework Transcript Report**

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** [redacted]
- **Email:**
- **Institution Affiliation:**
- **Institution Unit:**

- **Curriculum Group:** GSEP Education Division
- **Course Learner Group:** GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 19466769
- **Report Date:** 05-Jul-2016
- **Current Score**:** 100

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	07-May-2016	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	07-May-2016	5/5 (100%)
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	06-May-2016	3/3 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	14-May-2016	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	14-May-2016	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	14-May-2016	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	14-May-2016	5/5 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	14-May-2016	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: https://www.citiprogram.org/verify/index.cfm?verify=feaa8769-4731-4a0e-9abb-38691e58f263

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)
Email: support@citiprogram.org
Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

APPENDIX D

Participant Agreement

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study conducted as part of the requirements for a dissertation in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. For this study, I will collect data from secondary school principals who have more than five years of tenure as school administrators in a public school setting in Southern California and are implementing the Local Control and Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The research will be supervised by my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Christopher Lund, Pepperdine University Adjunct Professor.

The purpose of this research study is to explore school-level leadership and the new funding formula in California, by capturing the essence of the lived experiences of secondary school leaders during this period of financial transition. This study will be used for academic research. The result of this study will be used to inform the profession of the emotions and professional support needed during the implementation of finance-related reforms as the state focuses more on local control and accountability. All data gathered will be treated confidentially.

For this study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will consist of open-ended questions. The interview process may take approximately 60 minutes. Prior to the interview, you will be asked to complete a 10-question biographical/demographic questionnaire. The questionnaire will take approximately 8-10 minutes to complete online via Google forms.

Your participation in this study is confidential and voluntary (pseudonyms will be used to code your answers and all identifying information will be removed upon completion of the data collection process). You may elect to stop your participation at any time and without any consequence. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me. I hope you will agree to this opportunity. Thank you for your consideration and help.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Christopher Lund, Adjunct Professor, Dr. Judy Ho, Graduate and Professional Schools (GPS) IRB Chairperson.

Sincerely,

Mayra Vega-Manriquez	Dr. Christopher Lund
Doctoral Candidate	Adjunct Professor of Education

I ______________________________________, agree to participate in the research study conducted by Mayra Vega-Manriquez under direction of Dr. Christopher Lund.

Signature of participant: ______________________________________ Date: _____________

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

Pseudonym of Interviewee: ____

Location of interview: ____

Date of Interview: ______________________________Time of interview: _________________

Research Question	Main General Questions	Possible Follow-up Questions
What are the lived experiences of districts and school site leaders who are currently implementing the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)?	1. What has your experience been with LCFF and LCAP?	• What is it like to lead during the transitionto the new school-finance and accountability reform, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)? • What was your implementation experience like? • What strategies did you use? • How would describe your role as a secondary school leader in the implementation of these new educational reforms? • What, if any, changes have you experienced in your role as a secondary school leader during the implementation process versus the previous accountability and financial reform? • How has this implementation been impacted by other stakeholders?
	2. Recall the process of short-term and long-term fiscal planning at your school site. Describe the steps taken and the resources used to create the school fiscal plan in relation to LCFF and LCAP goals?	• What implications, if any, did leadership style have on the implementation of LCFF and LCAP? • How would you describe your leadership style? • Describe a specific example of how your leadership style influenced the implementation process of LCFF and LCAP? • What was the communication like with stakeholders? • Describe a specific experience working with stakeholder to develop the school fiscal plan.
	3. When you think back to your experience of managing your site budget under LCFF and LCAP, what would you identify as the most significant barriers or challenges faced during implementation?	• What, if any, conflicts arose during the implementation process? • Describe how you went about managing a particular barrier or challenge? • In what ways, if any, did stakeholders help manage any particular barriers?
	4. What feelings were generated by the experience of implementing LCFF and LCAP?	• Describe a particular experience working with parents. • In what way, if any did stakeholders advocate for supports and services for students? • In what ways, if any, did these experiences influence your interpretation of the reforms?
	5. How did student need if at all help influenced the implementation?	• In what ways, if any, has student need guided your experience with school finance and accountability? • How would you portray your current relationship with parents with school finance and accountability to impact student need?

APPENDIX F

Demographics Survey

Demographics Survey

Please complete the following questions to provide the researcher with demographic information about you and your current school site. The demographic information will serve the researcher in the interview process and data analysis process. Thank you for your participation in the study.

* Required

Last Name: ______________________________

First Name: ______________________________

1. What is your current job title during the 2016-2017 school year? *
2. What types of degrees have you earned? *
3. What credential(s) do you possess? *
4. What is the number of years of experience overall in the field of education? *
5. What is the number of years of experience in a leadership role? *
6. What is the number of years of leadership experience at the current school site? *

School Demographics

7. What is student enrollment numbers at the school site? *
8. What is the number of classified staffing at the school site? *
9. What is the number of certified staffing at the school site? *
10. What is the numbers of years employed at this school site? *

APPENDIX G

IRB Approval Letter

PEPPERDINE

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: September 06, 2016

Protocol Investigator Name: Mayra Vega

Protocol #: 16-07-345

Project Title: School Finance and Accountability: The Phenomenology of Secondary School Leaders

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Mayra Vega:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives

APPENDIX H

Request to Use Figure to Adapt Material by T. Timar

Email request sent October, 14 2017 via email:

Dear Professor Timar:

I am Mayra Vega-Manriquez, a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University. I am in the process of preparing my dissertation for publication and I am seeking permission to include the following material in my publication:

Publication: Categorical School Finance: Who Gains, Who Loses?
Retrieved from the PACE Working Paper Series 04-2
(http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED491699.pdf)

Copyright year: 2004

Material needed: adapt, p. 6, Figure 1 Changes in the Share of Restricted to Unrestricted Funding 1980-2000.

The work will be used in the following manner: To provide the reader with an overview of California School Finance system and an understanding of the old structure of school financing in California prior to the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP). The figure will be used to illustrate to the reader the changes in the share of restricted to unrestricted funding between 1980-1920 in my literature review.

The publication information is as follows: School Finance and Accountability: The Phenomenology of Secondary School Leaders, dissertation, Pepperdine University, expected date of publication November 2017.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Mayra Vega-Manriquez

Doctoral Student
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Pepperdine University

Permission approval:

Thomas B Timar
to me

Dear Mayra Vega-Manriquez,

Please feel free to use the material.

Best wishes on the completion of your dissertation.

Tom Timar

APPENDIX I

Request to Use Figure to Adapt Material by Legislative Analyst's Office

Email request sent October, 14 2017 via email:

Dear Mac Taylor:

I am Mayra Vega-Manriquez, a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University. I am in the process of preparing my dissertation for publication and I am seeking permission to include the following material in my publication:

Publication: Updated: An Overview of the Local Control Funding Formula. Retrieved from (http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2013/edu/lcff/lcff-072913.pdf)

Copyright year: 2013

Material needed: adapt, p. 11, Figure 7 Eight Areas of State Priorities Must Be Addressed in LCAPs

The work will be used in the following manner: To provide the reader with an overview of California School Finance system and an understanding of the new structure of school financing in California. This figure will be used to introduce the reader to the accountability component of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), the Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP). The figure will be used to illustrate the state priorities in my literature review.

The publication information is as follows: School Finance and Accountability: The Phenomenology of Secondary School Leaders, dissertation, Pepperdine University, expected date of publication November 2017.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Mayra Vega-Manriquez

Doctoral Student
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Pepperdine University

Permission approval:

Hi Mayra,

Please feel free to adapt the figure for your dissertation. We only ask that we are cited as the source of the material following standard academic practices.

Best,
Sarah

Sarah Kleinberg
Administrative Officer