Leading with Race: An exploration of Leadership Academy's alignment with racial equity leadership design

Danica M. Moore

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Peabody College of Education and Human Development
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN

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Dedication

"The sky ain't the limit; to me it's a limitation in a planetary on my navigation; you can follow me to every destination…" ~Lecrae

First and foremost, I give honor to my Creator, who graced me with the capacity and purpose to move forward. I am grateful for the continued showering of grace and mercy when I deserved none of it; mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical strength when I couldn't stand on my own; and the prayer warriors who lifted me up on my right and my left as we finished this race.

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Executive Summary

Lawrence Leadership Academy (LLA) is housed in a PreK-12 public school district located in the Eastern edge of Kansas and has committed to racial equity goals related to policy, curriculum, learning, and leadership. Through a longstanding relationship with a consulting partner (almost 15 years), the district adopted an equity protocol for discussing race in data, classroom practices, and policy, all in order to promote an increased focus on the impacts and experiences of the students, families and staff engaging with school policy, classroom curriculum, and school leadership. Simultaneously, in an effort to focus on leadership development, the district created a Leadership Academy that launched in 2016 with the intention of providing adaptive leadership skills to staff who aspire to be building and district leaders in administration in their local school district (Appendix A). After some conversations with school equity team members, who were enrolled in the Leadership Academy, about challenges related to school leadership and racial equity, I became interested in the relationship between the district's strategic goals around racial equity and the Leadership Academy.

In initial conversations with past participants who also serve on school equity teams, participants shared their observations and reflections of the content sections meant to emphasize racial equity leadership with me. These conversations sparked my inquiry, as an equity facilitator concerning the question, "How does the Leadership Academy intentionally embed racial equity teaching and leadership into the learning content for aspiring building and district school leaders?" I fulfill the role as Equity Facilitator in this district but previously had no relationship with the Leadership Academy. I do not oversee any of its operations or budget, nor do I collaborate to plan or facilitate any of the learning sessions included in the Leadership Academy.

Problem

Like several surrounding districts in the area, Lawrence Public Schools created a "grow your own" (Versland, 2013) development program for leaders from within their organization, with the hopes of seeing potential leaders move into higher levels of leadership within the district. In early informational interviews with district staff and past Academy participants, I learned that many perceived a disconnect between the district goals and strategic plan centering racial equity and the content of the Lawrence Leadership Academy intended to develop future leaders. The purpose of this study is to investigate the design of the Leadership Academy within Lawrence Public Schools, with an eye toward leadership for racial equity, in order to inform recommendations that can support future Leadership Academy design efforts.

There are limited investigations of school leadership programs that emphasize racial equity, diversity, or social justice matters regarding what an entire racial equity leadership development program should entail (McKenzie, 2008, p. 112). What work has been done

suggests that "a coherent preparation program that infuses equity, diversity, and social justice within all (rather than one or two) course offerings and internship experiences" is more impactful (Kose, 2007, p. 656) for the development of school leaders than one-shot courses or experiences. Bell and Taylor (2015) discuss what it means to have *relevant curriculum* included in the design of leadership academies, which should consider the strategic plan, board goals and current initiatives (p. 1109). Recurring themes from past studies and literature on commonly noted design elements of school leadership development programs include: ongoing professional development, learning led by experts in specific contents, opportunities for understanding one's own identity and applying theories to practice (Bell & Taylor 2015; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017; Dowd & Liera, 2018; Kose, 2007 and 2009; McKenzie, 2008). Yet few studies offer specific direction regarding the *content* (curriculum) of principal preparation programs related to racial equity (McKenzie, 2008)

The questions guiding this investigation are as follows:
1. In what ways do the design elements of the Lawrence Leadership Academy (LLA) address racial equity leadership?
2. What design elements of participants' prior coursework in administrative and leadership-based degree programs addressed racial equity leadership?
3. How do design elements for racial equity leadership in LLA (as found in RQ 1) align or differ from participants' coursework in administrative and leadership-based degree programs?
4. What opportunities does the Lawrence Leadership Academy provide for participants to engage in particular practices of racial equity leadership?

Data collection

To complete the study of these research questions, I drew on a range of data but focused on the experiences of past Lawrence Leadership Academy participants. I created a survey by aligning the Senge & Guskey professional development perspectives to the racial equity goals and strategic plan of the school district that required respondents to identify elements of racial equity leadership in the academy's design (Singleton, 2015). Thirty-one of the forty-seven available program participants responded to the invitation to complete the survey. I conducted voluntary follow-up interviews targeting each subgroup of participants. Within each grouping, I sought a balanced representation across race, gender, and organizational roles.

Key Findings

The Leadership Academy design elements focused on racial equity leadership are minimal.

The vision of the Leadership Academy's goals connected to racial equity was "not present" to 41.9% of the survey respondents, while only 19.4% of respondents marked the vision and goals alignment to their perception of what they expected the academy to be as "not present". This finding signifies the majority of the participants found the academy to meet their expectations even though 41.9% responded the LLA goals and vision connected to racial equity was "not present" for the duration of the program. If participants had expected the academy to include racial equity leadership vision and goals, the percentage of participants responding to the Academy meeting their expectations as "not present" or "rarely" would display a higher response rate.

32.3% of survey respondents did not recall any explicit teaching tools presented to analyze systems thinking and racial impacts, while 35.5% of respondents firmly perceived it was "not present" in the content. When asked "What design elements of the Academy's structure did you find to be supportive to your racial equity leadership growth?" all interview participants could not identify any specific design element that considered racial equity leadership aligned with the district's expectations for school staff.

Participants' administrative licensure and degree programs did not include components relevant to racial equity leadership. Interviewees did not describe intersections of race in the content or the activities for the topics of discussion in their former coursework specific to administrative leadership. Those who had content discussing race, not specifically racial leadership, referred to other degree programs such as Curriculum & Instruction.

Leadership Academy design elements and study participants' coursework were similar in that both did not include topics relevant to racial equity leadership. Participants spoke to the Leadership Academy supplementing the content of their administrative degrees programs and licensure certification programs in the areas of finance and human resources. The Leadership Academy's perceived missing focus on racial equity mirrored many of the participants' courses for their administrative licenses in the sense that the interviewees described.

Leadership Academy academy participants did not identify consistent opportunities to engage in particular practices of racial equity leadership. When asked to reflect on opportunities to explore their own identities, inclusive of race, in the learning content, the responses included: 3.2% "always present"; 16.1% responded these opportunities were "often present"; 29% "rarely present"; 35.5% "not present"; and 16.1% "did not recall".
Other particular practices respondents recounted included opportunities to collaborate with other district resources for racial equity leadership development. 12.9% identified this practice as "always present"; 6.5% as "often present"; 25.8% as "rarely present"; 35.5% as "not present"; and 19.4% "did not recall".

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Two limitations exist in the study for participants. First, those participants who were in the most recent cohort (spring 2020) experienced a shortened number of academy sessions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, therefore, may have not encountered the entire curriculum. The second limitation is the time lapse between the first cohort's completion (2016) and the start of the data collection (2020), a factor that may have impacted participant's recollection of the academy experience.

Recommendations

Lawrence Public Schools has a great opportunity to use the Leadership Academy to deepen its commitment to racial equity in its policies, curriculum, and instructional practices.. The administration tasked with designing and implementing the Leadership Academy can consider the following to develop strong candidates for leadership positions in their schools:

1. **Revise the curriculum for the Leadership Academy to intersect racial equity discussions into each of the identified themes for learning (e.g., hiring, budget).** The curriculum should include explicit teaching of the adopted equity protocol existing currently in the school district. In addition to the teaching and application of racial equity protocol, the Leadership Academy would benefit from investing additional time in covering racial equity structures and supports that leaders within the district must be prepared to guide such as equity teams (E-teams) or family of color affinity groups.

2. **Identify additional leaders within the school district to support Leadership Academy participants in the use of the tools available in the district- approved racial equity protocols.** These leaders can be invited to collaborate in the planning of the learning content and also be included in the teaching of the content. Participants mentioned roles and departments they would have wanted involved in their learning sessions, such as the district equity facilitator and the Native American Student Services program, to understand more in racial equity leadership collaboration.

3. **Present participants with ongoing support and mentorship centering racial equity leadership development in addition to opportunities to apply learning and demonstrate mastery of racial equity protocols, specifically those promoted to building leadership roles.** One option that can benefit is creating a "New Principals Cohort" to meet consistently throughout the school year once a leader is promoted to principalship from the Leadership Academy. This mentorship and support program can include additional leaders who support the learning of existing racial equity protocols as mentioned in the previous recommendation.

Introduction

The demands of today's schools require principals to support recruiting and retaining teachers, facilitating staff professional development, improving student learning, in addition to applying knowledge and skills in social justice and racial equity leadership (Darling-Hammond et. al. 2007, p. 1-2). Although outlines of high quality school leadership development are available in the literature (Bell & Taylor 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dowd & Liera, 2018; Kose, 2007 and 2009; McKenzie, et al., 2008), how organizations can design learning to develop school leaders for social justice and racial equity leadership is understudied and no silver bullets are available. The idea of racial equity leadership means "[requiring] continual re-examination and reshaping to contribute in positive ways toward creating society in which opportunities and benefits are equally shared [...] [changing] our leadership development and thinking approaches in order to become part of the solution to racial inequalities" (Keleher et al., 2010, p. 3) as represented in the work of the Leadership for a New Era Series report written in collaboration with the Leadership Learning Community and a host of other partner organizations committed to racial justice in leadership fields. Current studies have reached conclusions and implications regarding recurring skill sets and knowledge that highly qualified school leaders for racial equity possess, as well as what experiences impacted their ability to learn and apply racial equity leadership tools (Bell & Taylor 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dowd & Liera, 2018; Kose, 2007 and 2009; McKenzie, 2008).

Lawrence Leadership Academy (LLA) is housed within a public PreK-12 school district located in the Eastern portion of the Midwest region. This school district is one of a few districts in the state with a racial equity focus guiding improvement goals and their strategic plan. In 2016 district administration created an internal Leadership Academy to provide opportunities for practical training within a framework of effective leadership development, as described on the district's internal webpage. The webpage goes on to empirically link school leadership and student achievement.

Problem statement: Like several surrounding districts in the area, LLA intends to develop leaders from within their organization, with the hopes of seeing them move into higher levels of leadership within their district. These programs are often referred to as "grow your own" leadership academies. At present, however, Leadership Academy participants, who are members of school Equity teams, are questioning, what they perceive as, a disconnect between the district goals and strategic plan focus centering racial equity and the content of the Leadership Academy intended to develop future leaders within the school district. These team leaders approached me after a district-wide equity development workshop and asked if I planned to facilitate any sessions in the Leadership Academy teaching skills for racial equity leadership. Their rationale for asking was due to the previous evening's learning session skipping over what they believed

to be a critical conversation about race, which they understood the school district was asking its staff to engage. For this reason, this project seeks to investigate how this "grow your own" leadership program intersects components of racial equity leadership development into the program to develop future school leaders who will optimize their current goals in racial equity, both in staff and student performance. Applicants accepted into the Leadership Academy are not required to provide evidence of racial equity leadership experience to gain entrance into the academy, nor do all applicants have experience on racial equity leadership teams in the school sites. Therefore, it is possible to enter the academy with limited racial equity awareness and graduate without developing the capacities to support the actual role LPS desires of their school leaders. Essentially, a graduate in this predicament *could* be promoted internally to an advanced district or school leadership role with limited effectiveness in racial equity leadership needed to support the goals of racial equity to which the school district has committed. Some might suggest that hiring and interview practices can identify those candidates who already engage in racial equity leadership practices, a path that is certainly promising and should be seen as a supplemental effort and not an alternative to development of existing staff. If the purpose of the Academy is to supplement prospective leaders in the key aims of the district, racial equity leadership can certainly figure centrally into the program design.

As racial equity leadership has become a focus for many school districts across the United States, researchers have recognized a lack of capacity and support. As noted by the Oregon Leadership Network (OLN) "educators [often] have no training or background in conducting honest conversations that are essential to making real progress" (Larson, 2013, p. 20) in areas such as racial equity and social justice. Observations like that of OLN are not uncommon for district leaders and program designers who speak out on race and equity (Kose, 2007, p. 276). An investigation into how the Lawrence Leadership Academy's program design implements elements of racial equity leadership has potential to inform not only the organization of what's going well, what's challenging, and what changes are needed, but also inform institutions and organizations across the region and country who desire to "grow their own" leaders with racial equity leadership development.

The purpose of this capstone study is to investigate the design of the Lawrence Leadership Academy (LLA) within Lawrence Public Schools, with an eye toward racial equity leadership. In what follows, I investigate the strengths of the program and the conflicts with the program design in tandem with the district's racial equity focus using data collected from through surveys and interviews with graduates of the academy's four cohorts. The analysis of strengths and areas of improvement focused on racial equity leadership for the Leadership Academy will utilize two overlapping frameworks. The Senge & Guskey professional development perspectives will serve as the guide for *how* the teaching and learning needs to occur, while the core competencies of racial justice leadership will as *what* the teaching content

is to include.This investigation surveyed past graduates of the LLA to determine the depth of impact on racial equity leadership development.

Organizational Context

The Lawrence Leadership Academy was created by and under a PreK-12 school district in a distant suburban area located on the Eastern edge of the state of Kansas. The school district has approximately 13,000 students and almost 2,000 staff making up the administrative, classroom, and classroom support roles. In 2009, the Lawrence school district committed to racial equity work, writing board goals and action plans to eliminate racial disparities in testing and graduation data. Since its inception in 2009 under the guidance of consultants with the Pacific Educational Group, Inc., the equity efforts noted above have expanded to include adopting processes and policies for the review and adoption of culturally relevant and sustainable curriculum, creating school equity teams, and creating district wide equity support positions.

The district uses the Courageous Conversation About Race protocol to center racial equity in their processes for creating and implementing policy, curriculum, teaching resources, and more. Singleton (2015) cites *passion* as an essential characteristic of racial equity leadership (p. 19); this *passion* is demonstrated through "specifically tightly holding on to a deep-seated, unyielding belief in the educability of [children]...is what drives racial equity classroom leaders towards success" (p. 19). Singleton founded his racial equity consulting firm and protocol on the need for school leaders to decide where they stand in relation to equity, find their passion as a prerequisite for succeeding in schools, and heighten engagement in the observation, dialogue, and implementation of anti-racist systems (p. 20). The leadership of schools in racial equity does not depend on educators of color; instead it relies on "culturally proficient, racially conscious, courageous educators of all races" (p. 20). LLA provides a venue where school leadership can emphasize the development of racially conscious school leaders.

The Courageous Conversation protocol utilized within the Pacific Educational Group, Inc. framework is an attempt to engage dialogue regarding race, sustain the conversation when it becomes challenging, and deepen the discussions to the point meaningful actions can occur (Singleton, 2015, p. 26). This protocol and framework is what the school district adopted for their classroom teachers, support staff, and all administrators to guide their progression towards board goals addressing racial inequities.

The importance of this study to Lawrence schools is based on their fourth strategic plan theme of "Effective Employees", which states Lawrence Public Schools seeks to "attract high-quality candidates for all employee groups"(Appendix B). Considering the Leadership Academy is intended for those already employed and completing administrative licensure, it is

important to center attention on how to continue to *develop* high-quality candidates for the specific roles of school leadership in the Lawrence school district. In an effort to provide leadership development and bring together current employees with interest in school leadership (principalship), the Deputy Superintendent and Director of Human Resources drafted the original plan for Leadership Academy. The Director of Human resources stated "It's just a time for us to get together and hear, and kind of, get to know the folks in our district that want to be future leaders." The Deputy Superintendent clarified the initiative to launch the academy stemmed from "data that came from a variety of surveys, exit interviews, and direct feedback from staff wanting a path to administration and/or teacher leader opportunities". One study participant believes the Leadership Academy formed in response to a concern he voiced to the superintendent regarding the high number of external candidates recently hired for building leadership roles in the district. The leadership academy began in 2016, with the goal of providing adaptive leadership workshops to district employees who have completed a K-12 administrative degree, licensure certification, or are currently enrolled in a program. Past participants have served as classroom teachers, teachers on special assignment (TOSA), and instructional coaches while completing the academy. During the academy's first year, the TOSA team was required to participate regardless of administrative coursework enrollment or completion. According to the organization's Director of Human Resources, while a few of the inductees into the Leadership Academy aspire to serve in district administrative (director) roles, majority of the participants aspire to be building principals. Originally, the academy met monthly in the evening for content learning with participants covering principals in their buildings for intern hours in the years following their completion of the program. The initial academy admitted 24 participants. Current enrollment has now decreased in size to 10 participants in the most recent cohort. The program has transitioned to meeting only 5 times a year with intern hours still occurring during the day when principals are away from their buildings. After four years of operating, the Lawrence Public Schools Leadership academy has now promoted six candidates internally as building administrators. Three of these promotions were announced at the start of the 2020-21 school year. Since completing the academy, seven have been promoted to administrative roles externally. Of the 7 external promotions, all were participants from the first cohort (2016). Currently, only one graduate (out of all cohorts) of the LLA serves as head principal of a school in the district; all other internal promotions serve as assistant principals.

The primary focus of the Leadership Academy is "to develop key principal leadership skills that emphasize effective instruction and fosters academic and personal student growth" (Appendix A). In addition to the previously mentioned skills, building leaders are responsible for leading the schools' equity teams as well as guiding the use of racial equity protocols to support the selection of culturally sustaining curriculum resources, processes and policy implementations, and relationships between school staff, students, and families. Leadership at both building and district levels are held accountable for supporting racial equity as it aligns with

their department goals and the overall district mission and vision statement. The overall impact of strong racial equity leadership in schools is intended for students' high achievement and performance. Other stakeholders in the outcomes of the Leadership Academy include the teaching staff, who are supported by the leaders enrolled in the academy; current building principals and district administrators, who provide mentorship and collaborate with academy graduates; the Human Resources directors who recruit and screen applicants for leadership vacancies in district,; and the Board of Education who oversees the progress of the strategic plan goals involving the hiring of high quality candidates to all employee groups.

This investigation has the ability to inform how to design the Leadership Academy's instructional components to embed a racial equity leadership framework. An investigation of this type requires that I look not only at the district but also at the broader literature on principal and school leadership preparation and specifically on literature related to preparation of K-12 educators for racial equity.

Problem of Practice/Area of Inquiry

In an effort to inform the improvement of the program, this project aims to better understand how the Lawrence Leadership Academy embeds racial equity learning with the current leadership learning content. Past graduates of the Leadership Academy participated in an Equity Team Development workshop at district level which I facilitated. After the workshop concluded, casual conversation between a few teacher leaders and myself revealed frustration following one of the Leadership Academy sessions the night before. One of the district's long-standing equity team members shared an observation with me regarding other graduates of the LLA from her building who had more opportunities for principal interviews both in and out of the district. As the conversation continued, this teacher noted a difference in the letter of recommendation both candidates received written by their building principal, which highlighted their involvement in the Leadership Academy. The Equity team member's letter did not mention any of her experiences leading racial equity work in the building and on district leadership teams. However, the second candidate's letter mentioned leadership on the Building Leadership team and several other committees without highlighting racial equity leadership. The equity team member asked the question, "How is racial equity leadership considered in the Leadership Academy for internal promotions?"

This district employee grappled with trying to understand how important racial equity could be to district leaders if the leadership academy had less focus on racial equity leadership and protocols than the Equity team workshops, which happen less frequently than the LLA sessions, but have longer hours per session. I inquired about how racial equity is discussed and taught in the LLA to understand the comparison being made to the Equity team development

workshop content. The participant recalled only one session where an article was sent out to read in advance. Participants came for the evening session after reading the article which briefly mentioned racial equity. This specific session was led by a guest facilitator who is also a district administrator. The discussion of the article was structured as a lecture, in which the facilitator shared key points that resonated with him without centering on the racial equity context. Once the article was summarized in this way, the discussion moved on to other learning for the evening.

My interest in the planning, structure, learning content, and collaboration involved in the Leadership Academy heightened following this conversation. I began to notice more conversations where other participants would discuss their experiences in the academy. With my role as a district wide equity facilitator, I engage with mid-level teams such as the learning coach team. This team has several LLA participants, past graduates, and, both, internal and external administrative promotions. In waiting for meetings to start, I would overhear conversations regarding their experiences with the Leadership Academy. These conversations typically occurred following a district announcement of a new external hire for an administrative vacancy. Some noted a "disappointment" in the inequities of the people involved and the discussions remaining at surface level to challenge learning and leadership with regards to race, while others shared the contentment with the content and structure of the sessions.

The school district has worked to intentionally embed racial equity into its strategic plan and all of the initiatives implemented. Some layers the organization has added to address racial equity in the aesthetics of the Leadership Academy include accepting a racially diverse pool of candidates into the academy, as well as including principals or color (Black) as guest panelists to lead learning with the participants.

The application process for the Leadership Academy has several prerequisites. In order to be eligible to apply, candidates must have at least 3 years of teaching experience and have completed or be enrolled in their administrative licensure program. While the current school principal must write a letter of support for their school staff to participate in the academy, the letter and process does not require applicants or the school administrator to provide evidence of racial equity leadership experience. Therefore, it is possible to enter the academy with limited racial equity awareness. My curiosity seeks to understand how the Leadership Academy works to develop awareness, skills, or tools to support the actual role Lawrence school district desires of their school leaders in racial equity leadership. Essentially, school staff, who have been committed to the racial equity work in schools since its inception, have concerns that a graduate in this predicament *could* be promoted internally to an advanced district or school leadership role with limited effectiveness or knowledge in racial equity leadership needed to support the goals to which the school district has committed.

In looking at the district's organizational chart (Appendix C) and comparing to those administrators teaching the session content, principals currently serving are utilized as resources to present their experiences as learning content to LA participants. There are support roles within the district leadership who are excluded from the Academy's planning and implementation. At the time of this investigation's design, the perception was the academy goals were not aligned to the district's goal of racial equity leadership. However, inquiries regarding what design elements are necessary for racial equity focus in leadership preparation programs can assist in the identification of what supports are possible to improve the Leadership Academy alignment to their district goals in racial equity.

To inform my inquiry, I examined broader literature on principal and school leadership preparation and specifically literature related to preparation of K-12 educators for racial equity leadership.

Literature Review

In what follows I review available literature that explores high quality principal preparation design and more specifically, principal preparation design focused on racial equity leadership.

Although leadership on principal preparation and development is at times inconsistent in its findings and recommendations, it is clear that the preparation of school leaders and opportunities for ongoing development " "has a lot to do with whether school leaders can meet the increasingly tough expectations of these jobs"((Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, President's Letter). This assertion is backed up by an increasingly substantive body of literature on the evolution of the role of public school principals over the last 25 years. The Wallace Foundation's report on "Preparing School Leaders" (2007) states "the 'effective schools' research of the 1980s, which identified the importance of principals who function as strong instructional leaders in improving academic achievement" has now extended into "several lines of research [which] have identified the critical role of principals in recruiting, developing, and retaining teachers; creating a learning culture within the school; and supporting improvements in student learning" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p.1).

Concurrent research on principal development suggests that a range of challenges await anyone attempting to prepare people for this complex role of school leader (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). While some of this attention has focused on university preparation programs, many school districts and third-party institutions have implemented leadership academies aimed at the development of classroom teachers into building administrators (Johnson & James, 2018; Parylo, 2015, p. 961). Running an effective classroom, of course, is a fundamentally different set of practices than running an effective school and particular challenges of preparing school

administrators have been documented across a range of focal areas (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 6). Leading organizations such as the Wallace Foundation have sought to support this work with the funding of such efforts as a Principal Pipeline Initiative (PPI) citing "Districts looking for ways to enhance school outcomes and improve the retention of newly placed principals should be encouraged by the experiences of the [pipeline]" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 30) . These efforts are well underway in many districts across the United States and Wallace claims that the"findings suggest that when districts focused attention on activities related to principal pipelines, principals, schools and students benefited" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 96)

Much of the research we know about principal development focuses on the key role principals play in leading professional development with their staff. What we know from past studies is there is a consistent lack of opportunities for prospective leaders to learn to lead for racial equity in schools (Larson, 2013, p. 20; Darling-Hammond, et. al. 2007, p.4). Kose (2009), in agreement with McKenzie (2008), confirms "a coherent preparation program that infuses equity, diversity, and social justice within all (rather than one or two) course offerings and internship experiences seems warranted" (McKenzie & Bell, p. 656). Education has seen this pattern before, where the role of principal has changed with little to no guidance or preparation to step into new duties (Darling-Hammond et. al., 2007, p. 1-2). Originally, administrators were seen as "school managers," before shifting to instructional leaders. Now, principals are tasked to be leaders in equity and facilitators of such learning for adults in their building despite little support or preparation outside of their own experiences.

The biggest challenge facing school administrators is "creating affirming, equitable, high-achieving schools that prepare all students to be multicultural, justice-oriented citizens (Kose, 2007, p. 276), an ambitious vision that requires capacities across a range of domains and experiences. Anyone wishing to develop effective principals for today's schools must ask, are principals learning these same challenges mentioned by Kose (2007) to teach their staff, let alone impact students in productive ways? Some programs and even some states have sought to make this work a priority.

School districts such as Beaverton, OR pointed out a shift in the racial demographics of the students compared to the stagnant, if not decreasing, rates of racial diversity in the staff member demographics (Larson, 2013, p. 19). Nearly one-third of Oregon's student population is served by sixteen major districts; these districts banded together to form the Oregon Leadership Network (OLN), "the nation's only comprehensive education leadership development network with equity at its core" (Larson, 2013, p. 19). In 2013, the OLN advocated for revisions in state policy for "administrator licensure programs and standards that now require evidence of demonstrating equitable practices" (Larson, 2013, p. 20). While McKenzie (2008) recommends the selection of those accepted into preparation programs "already have a propensity, at a minimum, to critically question the inequities found in schools," (p. 118), leaders within the OLN noted "educators [often] have no training or background in conducting honest

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conversations that are essential to making real progress" (Larson, 2013, p. 20) in areas such as racial equity and social justice. Herein lies the importance of McKenzie's claim naming the consequence of "not selecting [participants] who already lean toward a social justice orientation" as meaning "considerable territory must be covered in the common 2 short years of the [typical] principalship program. Without these participant strengths, a program would have to devote significant time to raising consciousness of participants about social justice, a demand that would be difficult to satisfy within the relatively brief duration of a leadership preparation program" (McKenzie, 2008, p. 118). As McKenzie's (2008) findings are relevant to leadership preparation programs connected to colleges and universities, we can see similar difficulty in raising consciousness about racial equity leadership in programs housed within school districts for leaders to elevate into administrative roles (Grissom, Egalite, Lindsay, 2021).

Considering the overall brevity in leadership preparation programs, what components and content are priorities for principal leadership academies to highlight and explore in order to produce leaders who are highly qualified and prepared for racial equity leadership? In their study of eight in- and pre-service programs, the Wallace Foundation criticized "too many districts [failing] to link professional development to instructional reforms, and [continuing] to waste resources on one-shot workshops, rather than designing ongoing support that would help align school activities with best practices and support principal problem solving" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 7). Oksana Parylo's (2015) case study of two Georgia school districts placed efforts in linking the connection of principal succession to professional development. Key outcomes of this study revealed that the district prioritizing proactive learning with informal structures, centered on the current happenings in their schools and society, had higher outcomes of principal succession. The learning of the remote district emphasized the control of planning professional development for principals, which limited *who* was seen as a valuable partner and expert of specific content for leadership development. Parylo (2015) noted the value of partnering with local experts outside of university preparation programs allowed professional development sessions to truly meet the needs of the current-day school systems, through "[providing] immediate application of the performance requirements expected…[which] are critical in the socialization of principals to their roles as the building-level leaders" (Parylo, p. 961). However, the downside of this selection of learning facilitators is "certain theories and topical areas that are often examined in-depth by university-based leadership preparation programs, such as social justice and culturally responsive leadership practices, might be left off the curriculum" (p. 961).

Bell and Taylor (2015) cited "[existence] a minimum of two years" as a contextual influence of internal urban school leadership academies in the twelve academies they studied (p.1195). Longevity of leadership academies is in direct alignment with the SGP's of "provide follow up, support, and pressure" (p. 1105). Due to the lack of state requirements for principal academy design, the longevity of programs differs by the location. Across the world, the duration of principal training differs tremendously ranging from no training for equity leadership at all to

years of training. Other countries with more federal education systems may offer a model for U.S. states. For example, The Swedish model for principal training mandates a 3-year enrollment in the National Principal Training Program for all newly-hired principals. Findings of the study argue "It is not enough to only read and discuss policy, theory and research; they need to be applied and tested [...] put into action" (Arlestig, H., p. 320). While the learning with the National Principal Training Program had no content including racial equity or social justice, the instruction was provided 100% through university teaching staff. Considering the difference of outcomes in these studies (Parylo, 2015; Arlestig, 2012) it is worthwhile for future leadership preparation case studies to investigate how those involved in the professional development facilitation impact the effects of the learning and application within principals' practice, specifically in regards to racial equity leadership development.

So what critical elements for principal development for social justice and racial equity are recommended for preparation programs? Kose (2007) studied three principals who matched the highest abilities to navigate social justice and equity leadership. These school leaders were identified as "high ability" through a two-step process. First, principals were selected based on their teaching for diversity practices centering on "reform -based subject matter excellence and [...] various forms of personal development" (p. 281). The second step involved a pre-screening interview to assess principals' understanding and application of socially just student learning and teaching criteria. Those scoring a 2 or 3 in each category were ranked from highest to lowest total, with the top three being chosen to move forward in the study. An uncovered characteristic all three subjects possessed, in order to provide effective professional development to their staff, was social identity development. "Three areas of professional development provided the foundation for social identity development: personal diversity awareness (i.e., awareness of one's own identity), affirming the diversity of various student backgrounds, and building cultural capital for traditionally marginalized students (e.g., by understanding the rules of the "dominant" culture)" (p. 285). Building leaders taught these areas both isolated and integrated with subject matter content. Social identity development is "largely overlooked in principal leadership for professional development", yet contributes significantly to "fostering teacher development for equitable student academic learning opportunities and outcomes" (Kose, 2007, p. 303). Kose would argue university programs that do not center on teaching these foundations for leadership development are unlikely to produce school leaders who are suited for leading professional development for social justice and racial equity to school staff. Therefore, social identity development within its three strands is a critical component to leadership preparation programs.

A comparison across six urban leadership academies (Bell & Taylor, 2015), cite *relevant curriculum* as a critical component of leadership academies. *Relevant curriculum* is defined as "curriculum which seeks to meet the needs of each district as well as the needs of those participating in the program" (p. 1109). If school districts based their design of principal preparation academies on their strategic plans, board goals, or current initiatives, racial equity would surface as a theme of relevant curriculum for principal preparation. Other considerations

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for leadership academies from this cross-comparison study include: mentor principals provided; expert teaching staff; varied learning experiences; and flexible content aligning with both the district and participants' needs.

All recent research surrounding in-district leadership preparation programs, share themes of program evaluation and tools to provide feedback in the effectiveness of the program. Bell and Taylor (2015) cited seven contextual influences as critical to the evaluation of leadership academy design characteristics (p. 1095). These contextual influences noted for urban academies include:

- Managed primarily by a school district;
- Serviced public schools some low-performing or failing
- Located in an urban area;
- Maintained a partnership with another educational entities such as an other school district(s);
- Used professional development and leadership knowledge base;
- Existed a minimum of two years;
- Opened to educators at K-12 schools
  (Bell and Taylor, 2015, p. 1095)

However, none of the programs studied have direct connections or integrated learning centering racial equity leadership, educational equity, diversity, or inclusion. Researchers noticed that when their seven contextual influences were present in urban leadership academies, those same academies "had strong relationships to SGP concepts" (p. 1095).

The Leadership Learning Community (LLC) "identifies a set of core competencies associated with racial justice leadership" (Keleher et al., 2010. p. 2). In order to "provide those engaged in leadership of organizations, networks, [...] with access to tools and resources that support them in making racial justice a conscious part of planning and decision-making in their leadership work," The Leadership Learning Community designed five core competencies for racial justice leadership to embed into ongoing practices of organizations (Keleher et al., 2010, p. 6). These five competencies are:

1. **Meaning making and connecting** -- Deep knowledge of self and others

2. **Systems Thinking**-- Deepen understanding of how structural racism is perpetuated; Assess racial impacts of key plans and proposals before decision-making

3. **Organizing** -- Conscious attention to racial justice in a variety of contexts

4. **Learning and Reflection** -- Reflection on one's experience; collective accountability for progress; Use data to diagnose

5. **Bridging** -- Strategic alignment around problem analysis and vision

While these five competencies have not been studied in action, the LLC firmly believes "having a systemic perspective and a focus on leadership as a process, leads us to ask [...] how to embed racial justice competencies in the ongoing practice and culture of organizations, networks, and communities" (p. 6). Kose (2007, 2009) studied the efforts of principals leading professional development for social justice and what characteristics and traits principals need to be most effective as *teachers* of this work, without exploration of the training to prepare these principals for social justice/equity work. Some teacher preparation programs (undergraduate) emphasize the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy, with lessons of inclusion and diversity (McKenzie et al., 2008, p. 113). What learning builds on this foundational knowledge and supports to promote teachers into principal roles to lead for social justice and equity? This unanswered question drives the purpose of this study to analyze critical components of racial equity leadership development through observing principal preparation academies designed by school districts.

Conceptual Framework

What is racial Equity?

The Aspen Institute (2013) defines *racial equity* as the point "when people in society have equal chances to reach their full potential andare no more likely to encounter life's burdens of benefits just because of the color of their skin" (p.1). It is a social outcome "in which race is not consistently associated with privilege and disadvantage" (p. 8). The overall goal of racial equity is to eliminate race as a determinant of merit or distribution of access and opportunity.

What is racial equity leadership?

The Leadership for a New Era series (2010), defines leadership as a contribution to racial equity by "[requiring] continual re-examination and reshaping to contribute in positive ways toward creating society in which opportunities and benefits are equally shared [...] [changing] our leadership development and thinking approaches in order to become part of the solution to racial inequalities" (p. 3).

I draw on the conception of racial equity leadership in this investigation, in part, because the school district uses Singleton's (2015) notion of educational equity as the guide for its vision of racial equity leadership. According to Singleton (2015) *educational equity* consists of " raising the achievement of all students, while narrowing the gaps between the highest and lowest performing students, and eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories" (p. 55). Singleton cites *passion* as an essential characteristic of racial equity leadership (p. 19); this *passion* is demonstrated through "specifically tightly holding on to a deep-seated, unyielding belief in the educability of [children]...is what drives racial equity classroom leaders towards success" (p. 19). Singleton founded his racial equity consulting firm and protocol on the need for school leaders to decide where they stand in relation to equity, find their passion as a prerequisite for succeeding in schools, and heighten engagement in the observation, dialogue, and implementation of anti-racist systems (p. 20). The leadership of schools in racial equity does not depend on educators of color; instead it relies on "culturally proficient, racially conscious, courageous educators of all races" (p. 20). LLA provides a venue where school leadership can emphasize the development of racially conscious school leaders.

The Courageous Conversation protocol utilized within the Pacific Educational Group, Inc. framework is an attempt to engage dialogue regarding race, sustain the conversation when it becomes challenging, and deepen the discussions to the point meaningful actions can occur (Singleton, G., 2015, p. 26). This protocol and framework is what LPS adopted for their classroom teachers, support staff, and all administrators to guide their progression towards board goals addressing racial inequities.

Bell and Taylor (2015) created a multifaceted conceptual model to examine and analyze how urban districts ranked the quality of aspiring principals graduating from principal preparation programs led by urban school districts. This model combines Senge's (1990) five disciplines of learning organizations and Guskey's (1995) optimal mix model for professional development. Senge's work focuses on five major components: 1) systems thinking, 2)personal mastery, 3) mental models, 4) shared vision aligned to goals, and 5) development of team learning. Guskey's optimal mix model offers an "assorted professional development variables and operations as procedural guidelines" (Bell and Taylor, p. 1094). The mix model includes: 1) recognizing change as both an organizational and individual process, 2) thinking big, but starting small, 3) working in teams to maintain support, 4) including procedures for feedback on results, 5) provide follow-up, support, and pressure, and 6) integrating programs.

These two models complement each other to analyze the function of principal leadership academies, while, simultaneously, providing insight on the design, implementation, and evaluation of professional development. The combination of these two models allows evaluators of academies to consider which elements of professional development design are present in their preparation programs and reflect on the depth of how each is covered during one's time in leadership academies. While the outcomes of using the Senge and Guskey perspectives (SGP) for analyzing principal leadership academies, specifically, are not fully known, this project will utilize and adapt this model to evaluate the academy design and the outcome of academy participant's learning and preparation for leading racial equity.

Table 1. Senge & Guskey Professional Development Perspectives

Senge & Guskey PD Perspectives	
1. Change is an individual and organizational process.	7. Systems thinking
2. Think big, Start small	8. Personal Mastery
3. Teamwork	9. Mental Models
4. Participant feedback	10. Shared Vision
5. Continued follow-up, support and pressure	11. Team Learning
6. Integrate new into old	

Bell and Taylor (2015) identified urban academies for their research through the Wallace Foundation's report ranking school leadership academies based on the evaluations of school leaders who were graduates. In order to adapt this framework, the criteria for evaluation will be framed to highlight the core competencies of racial equity leadership as noted by the Leadership Learning Community (2010) as they align with specific components from the SGP. The SGP model provides the ways in which the core competencies are built into the professional development design. For example, the literature highlights successful principal learning for social justice and racial equity includes self-identity development and awareness. This factor for learning can be included in Senge's component of "personal mastery," using one's self as the content to learn as well as the component recognizing "change as an individual and organization process". Guskey's variable of provided follow-up support can be considered as ongoing professional development. Much of the research studying the development of social justice principal leaders noted the continuation of learning opportunities created more sustainable leadership. With the support of the core competencies for racial equity leadership (Leadership for a New Era, 2010), the SGP model can be utilized to highlight how these core competencies for racial equity leadership show up in the design elements of leadership preparation programs (Table 2).

Table 2. Racial Justice Leadership Competencies Embedded in SGP Perspectives

Racial Justice Leadership Competencies	Senge & Guskey Professional Development Perspectives										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Meaning Making and Connecting	X				X	X		X	X		X
2. Systems Thinking		X		X			X		X	X	
3. Organizing		X	X	X		X			X	X	X
4. Learning and Reflection	X			X	X	X		X	X		X
5. Bridging		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X

To guide the design of this investigation, I overlayed a conception of racial equity leadership on a conception of program design.

Research Questions

The research questions that will guide this investigation are as follows:
1. In what ways do the design elements of the Lawrence Leadership Academy address racial equity leadership?

2. What design elements of participants' prior coursework in administrative and leadership-based degree programs addressed racial equity leadership?
3. How do design elements for racial equity leadership in LLA (as found in RQ 1) align or differ from participants' coursework in administrative and leadership-based degree programs?
4. What opportunities does the Lawrence Leadership Academy provide for participants to engage in particular practices of racial equity leadership?

Project Design

Data collection

The Human Resources office provided names of every participant who has completed the academy. In total, there are 53 graduates of the Leadership Academy. The breakdown of participants by organizational level, race, and gender was detailed by the organization's administrators leading the LLA. The first cohort was reported by level (elementary, middle, high, district), race (white and non-white). The following years the reporting changed to report candidate's level as elementary, secondary, virtual school, or "both" while, simultaneously, omitting the racial demographics. The final cohort prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was not detailed by race, gender, or level. The total number of graduates is 53; Out of all the graduates, thirty-one participated in this improvement study (n=31). Survey respondents also identified their years of experience in education overall and how long ago they completed their administrative licensure or degree (Figures 1-3)
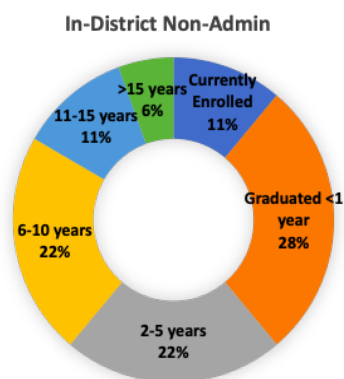
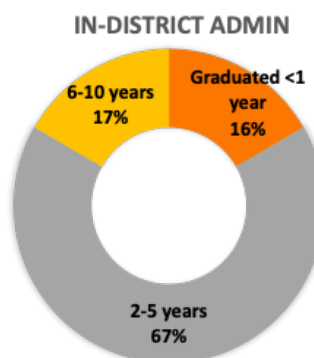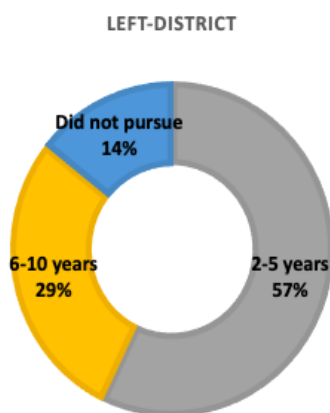Figure 1.   Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Table 3.

Demographics of Study Participants by Gender and Race

	Gender		Race	
	Female	Male	Of Color	White
Surveys	26	5	5	26
Interviews	9	2	4	7

Utilizing their district database, social media, and professional networks, I was able to locate the majority of the academy graduate. One graduate could not be reached due to international endeavors. I was able to find information declaring he was employed in Lima, Peru, however, school name and contact information within the Peruvian school system could not be found. There were 5 other graduates who left the district in the last year who also had no contact information available to invite them. To gather data to answer the questions above, I first created a survey to analyze the perspectives of past participants of the Lawrence Leadership academy. The survey consists of statements aligned with Senge & Guskey's eleven professional development perspectives. The SGP are identified as critical contributions that optimize the impact of professional development for school leadership preparation, which made these 11 perspectives the "how" for embedding the core competencies for racial justice leadership into the Leadership Academy. Each statement of the survey speaks to a direct component of the Senge & Guskey model as aligned with one of the five core competencies. All participants received the initial survey (Appendix D) by email or social media site messenger applications. Participants responded to each statement using a Likert scale rating of zero through four (0-4). A sampling of the survey statements are provided below.

1. The Leadership Academy explicitly teaches tools to analyze systems thinking inclusive of racial impacts.

2. A shared vision of the Leadership Academy goals connected to equity and social justice is presented at the start and revisited throughout.

3. Opportunities to explore my own racial identity, inclusive of race, are embedded in the learning content prior to an organizational focus.

Likert scale ratings are interpreted with the following meanings:

0 = I don't Recall or Remember
1 = Not present
2 = Rarely Present
3 = Often present
4 = Consistently present (always)

I grouped the data into three sub-groups based on the current status of the participant since completing the Leadership Academy. Data groups are classified into three specific categories: 1) in-district administrative roles, 2) in-district non-administrative roles, and 3) out of district graduates.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I reported the findings using percentages across the three subgroups of survey respondents. Using percentages instead of number of respondents makes the data consistent since each subgroup has a different number of participants.

Using the Senge & Guskey model, I created survey prompts focused on the professional development design with racial equity leadership competencies centered (Table 4). The table demonstrates how the SGP perspectives align with the survey statements. Survey respondents ranked these statements 0 to 4 on a Likert scale.

Table 4.   SGP embedded with racial equity learning

Senge & Guskey PD Perspectives	SGP connected to racial equity inquiry
1. Change is an individual and organizational process.	1a. Opportunities to explore my own identity, inclusive of race, are embedded in the learning content prior to an organizational focus.
2. Think big, Start small	2a. Broad goals for racial equity are stated with smaller goals being emphasized as indicators of progress.
3. Teamwork	3a. Opportunities to collaborate with other administrators (district and building) and other district resources for racial equity leadership are required.
4. Participant feedback	4a. Participant feedback is collected frequently during and after leadership academy sessions.
	4b. Participants are given feedback frequently during and after leadership academy sessions.
5. Continued follow-up, support and pressure	5a. Continued follow-up to apply, maintain and improve racial equity leadership are provided by academy facilitators.
	5b. Continued support to apply, maintain, and improve racial equity leadership are provided by academy facilitators.
	5c. Continued pressure to apply, maintain, and improve racial equity leadership are provided by academy facilitators.
6. Integrate new into old	6a. Opportunities to apply and integrate new learning and old learning for racial equity protocols are frequent and consistent.
7. Systems thinking	7a. Academy explicitly teaches tools to analyze systems thinking inclusive of racial impacts.
8. Personal Mastery	8a. Participants are provided multiple platforms to demonstrate and assess mastery of racial equity protocols frequently & consistently.
9. Mental Models	9a. The learning invests time to explore and understand mental models affecting racial equity outcomes.
10. Shared Vision	10a. A shared vision of the leadership academy goals connected to racial equity is presented at the start and revisited throughout.

	10b. The vision and goals of the academy aligned with my perception of the academy's purpose.
11. Team Learning	11a. Team learning activities use strategies to create meaningful engagement.

The Leadership Learning Community, also referred to as the LLC, (2010) has 5 core competencies for racial equity leadership. In order to make meaning of how to design professional development teaching these core competencies for racial equity leadership, I worked with the LLC's definitions of each competency and adapted each to the SGP perspectives. The Leadership Learning Community (2010) core competencies for racial equity leadership are:

1. **Meaning making and connecting** -- Deep knowledge of self and others
2. **Systems Thinking**-- Deepen understanding of how structural racism is perpetuated; Assess racial impacts of key plans and proposals before decision-making
3. **Organizing** -- Conscious attention to racial justice in a variety of contexts
4. **Learning and Reflection** -- Reflection on one's experience; collective accountability for progress; Use data to diagnose
5. **Bridging** -- Strategic alignment around problem analysis and vision

The following table shows how these competencies are embedded into the SGP professional development model to elicit the prompts for the initial survey.

Table 5.

Core Competencies for Racial Equity Leadership	Senge & Guskey PD Perspectives Survey Prompts
A. Meaning making and connecting	1a, 9a, 11a
B. Systems Thinking	2a, 7a, 9a
C. Organizing	3a, 8a
D. Learning and Reflection	4a, 4b, 4c, 5a, 5b, 5c, 11a
E. Bridging	3a, 6a, 10a, 10b

In order to calculate the competency scores of the Leadership Academy's professional development design, I took each REL Competency category and multiplied the number of

responses by the Likert rating. This total was then divided by the total number of survey respondents multiplied by the maximum Likert rating (4).

Example: Survey stem 1a has eleven responses for "Not Present" (1), 9 for "Rarely" (2), 5 for "Often/Mostly" (3) and 1 for Always (4).

(11 x 1) + (9x2) + (5x3) + (1x4)/ (31x4) = Competency for survey prompt

After calculating each individual survey prompt's total, I then added together all of the stems that aligned with each competency as shown in Table 4. These totals were then divided by the maximum score possible for that competency category (i.e. REL Competency A = total responses (31) x maximum response rating (4) = 124). These calculations were completed for each competency with all 31 survey respondents totaled together, as well as separately by the 3 subgroups to identify the composite scores of the REL competencies for the Leadership Academy's design (Figure 4).

Figure 4.
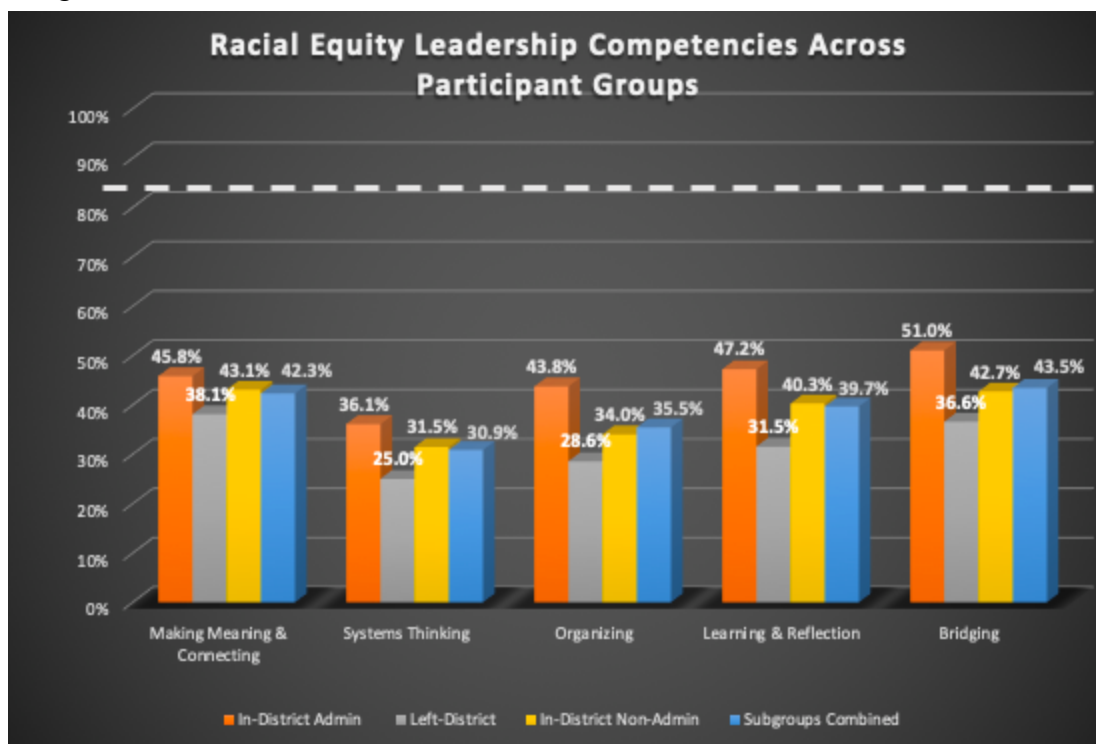
A proficient score is deemed 80% and higher. The Lawrence school district utilizes a score of 80% to represent a score of proficiency for students across multiple academic contexts. In order to align the competency scores of the LLA design, I identified 80% as the benchmark for proficiency or competency within this study. With a benchmark goal of 80%, the Leadership

Academy scored the lowest, across all three sub-groups in the competency of Organizing. These data points ranging from 28.6% to 43.8% indicate the level of intentionality to which the learning content has included topics relevant to racial equity leadership, aligned to the district's strategic goals. Most of the core competencies for Racial Justice Leadership for the Leadership Academy score below 50%, falling far below the 80% mastery benchmark.

The competency scores show the highest percentages for those who completed the LLA and were promoted to administrative roles in the district. The subgroup with the lowest competency scores is the group that left the district after completing the academy. Across all 5 competency categories, all subgroups show the lowest in the REL Competency of "Systems Thinking." These competency scores are not a rating of the participants, but rather an overview of the competency of the design elements inclusive of racial equity leadership focus for the Leadership Academy. Throughout the study, I aim to dissect the individual design elements within each competency category to understand what is impacting these low scores within each of the 5 Core Competencies of REL.

Once the initial survey data was gathered, I looked at the total number of respondents across the 3 sub-groups and considered current roles, race, gender, and other identity markers to diversify the invitees for follow-up interviews. I requested participants to complete a follow-up interview (Appendix E), in hopes that I could interview 25% of each sub-group. I prioritized certain requests due to the limited gender and racial diversity across the pools. Because only five participants across four years of academy graduates identified as people of color, having varying racial perspectives participate was a challenge. When these participants declined either the initial survey or the follow-up, I requested across the remaining candidates by looking at gender next, then current position/role served in their respective organizations. Positions I made sure to include in the interviews include: building principal, higher education, educational consultant, mid-level instructional support, district administrator, and classroom teacher.

Using the snowball method and voluntary participation method, survey participants notified if they were willing to complete a follow-up survey. Due to limited self-initiated participation in the qualitative collection process, I began to analyze each of the 3 sub-groups to determine which participants would provide a multiple perspective to the data based on their role. After each interview, each participant was asked to invite another graduate from their Leadership Academy cohort to do an interview. When this method did not produce any new volunteers, I began contacting academy graduates individually and inviting them to complete a follow-up interview as a critical perspective based on their current role and experiences with different elements of leadership in the school district.

Interview questions elicit responses to explore how the core competencies for racial equity leadership are included in the instructional content through the SGP model. In an effort to quantify the SGP elements' presence in tandem with a racial equity leadership focus, the quantitative data is compared to the common themes highlighted across the interview responses. I also analyzed candidates' detailed narratives of what occurs and does not occur in the learning sessions of the Leadership Academy to annotate which REL core competencies and SGP professional development design elements are being described essentially. To show these trends, a coding book with definitions is included (Appendix F).

Findings

1. **In what ways do the design elements of the Lawrence Leadership Academy address racial equity leadership?**

The Leadership Academy design elements focused on racial equity leadership are minimal. The survey prompt asked candidates to rate if Leadership Academy goals, connected to racial equity, were presented at the start of the academy and visited throughout the program. 45.2% of the participants stated it was not present at all, with 25.8% not being able to recall if it was present or not. 6.5% of participants identified the connection to racial equity being present in every session attended. 32.3% of the sampling pool of 31 did not recall any explicit teaching tools presented to analyze systems thinking and racial impacts, while eleven participants believed firmly it was never included in the content. Only 13% of participants identified explicit teaching of racial equity tools during the academy. One participant stated, "While I know I completed the academy a while ago, I feel like something that significant, if it was present, I feel like I would remember that." (Interviewee 2C)

Figure 5.

Presence of Design Elements Addressing Racial Equity Leadership
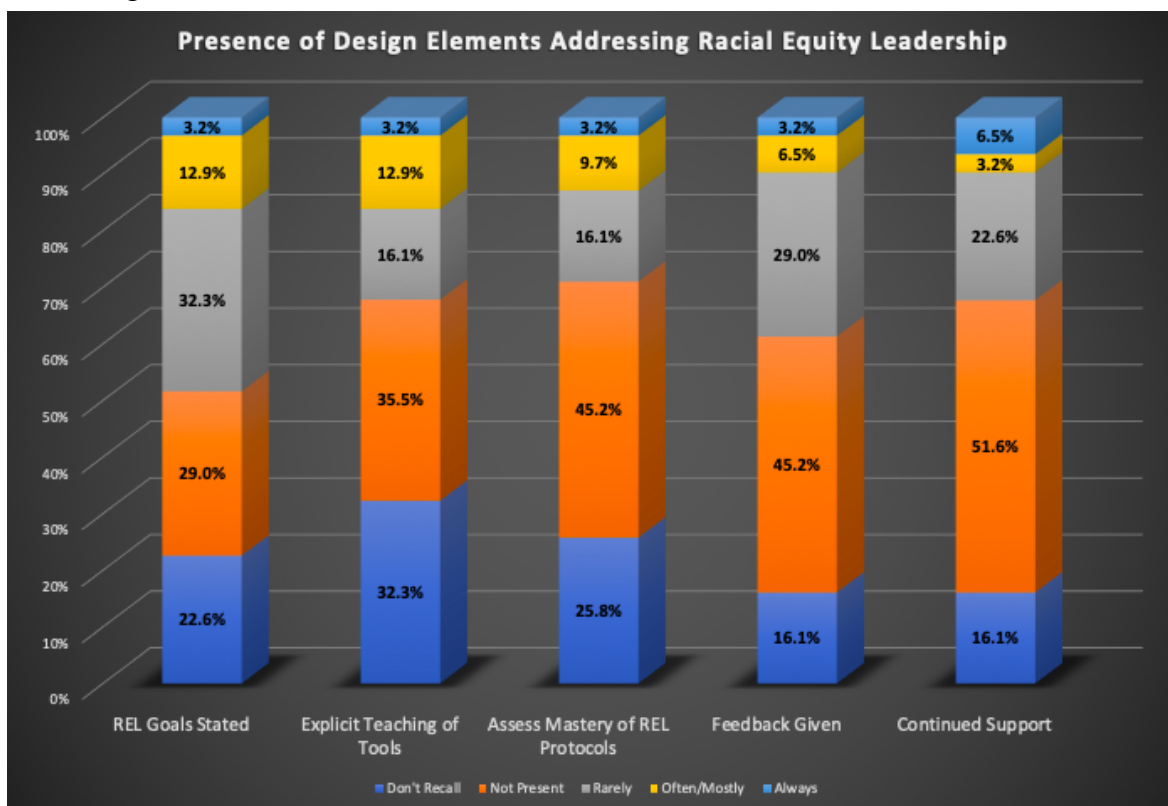
However, 41.9% responded "not present" when asked if a shared vision of Leadership Academy goals connected to racial equity and social justice is present at the start of the academy and revisited throughout. Even so, 16.1% of survey respondents identified the academy's visions and goals aligned with their personal expectations, while 32.3% responded it "often or mostly" aligned with their expectations. This disparity between the percentage identifying the REL vision and goals as "not present"and the percentage stating the academy "often" or "always" met their expectations is significant in highlighting the participants applied to the Leadership Academy and did not expect the learning content to link to the racial equity work in schools they might be promoted to lead. Only 3.2% of respondents identified REL goals always stated at each academy learning session. 12.9% stated REL goals were often or mostly present. 32.3% of participants responded that the broad goals of the district involving race were rarely discussed throughout the academy sessions, while 29% stated the goals for racial equity were not stated at all. (Figure 6)

Figure 6.
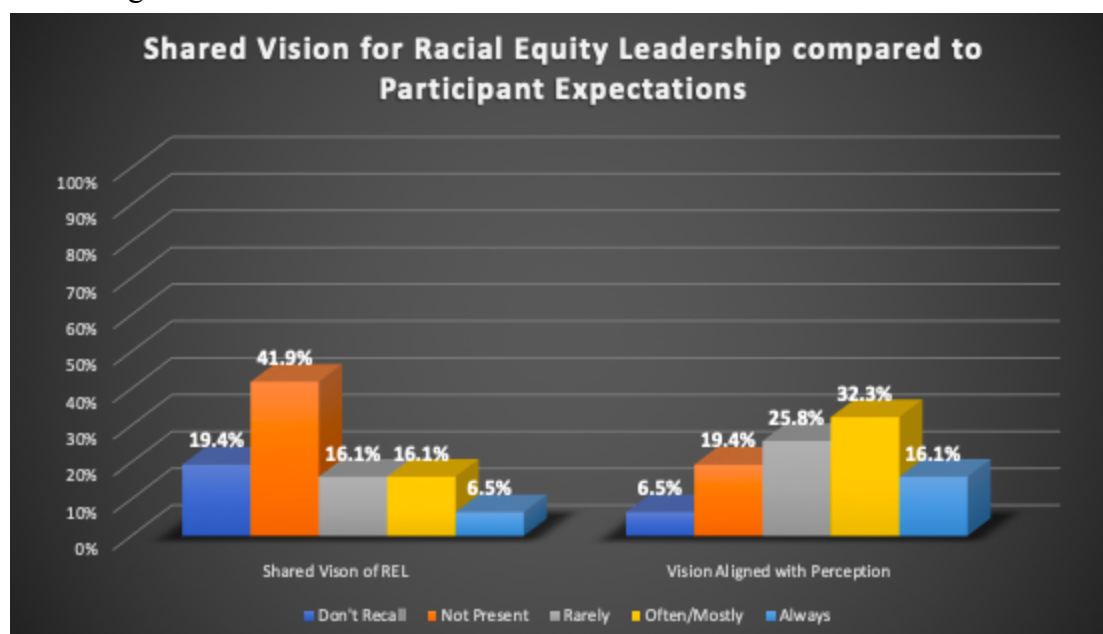
Interviewees consistently explained that racial equity was not a focus of the leadership academy and was addressed as a brief overview on the first day of the academy for most cohorts, if at allIn follow-up interviews, candidates were not able to identify anything relevant to racial equity leadership other than general elements of diversity or multiculturalism. For example, interviewees spoke about the "presence" of racial equity leadership being symbolized by the inclusion of two Black administrators who were invited to speak to the cohort about their approach to general leadership decisions such as how they plan professional development day schedules. Interviewees did not recount any specific information shared by guest administrators that was significant to how principals engage in racial equity leadership in their schools.. Another interviewee identified the diverse make-up of the cohort of participants as evidence of racial equity being included in the academy design. The theme of Racial equity in the LLA was characterized by interviewees as a general overview.

"With the Leadership Academy, they did talk about the Courageous Conversations piece. They did mention that, you know, their new incoming staff members do receive the Beyond Diversity training." (Interviewee 1B)

Another interviewee recalled LLA facilitators giving brief details to establish expectations for group discussions. "They might have given us the little tabletop with the norms and we might have briefly just touched on 'Let's use that in our discussions', but other than that I can't think of anything that was so structured that impacted me in any way, shape, or form." (Interviewee 2A)

In order to embed a level of learning and commitment to racial equity leadership, organizations creating professional development to enhance leadership need to "[align] professional development with school goals to provide a common (rather than fragmented) learning focus" (Kose, 2009, p. 632). The findings regarding the presence of REL goals stated, explicit teaching of racial equity tools, assessing master of REL protocols, giving feedback, and continued support in the Leadership Academy align with Kose's research.

2. **What design elements of participants' prior coursework in administrative and leadership-based degree programs address racial equity leadership?**

Participants' administrative licensure and degree programs did not include consistent components relevant to racial equity leadership. Participants completing follow-up interviews described two different tracks that resulted in administrative licensure. For some, this path was completed through a university-based Master's of School/Building Leadership, followed by completion of the administrative Praxis exam. For others, an administrative certification program through a university was completed (15 credit hours) along with the Praxis exam passed. When asked to discuss how their administrative programs addressed racial equity, the majority of the participants had one class that centered on "multiculturalism" without specifically addressing race. While the majority of the study participants completed degrees in state, one completed their program out of state.

Due to the complexity and variety of what prior coursework has looked like for most participants, there are varying definitions of what participants described as topics of "racial equity". However, participants who had multiple Master's degrees, with a second degree in Curriculum and Instruction, could speak to 'diversity' topics such as racially diverse authors for textbooks and multicultural lesson planning, being included in their program coursework. These interviewees could only speak to relevant topics about race from the Curriculum and Instruction coursework, but not their administrative leadership programs. Several participants enrolled in doctorate coursework after their administrative licensure. A few of these participants could identify components of racial equity leadership in their doctoral classes as a much higher frequency than what they experienced in their Master's programs for administration or building leadership.

> "There was a specific class about that every now and then there was maybe another class or two that tied back into topics of racial equity. And, so it was definitely more present in the degree that I earned than it was in the Leadership Academy." (Interviewee 2C)

"Yeah it's embedded in [doctorate coursework]; there's a lot of opportunities where they're talking about social justice, racial disparities, how can we...hiring, recruiting. How do we make sure we look at it through the lens of racial..racial equity? So yeah it's... it's the route; it's pretty upfront." (Interviewee 1B)

3. **How do design elements for racial equity leadership in LLA (as found in RQ 1) align or differ from participants' coursework in administrative and leadership-based degree programs?**

Leadership Academy design elements and study participants' coursework were similar in that both did not consistently include topics relevant to racial equity leadership. In the initial interview with the Director of Human Resources, she discusses the LLA design goal with regards to participants' administrative coursework.

"We don't want to make [Leadership Academy] too daunting...because we know how busy their lives are as teachers and our learning coaches; it's a lot of work and two, some of them are still in their university settings too. So we kind of want to balance that. I know they've had a lot of the book work and the text work and things like that so this is just basically helping them...just a snapshot of what the life of a principal is. We don't want to make it feel like a college course or make it feel like their administration work that they do in a college or in a university setting. We want to make it more adaptive type challenges that you may face as a principal."

During interviews, participants compared their coursework experiences and learning to that of the Leadership Academy. Some themes and topics four participants noted as overlapping in their coursework and the LLA include:
- Human Resources focus
- Staff Composition
- Understanding district level functions/operations
- Finance and Taxes
- Educational Law
- Data

Seven participants were not enrolled in any courses during their time in the LLA but completed prior coursework in the years preceding their participation in the LA. There are four candidates who were dually enrolled in leadership or administrative courses *and* the Leadership Academy. The interviews elicited three different groups of responses regarding the similarities or differences between their administrative coursework and the LLA content with regards to racial equity leadership topics. The first group described the REL and the coursework as having no

focus on racial equity leadership topics. Four participants did not remember any topics embedding REL in either their educational coursework or the Leadership Academy.

The second group the interviewees can be classified by is those who described REL related content in the LLA similarly to their prior coursework. These interviewees discussed and identified the variety of guest speakers across multiple racial identities as an element of professionally development design that emphasized racial equity. Some recounted class discussions centering how guest speakers' racial identities impacted their thought processes and decision-making abilities. These recollections applied to guest speakers in their degree classes rather than in the Leadership Academy. However, there were some participants who pointed to a variety of guest speakers –emphasizing the diverse roles and backgrounds – as a significant benefit the Leadership Academy provided that their coursework did not. Participants identified learning and reflection through processing scenarios as well as substituting for absent principals as opportunities the Leadership Academy afforded them that were not present in their leadership coursework. None of the participants, who mentioned these professional development elements, believed the LLA implemented with a specific eye towards racial equity leadership, yet these elements resonated with them and were critical to their learning as leaders. Six participants, in total, reflecting on the importance of hands-on learning and problem-solving/scenario processing. One believed it was present in both; 3 believed this was a component in only the Leadership Academy, while the remaining 2 experienced this only in their coursework. Again, these components of professional development existed for LLA participants void of an intersection with racial equity leadership regardless of the component being included in the academy or in the coursework.

For other participants, courses that sought to highlight what it means to be a "multicultural educator" were included in their leadership or administrative coursework. While the memory of what these classes included was at a minimum, three participants could recall the courses involved authors of racially diverse backgrounds for the text readings and class discussions.

The vast majority noted specific components of professional development design aligned to the Senge & Guskey model are present in either the LLA or their coursework, but much of these highlighted areas did not have a racial equity leadership overlap. It is important to note several participants were enrolled in graduate licensure programs or certification programs simultaneously while completing the Leadership Academy. Seven participants were not enrolled in any courses during their time in the LLA but completed prior coursework in the years preceding their participation in the LLA. There are four candidates who were dually enrolled in leadership or administrative courses *and* the Leadership Academy. Since completing the academy, two participants have now started additional study programs which have a significant

focus and intersection with racial equity leadership compared to the content of the Leadership Academy.

Below are some of the reflections shared comparing the administrative coursework's focus on racial equity topics to those of the Leadership Academy:

"It was ...those meetings were not as deep as the courses that I was taking in school, but what the main difference was: being able to serve... be a substitute administrator within the building for that, on the job experience, I will say is the main difference." (Interviewee 2D)

"I don't know that there was a lot of course work around racial equity, if anything, I believe I brought issues about racial equity into my classrooms." (Interviewee 3A)

"...I feel like I talked about it more in my master's program with curriculum and instruction. With the books that we read you know, we had to... we read Cornel West, you know and Savage Inequalities about schools in St. Louis but in the administration program I just I can't recall it. I'd say [the Leadership Academy and my administrative program] are similar [regarding a lack of racial equity leadership focus]". (Interviewee 2B)

"If I'm thinking in terms of just the extra classes I took only for the certification, there was really no focus on racial equity at all, but if I'm thinking about the whole doctoral program there was a little more focus on it, than in the Leadership Academy. Like we did have a wide variety of guest speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds, but [racial equity] still wasn't the primary focus of our [doctoral] Program. (Interviewee 1A)

4. **What opportunities does Leadership Academy provide for participants to engage in particular practices of racial equity leadership?**
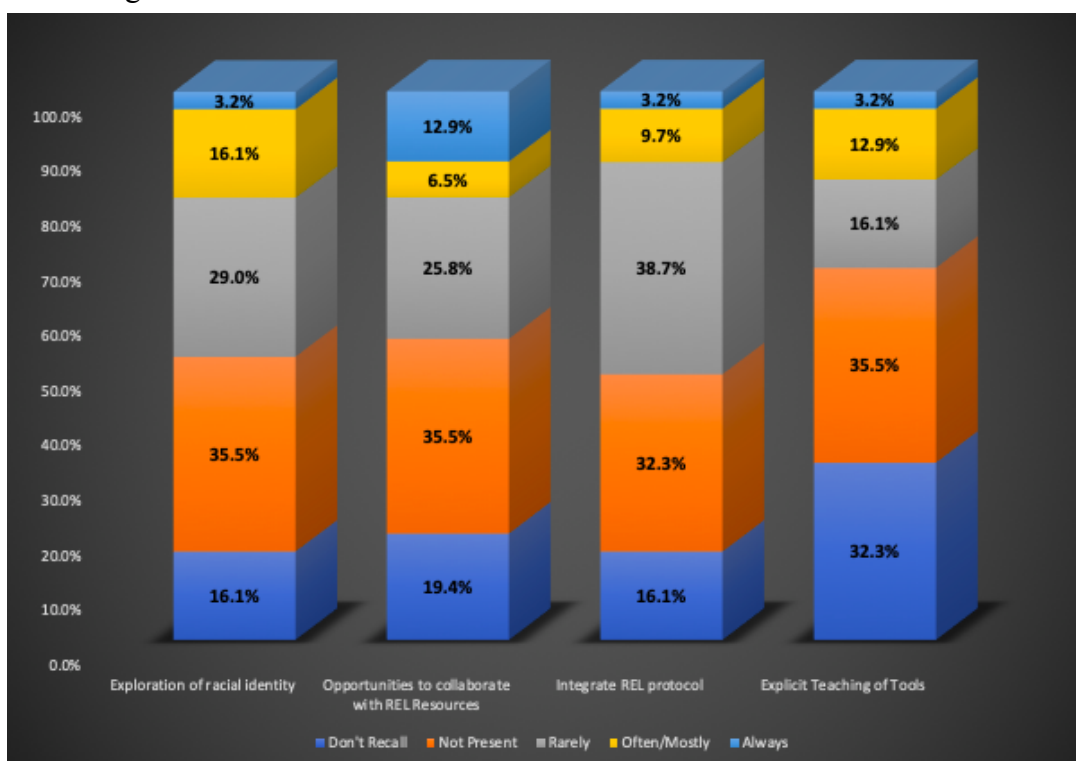
The Leadership Academy participants did not identify consistent opportunities to engage in particular practices of racial equity leadership. The LLA's internal page lists the Courageous Conversations about Race (CCAR) protocol from Singleton's (2015) work as the framework with which school leaders are interrogating policies, practices, and curriculum for racial inequities. In this finding. However, the LLA participants couldn't recall any intentional opportunities to practice and apply these REL protocols. Instead, participants shared the inclusion of these protocols as a quick review and stated expectation for the first session, but not explicitly taught or practiced throughout the entire duration of LLA learning sessions. This improvement study for the LLA is looking at how the organization creates opportunities for

Leadership Academy participants to engage with the CCAR protocols they have adopted for their district's equity work. Embedding the CCAR protocols into the learning context of the Leadership Academy is an example of how LLA can practice the core competency of "organizing" with racial equity learning in a variety of contexts.

The data (Figure 7) shows significant opportunities such as the "Integrat[ion] of protocol learning", "Explicit teaching of tools", and "Assess[ment] of REL protocol mastery" with the highest number of participants marking these as "not present" or "rarely present". It is also noted there are more participants who cannot recall this learning as occurring or not occuring than participants who identified the LLA including these opportunities to engage in specific REL practices present "often" or "always".

Figure 7.

Within the qualitative findings, the unanimous perspective offered from all interview participants highlights the Lawrence Leadership Academy as lacking content considering racial equity leadership aligned with the district's expectations for school staff. Participants spoke to the leadership program supplementing the learning for their administrative degrees and licensure certification in the areas of finance and human resources. However, no intersections of race were included in the learning or the application activities for the topics of discussion. The Leadership Academy's lacking focus on racial equity leadership mirrored many of the participants' courses

for their administrative licenses, while still providing some hands-on learning and processing for general leadership that their degree coursework did not offer them such as the intern hours shadowing or covering for absent administrators. Another hands-on learning participants benefited from were the activities that allowed participants to process scenarios and discuss how they would resolve them.

Majority of the participants responded that the activities facilitated in the learning sessions had meaningful engagement, however, this meaningful engagement was not on the topic of racial equity leadership.

"Not much of [my] experience in Leadership Academy gave me that... that belief in racial equity work or a further knowledge of it." (Interviewee 3A)

"So I don't think the Leadership Academy, when I was in it really talked about racial equity at all. I don't think it was a piece of that. I feel like it was a separate entity.That the equity facilitator was responsible for teaching the equity piece like in Beyond Diversity training and or Courageous Conversations and those pieces, but I don't think it...I don't think it was embedded in the Leadership Academy." (Interviewee 1B)

Recommendations/Interventions

For almost fifteen years, Lawrence Public Schools has committed to centering race and racial equity in their policies, curriculum, and instructional practices. In the quest to develop future leaders internally for their own district, there is a great opportunity to provide school leaders from the Leadership Academy intensive development in leadership addressing racial equity to progress their district's school goals. Therefore, it is my recommendation that the administration tasked with designing and implementing the Leadership Academy consider the following for alignment with their strategic plan and racial equity goals in district to develop strong candidates for leadership positions in their schools:

1. **Revise a curriculum for the Leadership Academy that intersects racial equity discussions into each of the identified themes for learning (e.g.,. hiring, budget).** The curriculum should include explicit teaching of the adopted equity protocol existing currently in the school district. In addition to the teaching and application of racial equity protocol, the Leadership Academy would benefit from investing additional time in covering racial equity structures and supports that leaders within the district must be prepared to guide such as equity teams (E-teams) or family of color affinity groups.

Before a curriculum is written, district administration needs to reflect on "What does a potential leader candidate need to understand and have prior experience and knowledge to qualify them, regarding racial equity leadership, to be a leader in our district?" Once this question is brainstormed, a vision should be drafted for the academy. What themes has LLA leadership drafted for the focus areas of the learning sessions and how do the core competencies and PD perspectives fit inside of themes? The LLA vision statement should intersect with the Strategic Plan and detail how racial equity leadership development will be woven into the content with which the participants will engage. Leadership in a New Era (2010) states racial equity leadership "needs to express this commitment through concrete planning and to make it a reality through practice [...]" (Keleher et al., 2010, p. 7).

The first core competency of racial equity leadership is "meaning making and connecting", which also aligns under the Senge and Guskey perspective 'change as an individual process'. The learning material of the Leadership Academy must provide opportunity for participants to reflect on their own privilege and "one's own experiences with issues of power" (Keleher et al, 2010, p. 6). With the current content already inclusive of scenarios where participants practice their problem-solving, the next step the planning team needs to embed is adding a layer to these scenarios involving race. Using all five of the LNA's core competencies for racial justice leadership, LPS can look to embed these throughout the learning content that is already being utilized or they can redesign/restructure to include these competencies for racial equity leadership development.

2. **Identify additional leaders within the school district to support the learning of racial equity protocols for Leadership Academy participants.** These resources must be invited to collaborate in the planning of the learning content and also be included in the teaching of the content. Participants mentioned roles and departments they would have wanted involved in their learning sessions to understand more in racial equity leadership collaboration. Departments and district leaders who were named during the interviews who participants believed would have supported their learning for racial equity include the equity facilitator, the Native American Student Services coordinator, as well as the content from Pacific Educational Group, Inc. While the Director noted a need to involve more of their sitting principals in the learning sessions, leadership must consider how they select principals specific to experiences and application of racial equity leadership tools.

The 2010 report from Leadership from a New Era reminds school leadership development involving racial equity to reframe "the process by which individuals and groups align their values and mission, build relationships, organize and take action [...]" (Keleher et al., 2010, p. 9). In utilizing multiple leaders who support the goals of racial equity in the school

district for the planning and facilitation of learning, LPS LA will bring the third core competency of racial equity leadership, organizing, into the design even stronger.

Currently, many LLA graduates refer to racial equity as a "separate entity" which they have normalized as the responsibility of specific roles. The second racial justice leadership competency is "Systems Thinking" which details the importance of looking at the role the systems plays in the hindrance of moving towards racial equity in organizational settings. As noted in the study interviews, many of the Leadership Academy graduates already have a perception that racial equity leadership development is not part of the leadership system. Without opportunity to experience and observe systems collaboration, potential school leaders will only perpetuate a system where leaders do not understand how to create effective and meaningful partnerships and collaborations that work to center racial equity leadership and racial justice in schools. LPS LA has an opportunity to model collaborations with district supports who are positioned and possess high knowledge and skill for racial equity work.

3. **Present participants with ongoing support and mentorship centering racial equity leadership development in addition to opportunities to apply learning and demonstrate mastery of racial equity protocols, specifically those promoted to building leadership roles.** This mentoring would provide a way for participants to have specific accountability to collaborate with the resources provided during the Leadership Academy, as well as application of racial equity protocols included in the academy. In the earliest year of the Leadership Academy, participants reflected during their interviews about the cohort size serving as a barrier to facilitators of the learning being able to connect with them at a more personable level. Since the first cohort's completion, the remaining cohorts have been significantly smaller in size, however, few candidates could identify current mentorship and ongoing support since their completion of the Leadership Academy.

Some of the participants in the study noted they participated in the academy two years instead of one. These candidates seem to highlight more leadership development through interning in buildings for principals than the learning sessions. However, these intern hours remain void of racial equity leadership development in the reflections. Participants in the most recent cohort and the first cohort highlighted the element of time. While the LLA is a series of 5 evening sessions for less than two hours each, the question of "Is this enough time to deepen the knowledge, learning, and understanding for racial equity leadership?" arises. The Oregon Leadership Network implemented a learning space that is year round and has multiple levels: district, building cohorts, and individual (Larson, 2013, p. 20). Options for LPS to consider are longer times for each session or starting the academy sooner in the year to have more evening learning sessions throughout a school year. Ärlestig (2012) studied the principal development programs of Sweden which is a 2-year program which allows time to break the time into four

quarters focusing on policy, research, theory, and practice. The model is scaffolded to build participants' ability to apply theory in live interactions (internships). The downfall of an extended program is losing candidates over time if they have to finish the academy in its entirety before qualifying for internal promotions to building or district leadership roles.

Administration must consider how interim work looks for participants between sessions. What are the meaningful tasks participants are asked to complete and reflect upon before returning to the next live session? These tasks must be more than reading an article; LLA can consider including journaling activities using the Courageous Conversations about Race protocol for responses to scenarios and even reflecting on their own personal experiences with privilege and issues of power as noted in the core competencies (Keleher et al., 2010, p. 6). Small, but intentional tasks for learning reflection (Core Competency 4) will help to balance the coursework without being overwhelming, as the Director mentioned they *did not* want the LLA to be for participants.

Conclusions

While internal "grow your own" leaderships are available in distant suburban and urban school districts within a 45-mile radius of Lawrence, this district is no exception in their intent to develop leaders from within their organization, with the hopes of seeing potential leaders move into higher levels of leadership within the district. The commitment, structure, efforts to excel in racial equity leadership have been part of the school district since 2005. The LLA is the only internally led program that provides opportunity for employees to enhance their leadership development involving information, skills, and structural knowledge specific to the school district. Considering the focus on racial equity, this study was conducted to understand how racial equity leadership is embedded in the professional development design of the Leadership Academy to prepare future school leaders, in order to inform recommendations that can support future Leadership Academy design efforts.

Using the Senge and Guskey Professional Development Perspectives as a framework for *how* professional development for school leaders needs to be implemented and the five core competencies for racial justice leadership as the guide for *what* content must be included to build knowledge and application of racial equity leadership, this improvement study analyzes the presence and depth to which the Lawrence Leadership Academy embeds racial equity leadership into its professional development design for inservice school leaders.

At the conclusion of the data collection and analysis, the study shows the vision of the Leadership Academy's goals connected to racial equity was often evident to 16.1% of the participants, with only two participants declaring racial equity leadership elements being present

in every session attended. In terms of the goals and objectives of the Leadership Academy, the findings for the limited presence of racial equity leadership is in alignment with the data showcasing nearly half of the participants believed the outcomes of the program were as they expected them to be. Candidates, who applied for this opportunity to develop leadership through their school district committed to racial equity, did not expect the Leadership Academy to have a focus on developing their knowledge and skills to lead racial equity in schools. Nearly one-third of survey respondents could not remember if any explicit teaching tools were presented to analyze systems thinking and racial impacts, while 35.5% of respondents firmly knew for certain it was never included in the content. Only 13% of participants identified explicit teaching of racial equity tools during the academy.

One limitation in the study for participants who were in the most recent cohort (spring 2020) is the shortened academy sessions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The academy ended after only 2 sessions, with a short virtual reconvening which concluded the learning time for the participants. Candidates who completed interviews from this cohort could only speak to the introduction session and the budget/finance sessions. They were not aware of what other learning topics were to be included in the academy. The survey responses for them rate higher because any mention of racial equity leadership in even 1 session of facilitated learning, would mean a higher score for racial equity elements present across all sessions.

A second limitation includes the differences noted between the initial graduating cohort and the second and third cohorts. The initial cohort (2016-2017) included a larger number of participants (n=24), in addition to a larger number of sessions (7) and longer sessions (90 minutes). The second and third cohorts had a revised structure that was implemented with 5 sessions, each for one hour. (Figure 8)

Figure 8.
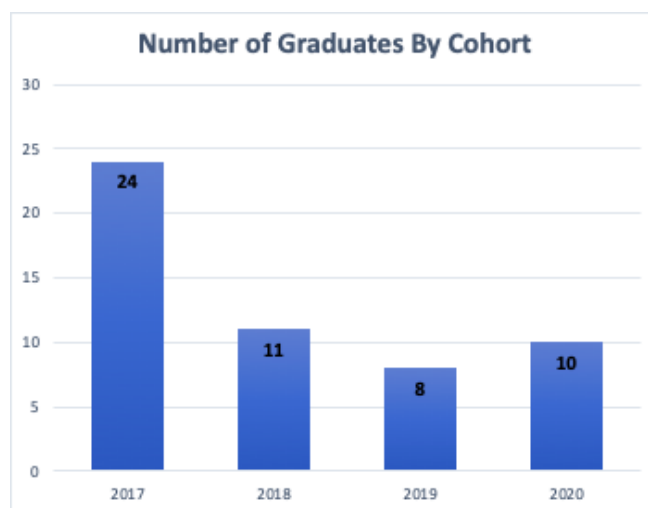
I was not able to observe the current cohort, as the district cancelled the 2021 class due to time restraints caused by COVID-19. The next cohort will begin late fall 2021 and conclude Spring 2022. The original proposal for this research was to survey and interview the past four cohorts, in addition to observe the 2021 cohort live during learning sessions, survey them after each learning session, and interview those who volunteered to understand their experiences deeper. Working with the current cohort would also provide opportunity for participants to recall their learning experiences more accurately with interviews and surveys happening immediately after each learning session rather than months and years afterwards, as was noted in the interviews of candidates from the first three cohorts (2016-2019).

One area that has potential for further explanation includes the application and selection process of participants in the Leadership Academy. Past research and literature suggests candidates with a pre-exposure to racial equity consciousness and awareness have higher potential to succeed in advancing to school leadership positions with administration. Candidates without a strong background start further behind and have more ground to attempt to gain in awareness, knowledge, and application in the short amount of time that a leadership development program can allot in the current structure utilized in the LLA (McKenzie et al., 2008, p. 118). In addition to this expansion of the study to include selection of candidates (application requirements that identify racial equity leadership experiences), an entry and exit assessment of racial equity awareness to identify where participants started with their knowledge and awareness and what growth they sustained through the completion of the Leadership Academy would provide data to support the district's understanding of which candidates are successful in applying racial equity protocols and where the academy can modify, edit, or omit learning content that is impacting the level of application they wish to see in graduates of LLA.

This improvement project has potential to support professional development and curriculum design for current and future educational leadership programs both internally and externally. My first hope is that LLA consider utilizing the SGP and Five Core Competencies of Racial Justice Leadership in their professional development design to deepen the knowledge, understanding, and application of racial equity leadership skills and tools. With intentional improvement, the model LLA creates has potential to impact surrounding school districts utilizing in-service leadership academies as well as universities offering coursework for advanced degrees in leadership with an eye toward racial equity leadership. As racial demographics continue to increase in student populations and stagnate in school leadership hires, the emphasis for school leaders who are able to lead with racial equity leadership in mind in an effort to work towards the elimination of racial disparities plaguing school data nationwide, it is critical that in-service leadership preparation programs, such as the Lawrence Leadership Academy, look to integrate

racial equity leadership development into every platform as a foundational start to staff and student achievement (Grissom, Egalite, & Lindsay, 2021, p. xii).

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APPENDIX A: Leadership Academy Mission Statement Page

Program Description

The Leadership Academy is a one year program designed to provide opportunities for practical training within a framework of effective leadership development. Selected candidates will work toward acquisition of leadership competencies including developing shared vision/mission, use of data to improve teaching and learning, implementation of effective instruction and consistent curriculum, development of teacher leaders, collaboration and communication within a school community and the management and operation of a school facility.

Candidates are selected from a pool of Lawrence Public School staff who <u>have at least three years successful teaching experience. Candidates must have completed or be enrolled to earn their administrative licensure</u>. After successfully completing an application, approximately 12**-20 candidates** per year will be selected to participate in the program. <u>These educators are required to attend monthly sessions and will spend time shadowing selected administrators.</u>

Program Outcomes

Numerous studies show an empirical link between school leadership and student achievement. Leadership is the crucial element in combining the required variables and creating conditions for optimal teacher and student performance. Our Leadership Academy participants will work to develop key principal leadership skills that emphasizes effective instruction and fosters academic and personal student growth.

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APPENDIX B: LPS Strategic Themes Visual

https://www.usd497.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=11861

APPENDIX C: School District Organizational Framework

https://app.luminpdf.com/viewer/60839bd1d7cbfa00131c4af9

APPENDIX D: Leadership Academy Participant Survey

1. How many years have/did you work(ed) in LPS?

    a. This is my first year.

    b. 2-5 years

    c. 6-10 years

    d. 11-15 years

    e. 16-20 years

    f. More than 20 years

2. Are you still employed by LPS?

    a. Yes

    b. No

3. How long has it been since you've completed a degree or coursework in Educational

    Administration (K-12), Leadership, or other advanced Leadership degree?

    a. I'm currently enrolled now

    b. I graduated within the last 12 months

    c. 2-5 years ago

    d. 6-10 years ago

    e. 11-15 years ago

    f. More than 15 years ago

Please reflect on your experiences with the Lawrence Public Schools Leadership Academy's live learning sessions. The following prompts will ask you to provide your perspective of the learning content that was the focus of each time the Academy group met (5-7 times). Provide your answers to the prompts based on the following scale:

0 = I Don't Remember
1 = Not Present at All
2 = Rarely Present
3 = Often/Mostly Present
4 = Always Present

Opportunities to explore my own identity, inclusive of race, are embedded in the learning content prior to an organizational focus.	0	1	2	3	4
Broad goals for racial equity are stated with smaller goals being emphasized as indicators of progress.	0	1	2	3	4
Opportunities to collaborate with other administrators (district and building) and other district resources for racial equity leadership are required.	0	1	2	3	4
Participant feedback is collected frequently during and after leadership academy sessions.	0	1	2	3	4
Participants are given feedback frequently during and after leadership academy sessions.	0	1	2	3	4
Continued follow-up to apply, maintain and improve racial equity leadership are provided by academy facilitators.	0	1	2	3	4
Continued support to apply, maintain, and improve racial equity leadership are provided by academy facilitators.	0	1	2	3	4
Continued pressure to apply, maintain, and improve racial equity leadership are provided by academy facilitators.	0	1	2	3	4
Opportunities to apply and integrate new learning and old learning for racial equity protocols are frequent and consistent.	0	1	2	3	4
Academy explicitly teaches tools to analyze systems thinking inclusive of racial impacts.	0	1	2	3	4

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Participants are provided multiple platforms to demonstrate and assess mastery of racial equity protocols frequently & consistently.   0   1   2   3   4
The learning invests time to explore and understand mental models affecting racial equity outcomes.   0   1   2   3   4
A shared vision of the leadership academy goals connected to racial equity is presented at the start and revisited throughout.   0   1   2   3   4
The vision and goals of the academy aligned with my perception of the academy's purpose.   0   1   2   3   4
Team learning activities use strategies to create meaningful engagement.   0   1   2   3   4

APPENDIX E: Individual interview questionnaire

1. What is your name and current role in the School district?

2. Why were you interested in the leadership academy?

3. Please describe the selection process from applying to selection.

4. What is the value for you in completing the leadership academy?

5. What leadership qualities and skills did the academy help you to develop?

6. How do you define racial equity? What role did the leadership academy serve in shaping how you define racial equity?

7. What is your understanding of the role that school leaders play in addressing racial equity in schools? To what extent did the academy provide explicit opportunities to discuss race and apply racial equity protocols?

8. What elements of the academy's structure did you find to be supportive to your racial equity leadership development?

9. What elements are missing in the academy or need improvement to support your racial equity leadership development?

10. How was this experience similar to or different from your experiences in your administrative degree courses or other coursework you have completed?

11. How did the leaders in the academy display personal and professional investment in you individually?

12. How has support and mentorship from Leadership Academy administrators continued since your completion of the program?

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APPENDIX F: Coding Definitions Codebook

Code	Definition	Example (from interviews)
Making Meaning and connecting	Building an explicit commitment to racial equity through deep knowledge of self and making meaning with intersecting identities to develop leadership	"I think my definitions were being created in other professional learning opportunities, not necessarily in that group." "I felt when I walked in I was getting the experience but I didn't feel like the, you know, that equity lens was being allowed for me to be open and honest with what I was trying to accomplish."
Systems thinking	Deepening of understanding and assessing racial impacts of plans and proposals before reaching a decision	"It needs to be that we are looking at systemic things that are in place that need to be changed [systematically] so, meaning we can't just pull one thing apart and think that's good, we need to be changing these things on a continual basis through leadership…"
Organizing	Conscious attention to embedding racial equity in a variety of contexts; requires transparent conversations about power and privilege	"So I don't think the Leadership Academy, when I was in it, really talked about racial equity at all. I feel like it was a separate entity." "I think that it...so leadership needs to be...racial equity news to be embedded in the leadership and in the schools. It can't play a separate...can't be this separate thing…"

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Learning & Reflection	Continuous process to reflect on individual experiences with power and privilege; includes knowing how to used data to diagnose and track progress	"You know, filling in for principals throughout the district, it gave me the confidence in my decision-making, based upon real life experience that I wouldn't have otherwise had."
Bridging	Connecting racial equity leadership between many organizations and different individual roles in a system or organization. Includes interdependence with a diverse body of stakeholders	"I would also encourage every single guest speaker that comes, like, for example, [communications director] comes and she talks to us about her role as the communications...I don't know the title..the person, you know for the district. Okay, so how does she insert equity work into her role?" "I would say bring in our equity facilitator to have conversations about how they can utilize the equity facilitator. Because, really, it's not something that is given to us saying, "Hey we have [an equity facilitator]. These are her roles and this is how she can help support you and your staff."