# AN UNFULFILLED DREAM OF AN URBAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS: A FAILED EXPERIMENT IN EDUCATIONAL REFORM

by

Kerri Doyle

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Approved by:

_____
Dr. Jeanneine Jones

_____
Dr. Chance Lewis

_____
Dr. Jae Hoon Lim

_____
Dr. Janni Sorensen

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# ABSTRACT

KERRI DOYLE. An unfulfilled dream of an urban community school for girls: A failed experiment of educational reform. (Under the direction of DR. JEANNEINE P. JONES)

This research presents the qualitative case study of an urban community school initiative that began as an educational reform effort and that ultimately failed. The process of emergence for this school and factors leading to its collapse are described through participant interviews and document analysis. Nationally, policy reformers, practitioners, and the public have been seeking solutions to urban education challenges. With this attention and the appropriation of government funding, a multitude of unique UCS initiatives run under a broad variety of auspices, are emerging. Currently, there is a lack comprehensive regulation and data examining the overall success of community schools. This study explores challenges associated with this type of educational reform. The research findings provide lessons-learned and key components to build upon for successful future initiatives and cautions regarding the actions that led to failure for this UCS. It exemplifies the need for a critical analysis of a community's social and cultural capital before an initiative emerges. These findings suggest the importance of emphasizing 1) focus on a substantial planning period which embraces members of the community in equitable roles, 2) proper funding and financial sustainability in place, and 3) a cultivation of understanding that addresses cultural and class disconnections. Community schools appear to play a role in the ability to positively change urban students' holistic outcomes.

Keywords: urban education, community schools, education reform

# DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to life-long learners everywhere, especially those who must struggle to gain the education that they crave. Once it is attained, the knowledge is yours forever. Go and make the world a better place with it!

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEAS Community Empowerment and Agency School
The urban community school initiative that is the subject of this dissertation.

CCS Coalition for Community Schools
An alliance of national, state, and local organizations that holistically represents community development, community building, and education.

UCS Urban Community School
A community-based school in an urban area that incorporates physical and mental health services, family advocacy, community planning and organization, and human services in children's educational experiences.

CMS- Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools
The public school system in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Project L.I.F.T. Leadership and Investment for Transformation
This project was conceived by local business owners and philanthropists to assist students in the West Corridor of the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district.

ABCD - Asset-Based Community Development
An institute which utilized asset based community development to develop stronger, sustainable communities.

SDP- Student Development Program
A program created by James Comer model of community schools.

# CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

## Introduction

School, family, and the feelings of community and success do not happen in isolation. Often each of these structures is viewed as its own entity, yet we recognize that when there is failure in one structure, a person's complete identity is not lost; all human beings have multiple identities and facets in their lives. We are holistic beings. Education, family, community, and success are intertwined the moment a child is born.

Traditional American educational structures often do not incorporate curriculums that support a child's holistic learning process. As a product of public schools, I personally understand that there is student success in traditional schooling. Yet as a whole, traditional schools are failing urban students (Comer & Haynes, 1996; Community Schools Coalition, 2003; Dryfoos, 2008; Epstein 1997; Melaville, 1998.) We have seen recent test scores decline (CMS, 2011) as more children are left behind. The traditional institution of schooling incorporates structural inequality in the form of stratification of education, (Kozol, 1991, 2005), ability grouping and tracking (Mickelson, 2001), and a culture of power (Delpit, 1995). All of these affect a child's educational achievement.

In *The Nation's Report Card: Trial Urban District Assessment Reading 2011* (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011), differences in average reading scores for public school students in twenty-one urban districts were compared to the scores for

all other students in large cities with populations of 250,000 or more. The study examined fourth and eighth grade students and found that in eleven urban districts the students scored lower than those in other types of schools. This example represents one way that traditional educational structures are failing urban students in reading achievement. This is significant because it exemplified the national trend of urban students falling behind non-urban students earlier in their schooling in American public education.

Nearly 1.2 million students fail to graduate from high school in four years (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2008). Students drop out for a variety of reasons, such as inadequate literacy skills needed to comprehend secondary curriculum (Kamil, 2003; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003). Also, a detriment to student progress is the public labeling and punishment of specific schools, students, and communities, which are overwhelmingly located in impoverished urban areas (Anyon, 1998, 2005; Lipman 2004). Silencing of student voices (Delpit, 1998; Lipman, 2004) and feelings of alienation by educational institutions (Delpit, 1998; Fine, 1991; Freire, 1970; Kozol, 1991) have the power to suppress students' language and cultural identities. These factors contribute to high student drop-out rates in urban areas (Fine, 1991).

It is well documented (Delpit, 1998; Fine, 1991; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1985; Kozol, 1991; Lipman, 2004; Moll, Amanti, Neff, Gonzalez, 1992) that traditional educational structures have routinely excluded strategies that lead to the success of marginalized students and their communities. Since language and cultural identities are vital pieces of an individual's multiple identities (Delpit, 1998; Fine, 1991; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1985; Lipman, 2004), the isolation of students actually becomes a point of

community cohesion (Lipman, 2004). The students and their communities' wealth of knowledge can produce successful strategies for learning and achievement in curriculum and testing standards (Moll et al., 1992). Hill Collins (2010) described that "emancipatory social movements have invoked the language of community as a powerful tool to challenge social inequalities" (p. 10).

Urban schools and accountability policies that dominate education need to be refocused from "Education for all" to "Education for what?" (Lipman, 2004, p. 165). Many urban students ask these questions: Why aren't there people that look like me in school books? Why am I getting an education? How will education improve my life? What is this education for? (Kozol, 2000; MacLeod, 1998). Class, culture, and racial disparity have been ignored in educational structures by focusing on Western European hegemonic knowledge as the official standard of what is correct knowledge to achieve in school (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Lipman, 2004). Urban public schools use tracking (Mickelson, 2001) and deficit thinking (Delpit, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Lipman, 2004) as tools to support the low expectations for low-income students' potential in school achievement. The role of traditional educational structures has morphed into a judge who dispenses rewards and punishments based on standardized achievement (Lipman, 2004), rather than the provider of resources and educators who support learning.

Barriers

Historically, education legally segregated students with the *Plessey vs. Ferguson* (1896) court ruling (Anderson, 1988; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). The law specified that states were able to establish racial segregation in public institutions if the

accommodations were "equal, but separate" (Anderson, 1998, p. 192). Public schools took part in this segregation until 1954, with the law being overturned by the *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) court ruling. Yet access to education is still frequently determined by one's neighborhood, race, and social class (Keating, Krumholz & Starr, 1996; Kozol, 1991, 2005; Meyer, 2001). The "hidden curriculum" (Anyon, 1980) in traditional American educational structures prepares students to work within the social strata in which they currently exist. This structure leads to varying expectations of students by teachers and society (Delpit, 1995; Haberman, 1995; Kozol, 2005).

## Poverty

Another critical barrier to educational access is poverty. Poverty is defined with a plethora of meanings. The connotations often bring about images of scarcity, deficiency and despair. Ruggeri Laderchi, Saith, and Stewart (2003) discussed the global agreement on the issue of poverty reduction as a policy goal, yet found that there is little agreement on the actual definition of poverty. Their review (2003) identified four approaches to the definition and measurement of poverty: the monetary, capability, social exclusion and participatory approaches, and it examined the theoretical underpinnings of various measures of poverty and problems with operationalizing these approaches. They argued that each approach is a reality construct that involves numerous judgments which are not always transparent. Diverse approaches define poverty differently. The varying approaches also have different implications for developmental, educational and public policy.

Further, when the word urban is mentioned, the thought of poverty almost automatically follows. Research (MacLeod, 1998) in impoverished urban neighborhoods

ascertained that where there is profound alienation, disenfranchisement and poverty, there is also a rise in positive behavior, which helps organize the community that has lost faith in the structured legal system. It becomes a people's law, street justice. Anderson (1998) found that because of deindustrialization and job losses, an entire class of people feels abandoned by the larger society. Researchers (Anderson, 1998; MacLeod, 1998) recommended raising the levels of human capital in the urban areas by creating skills, education, and job training. Their discussion included the need for strengthened social capital of people living in poverty, a wider society that is more receptive to people helping their neighbors. There is also the need for major financial and personal investments in people who need jobs and opportunity. Everything possible should be done to bring their participation into institutional systems (Anderson, 1998; Anyon, 2005; Keating et. al, 1996; MacLeod, 1998). Poverty is vital to this study, as it plays a central role in the educational initiative Community Empowerment and Agency School which was created to combat the institutional norms of traditional schooling.

Self-supporting urban communities

Urban communities are often forced to contend with issues surrounding poverty including abandoned buildings, dilapidated parks, neighborhood violence, and drug trafficking. Community initiatives are able to provide the most holistic approaches to problem solving solutions in an area (Halpern, 1995). Members of a community are experts with distinct understanding of their own educational, social, and economic concerns (Halpern, 1995; Keating et al., 1996). One such proposal is to increase community schools. There has been a growth of urban community initiatives, which includes universities, government, faith-based organizations and private companies, as

well as positive growth in the local community housing the school (Coalition for Community Schools, 2011). This happens because initiatives include building trust and commitment with the local community (Murrel, 2001; Reed, 2004), committing to service learning (Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; McIntyre, 2006), schools participating in community organizing (Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006), and teaching that is culturally responsive (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This leads to education that is socially transformative for students. It is crucial for local communities to have input into the planning of a school initiative to ensure that its design is around the realities of its members and the community's own authentic efforts (Murrel, 1998; Reed, 2004; Weiner, 2000). Initiatives funded to assist urban, low-income neighborhoods must recognize that community members understand that "the ones with the power to propose the change can also leave the community just as easily as they entered" (Noel, 2011, p. 32). A consciousness of the symbiosis, a mutual reliance on each other to be successful, is required in initiative development.

The intersection of traditional public education and urban communities

As a result of concentrated poverty and the failure to support urban students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011) educational reform is a frequently discussed topic. Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, said, "We have to say this [failure to support urban students] will not go on" (Children's Defense Fund, 2011). The Community School approach has increasingly become a focus of interest among government officials, parents and educators as a solution for this societal issue (Comer & Haynes, 1996; Community Schools Coalition, 2003; Dryfoos, 2008; Education Week,

2011; Epstein 1997; Melaville, 1998). Duncan found success in community-based schools in his past position as Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools.

Federally, the Obama Administration has followed through on campaign promises to alleviate poverty with a national commitment to fund similar initiatives. A national proposal to grant federal funds for Promise Neighborhoods has been created. "A Promise Neighborhood is a community of opportunity, centered around strong schools, that allows children to learn, grow, and succeed" (Promise Neighborhoods Institute, 2012). The programs are created to coordinate high-quality educational, health, social, and community support from the time children are born through their college careers. The Promise Neighborhoods Institute has established criteria (Figure 1) that must be met in the application process. The funded program initiatives are expected to apply the knowledge of local residents in the area to meet the needs of the *Promise Neighborhood*. The organization of each initiative applying for federal funds is to be structured answering the questions shown in Figure 1.

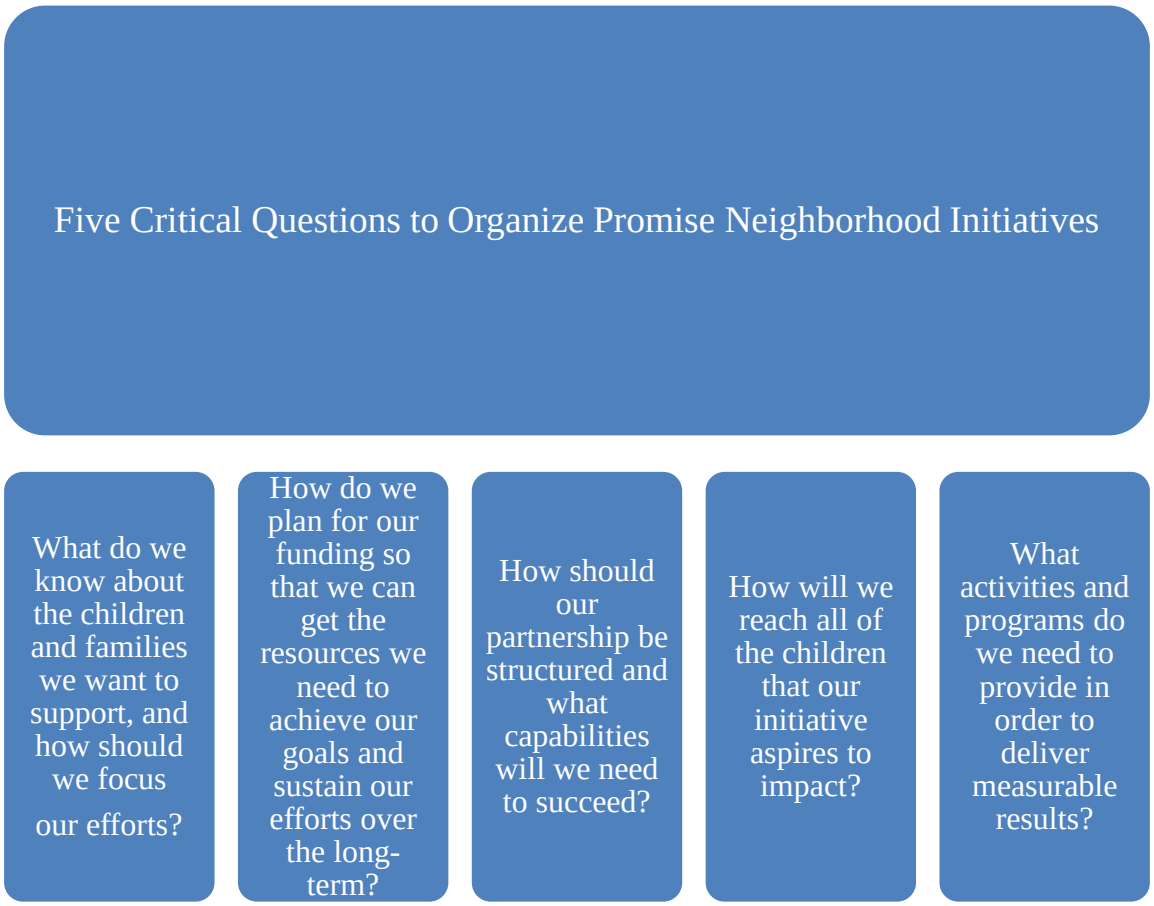



Figure 1: Promise Neighborhood Criteria
Note. Adapted from "Planning a Promise Neighborhood" by Don Howard and Rohit Menezes, 2010, *The Bridgespan Group, Inc. and PolicyLink.*

The questions look simple, but answering them effectively to receive Promise Neighborhood funding requires rigorous analysis and thoughtful consideration. The application process requires a demonstration of knowledge and an illustration of the most important tradeoffs. Each initiative requires specifics about how to converge its values with data and analyses to inform its decisions. The Promise Neighborhood Institute has written a guide (Howard & Menezes, 2010) for those interested in beginning a community school initiative. Whether or not they are applying for a Promise Neighborhood grant, this assists in the continuing dialogue among community leaders, policy makers and educators.

The Federal Promise Neighborhoods Program is an initiative to break the cycle of generational poverty by improving the educational outcomes and overall life prospects of low-income children and their families with a comprehensive place-based approach to support children from birth through college. The Promise Neighborhoods' vision is that "all children growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to effective schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and a successful transition to college and career" (Promise Neighborhood Institute, 2012, p. 1).

The goals of the program are similar to the successful community-based Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) model in New York City. Communities seeking to create their own approaches need to understand key elements of comprehensive community initiatives and community schools in order to lay a strong foundation (Promise Neighborhoods Institute, 2012; & Harlem Children's Zone, 2011). Twenty one communities in America have received federal funding to create a community school model that encompasses the local community's specific needs.

However, not all communities who need the funding have received it. For the unfunded urban centers, the collaboration of community organizations, schools, and families is essential in the creation of a holistic education for this country's children. According to Blank, Jacobson, Melaville, and Pearson (2010), community schools are built on the logic that schools and communities are mutually dependent, and strong and purposeful partnerships between them are essential to students' academic success. A community-based school curriculum encompasses the multiple identities of a child (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Coalition for Community Schools, 2003). Research

on community-based education does not often appear in traditional education publications because it is seen as an alternative approach to school reform. Educators and administrators may be exposed to writing that promotes community engagement in urban areas through education, but it is often vague and doesn't address specific challenges within the communities.

Research from the Coalition for Community Schools (2003, 2010) provides a basic understanding into the core concepts for learning and the formation of a community-based initiative (community school). Figure 2 describes five conditions that are provided to students to allow learning opportunities that are both academic and nonacademic. These competencies are achievable when a UCS initiative is intentional about how it brings its resources together. Stakeholders must understand that their contributions need to help fulfill the learning conditions. Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) warns stakeholders to recognize that more contributions do not always create the best situation. If stakeholders' commitments are ad hoc, the resources may not be used to the best of their ability to support the five conditions for learning.

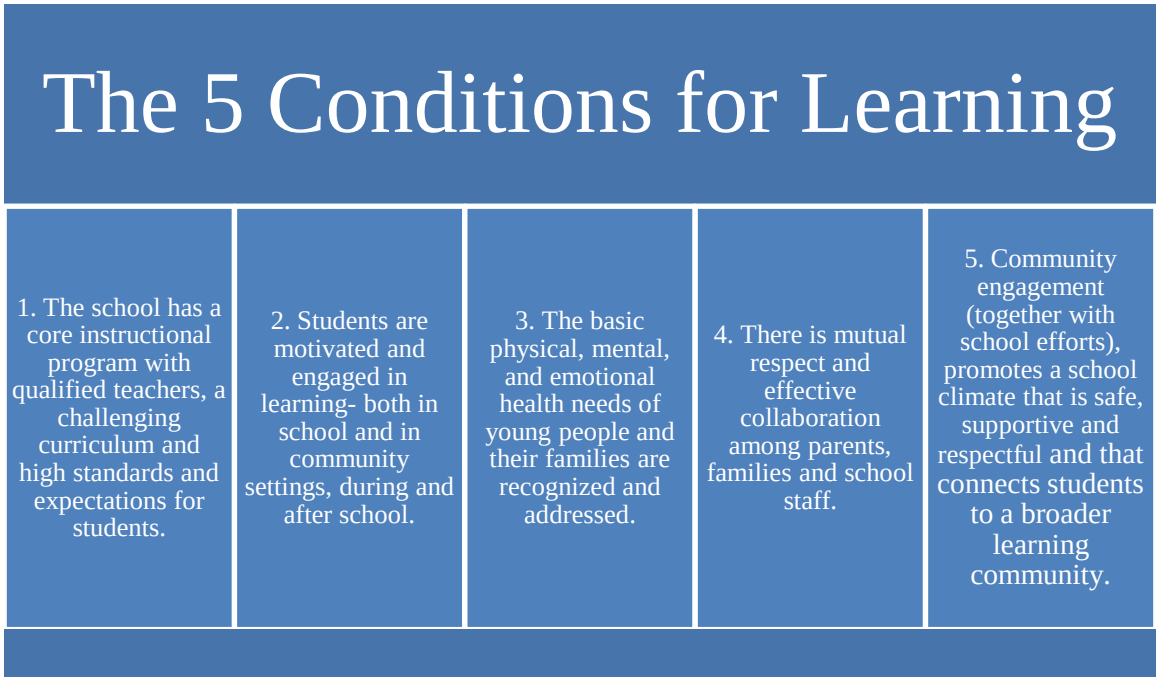



Figure 2: The Five Conditions
Note. Adapted from "Making the difference: Research and practice in community schools" by Martin Blank, Atelia Melaville, & Bela Shah, 2003, *Coalition for Community Schools.*

To challenge the traditional school structure and best meet the needs of urban public school students, advocacy for community schools as an educational reform requires the collaboration of multiple agencies. The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of over 160 national, state, and local organizations in K-16 education, youth development, higher education, community planning and building, family support, mental and physical health, and human services, government and philanthropy (Blank, Berg, & Melaville; 2010). Each of these organizations is "pressed to achieve maximum- and measurable-benefits for the dollars they oversee" (Blank et al., 2010, p. 1).

Organizations in each of these sectors often strive to produce quality programs to support urban communities. The Coalition for Community Schools provides the opportunity for the fragmented organizations to come together and support urban public

school students (Blank et al., 2010). As the African proverb states, "It takes a village, to raise a child" (Cowen-Fletcher, 1994).

Definition of community in education

Schutz (2006) defined a community as a group of people who share something with each other. In his study, community shared a geographic location of home and school. One reason for interest in urban community schools is the involvement of authentic participation, including input from school members, families, businesses, and citizens in the immediate area. Schutz (2006) and Anderson (1998) described authentic participation as an important part of success within communities. The authentic participation leads to feelings of belonging and sharing resources. Educators, families, and community members have opportunities to make use of local beliefs, practices, and goals to plan and implement various activities surrounding children's education.

Community-based education respects equality among all its participants. Members have a chance to participate individually or collectively to create and/or sustain change and implementation that positively impacts their community. James (2004) ascertained that policy makers view members of urban communities as objects of poverty, not as people living in circumstances of poverty. His explanation to educators included the recognition of the lived realities and experiences of the students, families, and community. The action of considering a holistic view of students' lives has created a connection to everyone involved in community-based education (James, 2004; Kolodny, 2001). Schools that work together with families and communities to establish commonalities, relationships, and understanding generate shared experiences. The times and types of the experiences such as morning coffee, a Saturday class, and an evening

meal need to be flexible to reach more local participants. The activities are designed to forge a bond that will last throughout the child's education. "A more child-centered motivation for the growth of these collaborative efforts stems from a growing desirability for a holistic approach to child development and learning" (Kolodny, 2001, p. 153). This seamless support for children creates success in many aspects and identities in their lives.

## Statement of the Problem and Significance of the Study

As a result of the overwhelming dropout statistics and inequalities in traditional educational structures within public schools, Urban Community School (UCS) initiatives are being created around the country (Coalition for Community Schools, 2003) as an answer to the call for urban educational reform. While there is extensive data available about general performance in traditional schools, there are few hard numbers about the general performance in urban community schools. A UCS can be run as a public, private, or non-profit organization. There are different models with varying levels of academic performance (Coalition for Community School, 2010; Dobbie & Fryer, 2009) though there is not one database for collective UCS performance. The Coalition assumed that each initiative was begun with the best of intentions: a need to do good, to create a solution to poverty, and to help support children's learning. An example includes the San Francisco initiative based on a partnership between Children's Aid Society (a non-profit social services organization) and a local school district (Blank et al., 2003). The two organizations partnered with community members to conduct forums with youth and families to discover and understand the wants and needs of the area. A two-year planning process led to collaborative fundraising for a new building on the school's campus to house social services. The need in this specific community dictated comprehensive

programming in the form of academic, social, and support services for students to fulfill their academic potential. Full time youth and family advocates collaborated with educators to assist students having behavioral or emotional difficulties. This initiative is being considered as a model for social services interweaving the country's educational system (Coalition for Community Schools, 2011).

The Community Empowerment and Agency School

What happens, however, when a school initiative, though well intended, lacks strategic planning and implementation? What happens if there are not enough funds to support the initiative? What happens to the students if the partnerships dissolve? What happens when there are cultural and class disconnections in this model? How can an initiative be considered a community school when it targets only females?

As the title of this dissertation reveals, the research in this case study describes the lessons learned from the successes and mistakes of one such initiative that addresses these questions. In an urban area of Charlotte, North Carolina, the Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS) rose out of a need to provide impoverished students opportunities similar to those of the private school students living in the same city. The large urban public school system provides very few of the life and learning opportunities afforded to students in the top six private schools in the area. Each of the private schools is run as a small district (Charlotte Area Independent Schools, 2012). These nationally renowned schools offer global studies, scholarships to elite colleges, international travel, and a multitude of advanced placement and college preparatory coursework. There are no vocational classes offered at these schools. All teachers are state certified and many have graduate degrees in the educational field. The average cost

of the six private schools is $21,000 per year, per child (Charlotte Area Independent Schools, 2012).

CEAS was a grass-roots initiative which was run as a non-profit 501c3. The mission of the private tuition-free school for girls in grades 5-8 was to educate and empower the leaders of tomorrow. The advertised model for CEAS included an extended school day, a rigorous curriculum, a commitment to student support through high school and college, hands-on learning opportunities and a discovery of personal interests for each student. The model also included family participation in the school and their inclusion in empowerment programs, along with student participation in community service projects. Each girl was to have her own laptop to develop confidence and competence in technology, and to assist her learning. CEAS considered itself a family that would celebrate and respect differences. The school was to balance the needs of each student with the support and cooperation of the community. In the recruiting material, the school's mission statement was presented:

> CEAS is a school where girls from low-income families in the 5th-8th grades are challenged to dream, plan, and transform goals into realities. Girls transition into young women who appreciate the power of the individual to impact her family, community, city, state, nation, and the world. They will break the cycle of poverty that plagues our nation's cities. They will close the global achievement gap. They will live their dreams in this great country that we call America (CEAS Brochure, 2010, p. 5).

The recruiting material failed to mention that the school was not run by educators. There was just one part time female participant who was certified to teach by the state

during the CEAS experience. Four of the initial participants were from a family that believed in supporting social justice needs, yet had limited experience in the educational field.

The pressing issues of education and the support of urban community schools as a federal urban reform strategy are important to note. There are constant debates at the federal level surrounding American public education (Children's Defense Fund, 2011). The Obama Administration has implored educators to claim responsibility for providing an education to all students. Federal funding tends to lead to educational trends (Promise Neighborhood Institute, 2012). For example, the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative is focused on improving education in urban areas by using a holistic approach similar to the Harlem Children's Zone. Yet in reality, the small initiatives are not reaching all students as intended (HCZ, 2010.) There are questions that must be asked; for example: What can be learned from the smaller alternative schools for use in public schools? Is the variety of community school initiatives hurting rather than helping the case for Promise Neighborhoods?

Also considered within this dissertation is that this type of grassroots school, this method of educational reform, is not currently regulated or even monitored by state and federal guidelines. Urban community schools operate under a broad variety of auspices. UCS initiatives are operated through public school districts, charter schools, private businesses, for-profit organizations, and as was the case of CEAS, a non-profit organization (CCS, 2010). Community schools that are run within the parameters of an existing school district or have been granted a charter are made to comply with their state's standards for education. Yet, with no central supervision for community school

efforts, some of these initiatives are not regulated as traditional public schools are. CEAS was an example of a school that avoided public scrutiny because it was considered a non-profit organization.

CEAS was not applying for Promise Neighborhood funding, but did define itself as a community school. This descriptive case study has intrinsic value, as it examined CEAS specifically, by using a critical lens against proven strategies in successful UCS initiatives. Through the description and the process of this case study, I provided the contextual perspective of CEAS. The research provided the background for this strategy of educational reform, the examples of successful initiatives, and the importance of including all participants in the initial stages of development, and the areas for initiatives to improve upon. This UCS experience was a relevant research study in that it provided guidelines and a framework for the many Promise Neighborhood and unfunded initiatives being started today.

## Research Purpose and Questions

Community schools are loosely defined and each school has a lot of unique qualities. We lack comprehensive data to look at the overall success of community schools. By examining one case of a school that failed within a year, this research sought to uncover some of the challenges associated with community schools. The purpose of this dissertation study was to form a comprehensive understanding of a grassroots endeavor of an urban community school initiative (UCS) that was not a Promise Neighborhood candidate. This effort, called the Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS,) was intended as an urban educational reform strategy. The study then described and analyzed the life cycle of the Community Empowerment and Agency UCS

initiative as an alternative to traditional schooling. The following questions guided this work:

1) What is the process for the emergence of an urban community school?

2) What factors contributed to the closing of the Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS) urban community school initiative?

3) What can be learned from the grassroots approach of Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS) as an urban community school initiative?

The qualitative design was an inductive case study of one urban community school initiative started at the grassroots level. This endeavor was not part of a researched model and did not apply for federal funding. Incorporating critical theory, the study was designed to focus on the experiences of its participants. The study examined the processes of this UCS initiative, CEAS, during its emergence and life cycle. The discussion included the analysis of participant impact and agency to create social capital, family and student perceptions of CEAS, and the benefits of the UCS initiative.

Though CEAS is an example of one failed community school initiative, it offers valuable lessons for schools, policy makers, and citizens who are considering this type of urban reform strategy. The results of this dissertation research include opportunities to build future initiatives and create an understanding for the need of a critical analysis of social and cultural capital in a community prior to the launch of an initiative. Additionally, there is a specific request from the federally funded Promise Neighborhood Institute for feedback to provide guidance and valuable insights for future initiatives in the country.

## Theoretical Framework

Critical theory provided the theoretical framework for this case study. This approach proposes agency to increase social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Freire, 1970; Mayo, 2008). Critical theory is defined as an awareness and insight that existing societal structures derive from historically generated patterns of domination and subordination (Bennett de Marris & LeCompte, 1999). A critical approach to social capital challenges the hegemonic structures in education which historically have been viewed as unfortunate, but natural and unavoidable (Freire, 1970; Giroux,1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lemert, 2010; Mayo, 2008; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004). Deficit labels of people living in poverty and of English language learners often absolve schools from the responsibility to educate all students (Stromquist, 2002). Yet it has been my observation that in a global market, bilingual students are in demand; the need for educational innovation is impending. School structure and family culture and traditions are significant factors that affect the daily lives of students.

Since CEAS was a reform initiative produced specifically for young females as an alternative to traditional schooling, it was imperative to examine the historical roots of feminism as a social theory. The three waves of feminism as well as brief description of the work of Harriet Martineau, Ida B. Wells and Jane Addams and a feminist critique of public education are included in the discussion.

The first wave of feminism began in the late 1840s and during the transition from classical (social class) to modern (encompassing gender and race) theory. This wave examined women's rights and the right for women to vote. Black feminism contributed to

this movement by examining the multiple identities being ignored by the hegemonic powers in American society.

The second wave of feminism had the effect of Affirmative Action for Women and took place from the 1960's to the 1990's. The equal rights of women, gay and lesbian rights, and social justice became key points of this movement. Black feminism contributed to this movement as minority women claimed their voice as Civil Rights Movements validated their work and place in American society. Audre Lord (1984) and Patricia Hill Collins (1997, 2010) are examples of Black Feminism in the second wave but are still relevant today especially when dealing with the social location of minority women.

The third wave of feminism examines the multiple identities of a woman. It deals with sexuality, and global implications of the rights and treatment for women now and of the future around the world. This also includes education of women, earning power, and the impact of technology on women.

Harriet Martineau, considered to be the first woman sociologist, began gender studies comparing the US and Britain. Her research included the Western Eurocentric history of women and examined rhetoric and action aiming for a positivist conclusion to change society. After coming to America, Martineau found oppressive structures in politics, immigration, and slavery which served to preserve hegemonic power. In *Society in America,* (1837) the scholar angrily criticized the state of women's education. Martineau wrote:

> The intellect of women is confined by an unjustifiable restriction of... education... As women have none of the objects in life for which an enlarged education is

> considered requisite, the education is not given... The choice is to either be 'ill-educated, passive, and subservient, or well-educated, vigorous, and free only upon sufferance (p. 92-93).

Applying her research to the current educational environment, Martineau's examination would support that schools are designed for White middle class American males to gain knowledge and power. Marginalized groups, minorities and women are often second thoughts to the creation and implementation of school curriculum. The history of tracking and specialized courses in schools keeps White males in a position of power while the Marginalized groups struggle to equalize the access of information provided to them.

Ida B. Wells examined issues of gender and race. She had multiple identities as an African American journalist, a teacher, a mother, and a researcher who used her words to fight the imbalance she found put upon her by American society. Her work (1970) in anti-lynching movements addressed racism, women's rights and the demarcation of interracial relationships. She examined the lack of validation and isolation that women and African American people received from the hegemonic forces in American society.

Wells research (1970) applied to today's educational environment would examine the roles which are valued in American society and find that they create both gender and racial stratification in school curriculum. Her work would recognize the success of the small gains made by these groups, but would recognize that there are still weighted values for the White European Males in American society which result in continual preferential treatment in educational institutions.

Jane Addams critically investigated and supported the education of marginalized groups. She was a colleague of Wells in the sense that she valued the many identities of a woman. Her studies critically analyzed hegemonic structures, their status quo, and what the structures deemed as the norm. Initially, Addams' work supported "being a woman" and women's rights (Lemert 2010; Scholl, 2009). She constructed the Hull House which generated a curriculum much different than the traditional school structure. She knew that women had specific and unique abilities and wanted to cultivate them through learning and education that was of practical use. Her work supported holistic learning that supported women as learners, family members, and social members of society. In Addams' work, she critically examined the structures of hegemony, patriarchy, and social class. At the time of her research, rich White men dominated land ownership. This began an awareness and support system of women for women's rights. Addams' study of education has been utilized by supporters of holistic education and those critical of hegemonic structures.

As a social reformist and one of the creators of the Hull House, Addams realized that education must focus on survival skills such as vocational skills and citizenship instruction. Hull House was established in Chicago where a new wave of immigrants was deemed a crisis for the city as problems erupted on a daily basis. Addams (1910) believed education must be brought to children and families in a way that would ultimately allow social problems to be solved by the very people they involved. Adams (1910) wrote:

> [Residents] must be content to live quietly side by side with their neighbors, until they grow into a sense of relationship and mutual interests. Their neighbors are

> held apart by differences of race and language which the residents can more easily overcome. They are bound to see the needs of their neighborhood as a whole, to furnish data for legislation, and to use their influence to secure it (p. 127).

Community schools and education were synonymous to Jane Addams as they were for John Dewey, an educational reformist who shared Addams' vision for linking the delivery of education with the community. Dewey (1909) wrote about his philosophy of education:

> I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends. I believe that school must represent present life-life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground (p. 7).

As an educational reformer, Dewey demanded the notion of community emergence in schools and eventually community schools. Dewey (1909) wrote, "…the school is an embryonic typical community life, and moral training must be partly pathological and partly formal" (p. 15). Dewey believed in a real-life curriculum for students that brought local agencies into the school environment so the school might be organized as a community center.

Addams' Hull House (Keating, 1999) was a center for social and school services, as well as a support system for the community, and a contributor to higher education. Her curriculum is considered culturally responsive teaching by more recent standards

(Ladson-Billings, 1994) which supporters of holistic education view as an important component of successful educational institutions (Coalition for Community Schools, 2010). In Addams' model, students wouldn't be measured on just their ability to pass a standardized test, but also on their abilities to have an active voice, participate in community service, and to think critically about their own contributions to society (Coalition of Community Schools, 2010; Keating 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The critical approach proposes agency to increase social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Freire, 1970; Mayo, 2008) to challenge the hegemonic structures in education. Social capital contributed to holistic education, and included Erikson's (2005) research which said that as humans, we require continued participation through cultural models to involve feeling in our knowledge. Learning is an emotional activity as well as a cognitive one.

Students' feelings of motivation, empowerment, and academic success are important components for their academic achievement (Erikson, 2005). Social change requires the collective voice. In Addams' research students felt that the actions of an individual or role model also make a difference (Dei, 1997; Moses & Cobb, 2001). Social change supports the work of critical theorist Freire (1970) who found the banking concept of education (in which the hegemonic group deposits information to the marginalized groups) serves the contribution of oppression. Critical theorists recommend understanding that history has generated the patterns of hegemonic domination in existing social structures (Bennett de Marris & LeCompte, 1999; Rios-Aguilar, C., Marquez-Kiyama, J., Gravitt, M., Moll, L.C. 2011).

To resist the banking concept of education, Ladson-Billings (1994) recommended culturally relevant teaching as a tool to combat hegemonic structures. Her work related to that of UCS initiatives (Blank et. al., 2010) in that she prescribed creating opportunities for reciprocity of learning. To further explain, teachers incorporate culturally relevant information and strategies from their students 'communities in the classroom. The students then teach information learned to the community through service and volunteering (allowing the students to have a stake in their own learning). Creating a community or family within the classroom through informal and regular class meetings generates respect between students and teachers. The group then feels connected (Ladson-Billing, 1994). She described students' motivation to give back to the community rather than abandoning it for a perceived better place. In addition, the students had high expectations for the community to exemplify the idea of cultural relevance by providing opportunity to create collaborative relationships with adults in the school and the community.

Student-based inquiry promoted teachers to listen to and facilitate students in utilizing their input into their own education. This created a shift in power from teacher to student. Students were active investigators; teachers became facilitators of knowledge rather than the gatekeepers (Delpit, 1995, 2006). The strategies worked to combat the "banking concept" (Freire, 1970) that kept marginalized groups oppressed. These strategies were planned attributes in the curriculum for the CEAS initiative, which was the subject of this study.

## Researcher's Position Statement

While my own circumstances were not impoverished, I had experiences that resembled those of the urban school students that I've come to treasure. The assistance I received along the way helped me maintain little triumphs in various areas of my life. As I examine urban community-based education, I recognize the importance of the multiple identities and factors that supported my own success. My own life experiences have brought me down a winding path which has exposed me to many sides of a cultural straddle (Carter, 2006) and a class divide (Lareau, 2003; Lubrano, 2004; Trevino, 2010).

My childhood was typical of a working or lower middle class child (Lareau, 2003), playing outside in the neighborhood and spending a lot of time with extended family. Uniquely, I volunteered for the Special Olympics each year as a child. My mother's desire for upward mobility (Bourdieu, 1986; Lareau, 2003) led to my exposure of what she called "culture." I fought against culture in my youth but am appreciative for those experiences as an adult. I joined many groups and belonged to numerous after-school activities to avoid the instability in my home. My multiple identities led me on many adventures in which I could be "classy" when my mom exposed me to middle class situations and "street" when I stayed with my dad. I became a person whose identity was intertwined across family, school, and community.

The stability in my life was school. It wasn't necessarily my teachers who saved me, actually quite the opposite in middle school. I was suspended, failing classes, and missing school often (35-40 days one year); no one took notice. It may have been because I was athletic and outgoing. I continued the same routine in high school, but there a teacher did take notice. He asked why I was fighting, why I fell asleep in class,

and about my family. Of course I did not divulge any of this information to him, but he kept up with me. I had failed algebra classes two years before I attended his class junior year. He tutored me almost every day and arranged for me to have him again as a senior. I knew that someone in the school cared about me.

When a guidance counselor learned that I wanted to be a teacher and suggested I schedule the vocational preschool educator track my senior year, my teacher said absolutely not. He thought I should go to college and I listened to him (as well as my family). While in many aspects my school failed me, a teacher and the community supported me and helped me to attain success for the next step in my intertwined journey.

I learned through those years that, like my own, every child's academic achievement is entangled with social, physical, mental wellbeing, with the development of multiple identities and competencies in many areas of life, and with the engagement of strong family and community relationships (Comer & Haynes, 1996; Coalition for Community Schools, 2003; Dryfoos, 2008; Epstein 1997; Melaville, 1998). I understand that in life there are copious factors that produce success in education and in an individual.

When I learned about the CEAS initiative, I was intrigued. I had been teaching in an urban setting for most of my career and had never seen a school curriculum that offered the experiences that CEAS planned to provide for students living in poverty. In comparison to the proposed Promise Neighborhoods, CEAS was funded by private donations and run as a non-profit 501c3. I spoke with the founder during the planning of CEAS and intended to share community school conference information and my expertise

in the field. We agreed that I would volunteer as the Community Outreach Coordinator and work with the students every Friday afternoon.

Although I examined urban community schools through the lens of an educator, it is important to acknowledge the roles of community and neighborhood in my work. As CEAS development progressed, I had strong reservations about the direction of the activities. Research (Coalition for Community Schools, 2003) suggested a strategic planning process of at least three years; the CEAS plan was put together in a single year. There was very little family and community involvement incorporated into the development of a curriculum. I was concerned with how family and community relationships would be supported, considering this initiative was being marketed and labeled as a "community school." Research (Coalition for Community Schools, 2003; Dobbie & Fryer 2009; HCZ, 2009; Promise Neighborhoods Institute, 2011) proposed extensive organizational structures for sustainability, professional development for teachers, and family, social service and community integration programs. I did not witness any of this in CEAS development.

My other set of reservations was with the single gender population and community school intersection. I did not necessarily understand how the two could mesh successfully. However, I decided I would continue with the experience because I was hoping for a positive learning experience for everybody involved with the school. Regardless of my own "gut reaction" I wanted CEAS to succeed. It was always my intention to use CEAS as the focus of my dissertation research. Initially, my research topic was to examine the social capital produced by the CEAS experience. It was only

after the school closed that I decided to contextually describe the life cycle of CEAS for this study.

## Summary

As discussed in this chapter, all students will have barriers and obstacles that they encounter in their lives and academic careers. Yet with support from role models, an understanding of holistic living, and wrap-around services to assist them, the option for success is attainable for every child. As the introduction to the research of UCS initiatives closes, Chapter 2 examines, among other things, these barriers, obstacles, and support system. It provides in-depth research about the current state of urban education in America. A variety of specific UCS models are explained and evaluated to allow the reader to gain insight and knowledge about this type of urban educational reform.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

A community school is defined as a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, services, supports, and opportunities leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities (Children's Aid Society, 2011; Coalition for Community Schools, 2011). As stated previously, there is no specific national database for community schools because of the varying organizations that initiate and collaborate to create them. In 1997, the Coalition for Community Schools was formed as part of the national community schools movement to help coordinate partnerships and share data. Because community schools come in so many shapes and sizes – there is no formal model – there is no exact number of schools in operation. The Coalition has compiled a directory of 5,000 national and international community schools and organizations (Coalition for Community Schools, 2012). However, it should be noted, that not all UCS initiatives are required for a school to be part of the Coalition.

In North Carolina, the organization named Communities In Schools (CIS) is not a community school, but rather a non-profit community organization whose mission is to help students stay in school and make right choices by connecting schools with needed community resources. CIS of North Carolina allows 44 counties in the state to assess the needs of their youth and design plans for meeting those needs using existing resources.

CIS North Carolina reports improvement in student achievement and school attendance rates with fewer suspensions. In these schools over 90 percent of students at risk of not being promoted were promoted to the next grade, while 93 percent of the CIS seniors graduated (CIS, 2012). CIS is an example of the community supporting the local schools and brings back to mind the African Proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child" (Cowen-Fletcher, 1994).

As was true at the time of this study, the local, urban Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools system works with CIS to coordinate resources, but there are currently no community schools available to Charlotte Mecklenburg students. Just outside of the Charlotte metro area, in Davidson, NC, there is one community school available to students in a middle-upper class area. The students are selected through a lottery program that requires families to fill out extensive paperwork and take on extensive parental responsibilities required for student attendance (CSDNC, 2012).

Through an examination of social and school contexts, the process for the emergence of an urban community school (UCS) is better understood. This literature review investigates community school models and strategies that have proven successful through evidence-based research (Coalition for Community Schools, 2010). Cautionary advice about models, strategies, and initiatives follows. A description of asset-based approaches to education is then exemplified with UCS success stories. This will also include connections that were established in the Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS) planning as part of an UCS initiative.

Poverty and societal infrastructures provide the macro-level factors which create an environment for an UCS to come to fruition. At the micro-level, issues related to

educational barriers support the emergence of UCS initiatives. A consequence of disengagement from traditional schooling, resulting from the macro and micro level factors, encourages the emergence of the UCS movement. Media has created a familiar deficit understanding of marginalized populations. There has been blame placed on the families, the students, and the communities for their failure to succeed in traditional education.

## Macro Level- Social Context

### Poverty

Redmond (2008) found that many analysts strictly define poverty in narrow terms as a lack of material resources. His definition used the term deliberately to describe a lack of resources, deprivation of capabilities and functioning, and social exclusion. "Poverty has an emotive-pulling power that a number of possible substitute terms (such as 'deprivation,' 'adversity,' 'disadvantage,' 'hardship,' destitution') do not so easily possess" (Redmond, 2008; p. 64). The variety of definitions for poverty from multiple perspectives is not easily measurable. Ruggeri et al. (2003) described points of concern which include the use of poverty lines, the space in which poverty is defined, the unit or level and geographic location of how poverty is defined, and the fact that most statements about poverty imply that there is a certain reality which poverty statistics capture. In which case, value judgments affect measurement, which ensures that the methods are not objective. The subjectivity of the measurement then depends on who is making the value judgments. Freire's (1970) explanation of human aspirations described how actions were occurring; and the dominant group (oppressors) was devaluing the judgments of people living in poverty (the oppressed.)

Redmond (2008) and Wagle (2002) noted the dominant approaches to defining poverty as economic welfare, capabilities, and social exclusion. The economic welfare approach is the public acceptance of economic indicators of well-being which views living standards and income as almost the same. Redmond (2008) described the capabilities approach as moving away from a preoccupation with commodities and incomes. A capabilities approach features an asset-based focus on potential and related outcomes. Redmond found that in this case, the child's mental, spiritual, moral, and social development increased. His description of the social exclusion approach emphasized the individual and collective process of exclusion in society. Human beings compared themselves with their peers in considering their own situations. The social exclusion approach may also be considered asset based, as it can create agency in individuals. Multiple researchers (Redmond, 2008; Ruggeri Laderchi, Saith, & Stewart, 2003; Wagle, 2002) agree that the purpose of defining poverty is to reduce it and to problem solve towards solutions for it.

A definition of concentrated poverty (CDF, 2011; Massey & Denton, 1993) features children and families living in neighborhoods with high concentrations of persistent, generational poverty. Due to the effects of racial segregation, changes in the urban economy, and the class transformation of the inner city, they have been intensely and negatively affected by their surroundings (Massey, 1990; Massey & Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987). In this situation, cognitive development is often severely delayed and verbal ability is reduced. Further, "When a significant number of children living for long periods in concentrated poverty are themselves concentrated in one school, that school

faces enormous and unique challenges" (CDF, 2011). The call to action is clear as UCS initiatives are one answer to urban school challenges.

## Infrastructure

An analysis of the existing literature led to three areas that directly impact this case study. The discussion includes an exploration of three specific historical infrastructures in American society led to an obvious pattern of poverty for marginalized groups. The infrastructures included real estate and residential patterns, transportation, and social services. The multiple barriers in these infrastructures have long affected the formation of the current institution of American education. As a reaction to traditional schooling, marginalized communities have created schools and learning opportunities that include their own cultures, traditions, and people.

### Real estate and residential patterns

The 1949 Federal Housing Act (Halpern, 1995; Keating et.al., 1996; Meyer, 2001) permitted and encouraged racial discrimination in mortgage underwriting and housing subsidy programs. The Act aggravated changing urban economic and social patterns. Banks, lenders, and real estate institutions fraudulently abused power to make money. Specifically, their manipulation of mortgage lending had different parameters for loans to White middle class and Minority poor class applicants. Tactics of redlining (not allowing African Americans to buy in specific neighborhoods) and racially unequal rent-charging within the Federal Housing Act created less stability in urban centers and exacerbated racial deficits. Racial segregation is crucial to explain the strong interaction between high rates of poverty and rising rates of African Americans as the urban underclass (Massey & Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987). Regardless of race, whichever

group was segregated would experience the same geographic concentration of poverty (Massey & Denton, 1993) in urban areas, though in the majority of cases that designation fell on the shoulders of the Minority poor.

In turn, physical isolation occurred as the location and design of public housing led to urban racial and economic segregation. There was no money allocated toward resources and social services in areas surrounding public housing (Keating, 1995), leading to flourishing poverty. White flight occurred as citizens reacted to the concentrated poverty by distancing themselves within the structures of suburbs, gated communities, and separate lives. Research studies (Halpern, 1995; Keating, 1995, Keating, Krumholz, & Star, 1996; Massey & Denton, 1993; Meyer, 2001; Rusk, 2003; Wilson, 1987) found that city populations, investments, jobs, and educational opportunities followed to the suburbs also, leaving urban areas with huge challenges and barriers to the attainment of economic well-being for their citizens.

Transportation

Public housing began to deteriorate by the 1960s because of occupants' low income and inadequate federal funding (Hays, 1995; Keating, 1996). As more people moved out to the suburbs, highways, garages, and connections to city centers were created to encourage commuters to come into the city for work. The transportation systems created for suburban cars were typically built near and through public housing areas because there was less agency by its residents and almost no political representation for them that would prevent this (Keating, 1996). These systems led to the actual deterioration of the land and lower housing values in these neighborhoods.

As previously discussed, jobs, educational opportunities, and services also moved to the suburbs as a result of the 1949 Federal Housing Act. This situation left urban centers stagnant as residents and students were unable to access social resources, positive school settings, and work that supported upward mobility, which was available now to those in the suburbs. Families living in concentrated poverty often spent triple the time of suburban families in daily travel (Makarewicz, 2012). Families found that they must borrow cars or use unreliable public transportation which affected their relationships with school, social networks, and employment. Transportation affected the family involvement in learning, school achievement, and school quality as well (Anyon, 1980, 2005; Halpern, 1995; Keating, 1996; Makarewicz, 2012). Communities found themselves left with the negative consequences of having been forgotten by policy makers.

Fragmentation of social, medical, and mental services

Our country hosts a plethora of youth and family service agencies (Dryfoos, 2003; Dryfoos & McGuire, 2002). Every category of problem has its own categorical agency, so that a troubled family may look to the welfare department for economic support, the health department for immunizations, and youth organizations for after-school programs (Dryfoos, 2003; Portz, Stein, & Jones, 1999; Putnam, 2000). Each of the agencies has its own regulations and policies and is usually located in a separate building. Families have to visit many different places to get the services they need and may not have the access to transportation that will carry them to these varied locations. Families may not have the time available or the education required to fill out the many different forms necessary to determine eligibility for each program. Further mental health research (Dryfoos, 1994;

Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Putnam, 2000) shows community mental health clinics exist, but that disadvantaged families do not know how to access them or are often ashamed to be seen entering such facilities.

The push to integrate residential living, transportation and social services for families has existed for many years (Dryfoos, 2003; Halpern, 1996; Mancz, Power, Ginsburg-Block, & Dowrick, 2010). Many community planning agencies have tried to address the problem of fragmentation by recommending centralized services. More recently, a diverse group of practitioners, educators, and youth advocates, deeply concerned about the situation in disadvantaged schools, began to call for bringing services closer to the needy population (Coalition for Community Schools, 2003; HCZ, 2010).

## Micro Level - School Context

The use of deficit labels for students in urban schools is common in current American society, with one of these deficit labels based on assumptions and stereotypes about people living in poverty. For example, "Often the attitude in generational poverty is that society owes one a living. In situational poverty, the attitude is often one of pride and a refusal to accept charity…Of particular importance is the use of formal register" (Payne, 1998, p. 64). Payne's (1998) framework to understand poverty was used to train educators around the country and was supported by research that had no data. Many American school districts trained faculty with Payne's deficit curriculum. Districts spent millions of dollars on workbooks, videos, and Payne presenting her curriculum. In the local Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools district, select teachers were sent to Payne's workshops and then expected to present information to their school's staff. This type of

teacher training combined with negative assumptions in media headlines, blamed students, parents, communities, and teachers, while research (Alley, 2012; Loveless, 2010; Orlando, 2011) called out for reform in urban schools.

Kunjufu (2002, 2006) addressed critical issues in education that are affected by deficit thinking and labels of urban students. Delpit (1995, 2006) found that different cultural influences opened educators to varied worldviews, and encouraged teachers to carry these views into the classroom. However, she explained that many teacher education programs focus only on pedagogy for White students. Further, teachers' own experiences don't vary far from this perspective because most are White middle class women. Since students don't relate to their teachers they often lose motivation which then feeds into the deficit thinking and labeling of urban students.

Deficit labels in the institution of American education have affected school tracking, testing, and segregation (Mickelson, 1990, 2006, 2008). The deficit labels have also disregarded the lack of resources (Kozol, 1991, 2005) and culturally relevant teaching (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1994) that, when coupled with the delivery of a Eurocentric curriculum (Kunjufu, 2002, 2006), hindered student learning in urban schools. The consequence of all these issues in traditional schooling was the disengagement of students, their families, and the communities.

The urban community school (UCS) movement has formed a reaction to this disengagement in order to create multiple identities of success for all students. The UCS movement utilized the assets of the community in which a school is located rather than assuming a deficit perspective of that community.

The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute describes asset building as utilizing local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development (ABCD, 2012). ABCD prescribes building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions to maximize the existing strengths of a community. ABCD uses asset-based community development to build stronger, more sustainable communities. As related to education, the ABCD creates mutually productive and positive relationships between local schools (Chicago Public Schools) and their surrounding communities. Defining the job responsibilities of School-Community Connector and building this role's capacity, ABCD has supported schools to secure political support for school funding and pedagogical resources, and it has created community building activities using school and community assets (ABCD, 2012). In many instances, asset based community development produced successful situations for UCS to develop.

## Community School Models and Strategies

Community school models are proliferating under many diverse auspices, for example:

- University-Assisted, Schools of the 21st Century, Principal-initiated Schools, Children's Aid Society (CAS), Communities in School (CIS), Community-Based Organization (CBO).
- Schools that are funded by specific foundations include Lighted Schoolhouses (supported by Beacons), Bridges-to-Success (United Way), Community Schools (Academy for Educational Development)

- Schools that are funded by specific states, Caring Communities (Missouri), Healthy Start (California), Full-Service Schools (Florida, New York)

Since there is not one specific name for an urban community school, no one knows how many such schools now exist. There is no central data, but the number appears to be growing rapidly (Coalition for Community Schools, 2011; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002).

The purpose of this section in the literature review offers focused perspective of the data into the myriad of urban community educational programs being implemented and finds the effective practices that they share. This examination of community school models includes specific strategies from Epstein's Spheres of Influence Model, Comer's School Development Program Model, Critical Care Strategy Model and Full-Service Schools Model. The impact of urban community schools focuses on relationships and attitudes between the students, their families, communities, and schools. This study then ties common threads that lead to the emergence of effective practices and success in urban community schools through these four models.

Epstein's Spheres of Influence Model

Epstein (2001) found communities, families, and schools as overlapping circles of influence that affect student development and achievement (Epstein et.al, 2009). She theorized that the "spheres of influence" can be pushed apart or drawn together depending on communities and schools' individual program beliefs, policies, and educational practices. Epstein's (2001) research found six types of involvement that facilitated collaboration in UCS environments.

- Parenting: Assisting families to establish supportive home environments for children

- Communicating: Establishing two-way exchanges about school programs and children's progress within those programs.
- Volunteering: Recruiting and organizing parental help at school, home, or other locations
- Learning at home: Providing information and ideas to families related to instructional support for students homework and other curriculum-related materials
- Decision making: Engaging parents from all backgrounds serve as representatives and leaders on school committees
- Collaborating with the community: Identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs

This theory was focused primarily on parent involvement in the school with a secondary focus on including community members in children's education (Epstein, 2001; Sheldon, 2003). In this model program organization and outreach are essential to the success of family, community, and school partnerships. Sheldon (2003) reviewed indicators of success in each of Epstein's spheres of influence (2001). Successful partnerships in program organization included checks and balances such as involvement, an annual action plan, regular meetings, progress reports and evaluations of the action plan to all stakeholders.

Sheldon (2003) produced a three-point scale to measure the degree to which programs met the challenges of outreach partnerships. The following points were measured: (a) opportunities for schools' families and students to contribute to the community, (b) use of community resources, (c) a check for equal representation on leadership positions within the school and community, (d) teachers who used interactive

homework to include families, by offering invitations and opportunities to volunteer at work or at home, and (e) culturally sensitive communication in a variety of modes to include the contributions and questions of all participants, information obtainment, and access to educators. Epstein (2001) Sheldon (2003) found that a school with a higher score on these indicators is successful in meeting the goals of bonding families, communities, and schools.

Comer's School Development Program Model

The Comer School Development Program (SDP) views community as significant in children's learning and holistic development (Comer & Haynes, 1996). In SDP schools, the staff travels into the community to learn about its assets, and to provide and receive services. Community members come to schools to serve as resources to meet students' school-based needs. The "village" created in this environment works to produce a fluid structure, rather than fragmented pieces, in a child's development. The culturally responsive and relevant elements to the program build upon three mechanisms: school planning and management, student and staff support, and a parent program. The school planning and management team worked primarily to build supportive community relationships. The student and staff support system relies on individuals in the community with experience in child development and mental health training. This team addresses interpersonal concerns for students and their families, and it uses community resources. The parent program keeps lines of communication open between home and school. It also brings community perspectives to the attention of educators.

The mechanisms in the SDP focus on three operations: comprehensive school plan, staff development, and assessment and modification. Guiding principles that all

members of the program are asked to abide by include, no-fault decision making consensus, and collaboration (Comer, Ben-Avie, Haynes, & Joyner, 1999). Researcher McGee Banks (2005) found the SDP program to be an effective way to include decision making roles for community members, families, and schools.

The SDP produced reciprocal, positive relationships and attitudes among families and teachers. Family involvement was successful at the school level when there was a climate of trust in the SDP. Families needed to feel comfortable expressing their ideas. Careful preplanning was coordinated to avoid tension and to support the atmosphere of empowerment for the families. Feelings of mutuality and collaboration resulted in the community building stronger bonds (Comer & Haynes, 1996; Comer et al., 1999; McGee Banks, 2005).

Like the Epstein model, the SDP focused on the individual success strategy that is dominant in traditional schools. Each model made attempts to incorporate community, but focused primarily on promotion of parental involvement. Comer et al. (1999) found that initially using parental involvement strategies and then incorporating mental health models of discipline could effectively generate stronger relationships between the community and the school.

Critical Care Strategy Model

Research (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006) found two successful Latino urban community schools to examine a critical care strategy. Each school used *funds of knowledge* (Moll et al., 1992; Rios- Aguilar, et al., 2011) to provide students with educational and social experiences that aligned with their community and cultural resources. A simple explanation of *funds of knowledge* (Moll et al., 1992; Risko &

Walker-Dalhouse, 2007) is a school that makes explicit connections between family, community, peer and students' own experiences as they share in content goals, knowledge, and learning.

Incorporating funds of knowledge research (Moll et al., 1992), the Latino schools integrated curriculum that used project-based themes like industry, power and self-determination, media literacy, and biodiversity. The curriculum and pedagogy of this urban community school was relevant to students' lives and used important historic knowledge that was grounded in the students' identities. The students were able to analyze their lives and their communities through the affirmation of racial and ethnic practices. Similar to the Epstein and Comer models, the program also integrated traditional curriculum, but added to it with hands-on experiences in community events.

Critical care strategy in a UCS is defined as "the capacity and obligation of schools and communities to provide caring contexts for students who may be lacking caring experiences in their lives. The difference theory recognizes varied definitions of caring among social, ethnic, class and gender groups…" (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006, p. 411). Critical care strategy uses the previous terms to define the theory behind its model. This strategy also includes giving privilege to both cultural values and the political economy of the community, while considering the ways in which it intends to educate its students. The focus in this UCS model was to provide support, engage its students, retain high academic expectations, and form high quality intrapersonal relationships.

As mentioned, the UCS initiatives that use the critical care strategy rely on project-based learning to holistically educate the child. The schools also designed urban

youth initiatives' three separate after school programs and programs that linked community development to individual development. There was a focus on authentic caring and opportunities for students to uncover the "hidden curriculum" (Anyon, 1980) that is prevalent in many other programs. Along with project-based learning and youth initiatives was the emphasis on the educational philosophy of the teacher's role as facilitator and learner (Freire, 1970, 1997). Students' ideas and experiences fostered input and ownership into their own education which were valued by their facilitators.

Facilitator-teachers and community members had high student expectations and were available to students consistently in their lives. These strategies supported the engagement of high quality intrapersonal relationships. Building such relationships was consistent with Epstein and Comer's work; however, the critical care schools put more emphasis on the relationships with students and their communities rather than on the relationships with students their families.

Full-Service Schools Model

Full-Service urban community schools are all inclusive in the education of the child. Most full service schools address a variety of culturally relevant services available to families, which include: the arts, educational enrichment, recreation, business practices, morning and afternoon school programs, juvenile justice, drug and violence prevention, as well as health, mental health and social services (Coalition for Community Schools, 2011; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; HCZ, 2010; Tough, 2008). Dryfoos (1995) especially noted that the key to family participation is ensuring that the services and opportunities made available are ones that families really want and need.

The designation "full-service community school" (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002) encompasses concepts drawn from the diverse fields of youth development, risk-prevention, family welfare, community improvement, and educational enhancement. The designation describes a school that is the hub of the community and is open most of the time. The full-service school houses an array of supportive child and family health and social services provided through partnerships with community agencies. Further, the full-service school integrates quality classroom teaching with activities in extended hours involves parents in significant ways, and has a full-time coordinator.

The non-traditional structure of the full service school is holistic in that it encompasses all identities of the child's life. The employment of a full-time coordinator to support consistency at the school is recommended (Dryfoos, 1995). The Coordinator understands both educational systems and human service systems, with knowledge that comes from a combination of personal graduate pursuits such as education, community psychology, social work, public administration, or public health. The same cross-disciplinary approach is present when hiring principals and teachers because of their exposure to ideas about child, youth, and family development as part of their training.

The full service school program is most similar to the critical care model. Both encompass multiple pieces of the child's development within the walls of the school. Each of the UCS programs entails members of different groups setting aside their preconceived notions in an effort to collaborate on the development of a holistic program to educate children successfully. The idea that schools should become the locus for health and social service interventions has been interwoven to improve the quality of classroom experiences. Advocates for full service community schools believe that

achievement scores for many young people will not improve if the children and families are not assisted in their efforts to overcome health, mental health, social, and economic barriers to learning. Also, schools cannot assume the responsibility for everything that needs to be done; rather many community agencies must be ready to take on that challenge by providing services in schools (Coalition for Community Schools, 2011; Dryfoos, 2003; Tough, 2008).

The particulars of the UCS models relate to this dissertation because they afford the details of "lessons learned" from successful initiatives. CEAS was a grassroots initiative that expected to succeed because of a need for alternative schooling for impoverished students in Charlotte. Its life cycle consisted of one year.

Cautionary Urban Community School Actions

Sustainability is the desirable goal in UCS initiatives (Coalition for Community Schools, 2011; HCZ, 2009). Historically, initial movements for a UCS originated at the local level, since communities had a need to educate their children more holistically. The process for local change began with planning, the first action of which is "bottom up," with the emergence of major models one at a time (Antrop-Gonzalez & De Jesus, 2006; Comer, 1999; Dryfoos, 1995; Epstein, 1995). There is no specific agenda a community employs to become a UCS; any community agency can take the leadership role. A UCS may rise from an inclusive group from one school or neighborhood, a cluster of schools, or the whole system.

Schutz (2006) found that in her research, Epstein (2001) implied that communities were only helpful when they brought in resources and supported the school's mission and they were seen as harmful if they resisted or criticized schools. As a solution to this

implication, McGee Banks (2005) found that the Comer Model SDP ensured opportunities to empower families and community members by providing roles for them to fill that were key to making successful school-related decisions. Kolodny's (2001) examination of primarily single mothers' voices warned reformers not to forget them when restructuring, designing collaborative efforts, and building on the curriculum for UCS initiatives.

Another solution to the problem presented in Epstein's Model may be found in full service schools which sometimes have outside facilitators who assist school and community members through issues and problems surrounding money, space, staff, transportation, perceived territory, and equity (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002). Each of these issues is not only found in urban community schools, but is also integral to any human endeavor built on relationships, thus providing a potential barrier to a UCS initiative's success.

Money is always a concern in education and, even more so in the UCS model. The typical UCS initiative, which uses a full-service model and is open year-round, obviously costs more to operate (approximately 1,000 additional dollars per student per year) beyond the cost of traditional schooling (Coalition for Community Schools, 2011; Dryfoos, 2003). These additional funds are not generally part of the regular education budget. Almost all of the ancillary activities could be funded from existing categorical resources. Accessing the resources often requires outside technical and financial assistance from experienced partners such as the Children's Aid Society or Communities in Schools. It is imperative to have financial sustainability planned into a UCS initiative (Blank et. al., 2010; Coalition for Community Schools, 2011). Leveraged funding,

collaborative partnerships and a purposeful integration and alignment of assets are essential.

After a detailed exploration of the literature on urban community schools, five ideals seem to dominate the conversation. The repeated themes have been hope, equality, communication, negotiation and patience. Most stakeholders have the ideal of hope for what a UCS can create for marginalized students. These investors hold a wish to do something or want to do something to produce change in American public schools. The ideals of equality, communication, and negotiation appear regularly in the literature. Stakeholders have equivalent power as they offer their unique perspectives in the planning stages of a UCS. The last repeated ideal in the literature is patience. On average, a UCS takes three years to plan, two years to implement, and two years to observe growth. Stakeholders have to endure and persevere through obstacles to find success.

Asset-Based Approaches to UCS

Community-based education has been conceptualized by scholars in divergent ways. This has led to a broad interpretation of the purposes and goals of community-based education. For example, Delpit (2006) suggests using people from the community to reach both teachers and students. She shares the illustration of a teacher who approached the parents as experts in raising their own children, asking them how they would elicit an answer from a child. By applying their advice, the teacher then found motivated children who were filling up journal pages where they previously had only drawn pictures. In this case, the UCS used parents as their entrance into the community. Family involvement is valued, pursued, and viewed as an asset in her findings.

"Parental involvement creates a win-win situation for parents and their children" (Huang & Mason, 2008, p. 20). This umbrella statement prompted research and an in-depth study in an African-American community (which is typically seen from a deficit point of view when related to parental involvement). Huang & Mason (2008) found that the community is often a barrier to communities and schools relationships because there is no clear understanding of expectations from either group. When a program fosters a relationship between the parents and the school and uses their children as role models, and it creates positive attitudes toward school and education. The results in this case produce positive outcomes (Huang & Mason, 2008). "Parents were motivated to empower themselves with knowledge (competency building) and enhance their children's learning" (Huang & Mason, 2008, p. 22). The parents became the tools for the school and students to build motivational needs through affiliation, power, and achievement.

A piece of UCS education is "recognizing the realities of the students and parents who are creators of their lives, histories, and futures, and not objects of their realities" (James, 2004, p. 28). Minority teachers who have related their own urban upbringing to urban students' experiences confessed their own feelings of anger and alienation (Collins & Tamarkin, 1990; James, 2004; Kozol, 2000). They perceived that their peers and educators didn't appear to understand or care about their culture. They felt judged by stereotypes that were nothing like their reality and they related to their students' lack of motivation because their cultural upbringing was also ignored. These teachers worked to make cultural relevancy a priority; the use of cultural capital or *funds of knowledge* was considered an operations manual of essential information and strategies that schools needed to maintain their well-being. The "funds of knowledge" concept enabled students

to affirm their racial and ethnic identities within the school curriculum (James, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll et. al., 1992).

A UCS initiative's holistic approach to child development in urban educational restructuring (Dryfoos, 2003; Kolodny, 2001) focuses on ecological theory, the understanding that multiple parts make up the world that influences a child's development. The consideration of the experiences and problems of a child's life as part of their education which has the ability to affect a child's participation is not to be left outside of the classroom. Service-learning and community service programs are avenues to improve real world connections, boost academic achievement, and increase motivation in urban students (Soslau & Yost, 2007). Through authentic instructional methods and service to their own communities, students learned how to actively participate in both school and community.

The measured effects of service learning on student motivation focus on attendance and suspension data along with student journals, teacher observations, and student interviews. These are summarized in one student's remarks: "You learn better when you're learning for yourself. Your mind can think a different way than someone else's mind…We were able to process it all together…My teacher listened to our ideas. She listened to us and took the classes input" (Soslau & Yost, 2007, p. 50). Their findings stated that students who participated in service learning versus students who had a traditional curriculum had positive gains in motivation, academic achievement, and real world connections.

UCS Success Story: Two Illustrations

The key elements in building a successful UCS are consistent with observations about successful schools made elsewhere and descriptions found in the literature (Dryfoos, 2003; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002). These factors included: commitment; strong support from the principal; open communication among all stakeholders; careful planning; access to technical assistance; leadership of a full-time, on-site coordinator; integration of educational and support components; and strong initial financial support. There is acknowledgement at the outset that collaboration is hard work, takes endless time, and requires meetings, patience, and understanding. In addition, schools and community agencies had to learn each other's language, perspectives, concepts, and prejudices.

The Children's Aid Society

The Children's Aid Society (CAS) model, developed first in Washington Heights, a borough of New York City and adapted in over 100 sites nationally, encompasses all of these concepts (Children's Aid Society, 2012; Dryfoos, 2002). In 1997, the local Prudential Foundation initiated the UCS process in Washington Heights. The Children's Aid Society model was introduced to and supported by the principal, and the CAS school authorities were awarded funds to support a lead agency, which was to be a strong community-based organization with ties to the neighborhood. Prudential also helped support a school-based clinic operated by the local Children's Hospital, and an early child development program, offered by the local college. Many other arts, literacy, and mentoring programs which were provided by community agencies, were integrated into the community school.

The staff and community worked together to select the Comer School Development Model as a mandatory reform effort. The components of this UCS initiative included:

- Extend hours. The school was open each weekday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., comparable hours on weekends, and during the summer.
- Extended day and school year. From 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. an after-school program was held, including homework help, academic enrichment, and extensive youth development activities, all carefully integrated with classroom activities. The after-school program was staffed by teachers and by group leaders (who were either parents or community people) hired to assist with recreation, sports, and the arts. The group leaders were trained in youth development. From 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. sports and adult education programs were supported and staffed by the school system. The school was open in the summer for a program, which was staffed by teachers and that focused on academic enrichment in the morning and supervised recreation in the afternoon.
- School-based primary health clinic. A suite was made available to the clinic staff, which included a full-time nurse practitioner, aide, social worker, and a part-time dentist, pediatrician, and psychiatric consultant. Children were able to get physical examinations, treatments for such prevalent problems as asthma and intestinal diseases, medications, follow-up care, and referrals for more complicated problems. The largest demand was for mental health counseling, which was provided individually and in groups by the social worker who grew up in the community.
- Family involvement. The most significant observable change in this school was the enormous increase in the number of families who participated in the school and the

quality of their involvement. Parents came as classroom and cafeteria aides; some were volunteers and others were paid. The community schoolroom was opened to families to enjoy coffee in the morning, use the computers, and to get direct assistance from staff. An array of courses was available to families during the day and early evenings in GED preparation, computers, aerobics, and other areas.

- Community work. For example, a significant need in this school was to fix up the decaying playground. With support from Prudential, a project was initiated by the Trust for Public Land that involved the students in the design and construction of an innovative and attractive new play area. Families began to organize clean-up on bordering streets. Now families are advocating for better housing and public transportation in the neighborhood as a result of their empowerment.
- Exposure to the larger world. The UCS staff arranged many field trips outside of the neighborhood to museums, baseball games, nature preserves, and amusement parks-places which were previously unavailable to students because of their disadvantaged status. Families accompanied their children and were able to gain new experiences. Special events were frequently held at the school to celebrate holidays, put on musical productions, or provide meals for families.
- Improved outcomes. The school begins to utilize educational indicators and benchmarks to guide its development. Based on data from surveys of parents and teachers, it appeared that these activities and changes in the school have had a large effect on the children, families, school staff, and community (Children's Aid Society, 2012).

Harlem Children's Zone

Located in the Harlem borough of New York City, the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) is another positive example of a community which over time has been able to support itself. Beginning in the 1970s as a truancy program, the community began to engage and work together. A 1990's project brought a range of support services to address all the problems that poor families were facing including: deteriorating housing, failing schools, violent crime, and chronic health problems (HCZ, 2011). The project began with a single city block; by 2007 the project grew to 97 city blocks.

The full service model UCS (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002) has been and remains utilized in the HCZ. The HCZ includes schools, mental, health, and social services along with job opportunities for its residents. The 'from birth to college graduation' cycle of HCZ is designed to ensure a positive and supportive social environment in and out of school (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009). HCZ has efficiently run programs that are aimed at breaking the cycle of generational poverty for the 10,462 youth and 10,817 adults it serves (HCZ, 2011).

The HCZ model is considered successful because since its inception, it has been closing racial achievement gaps in a predominantly impoverished Black and Latino community **(**Dobbie & Fryer, 2009**).** The HCZ Model encompassed core principles, accountable collaborations**,** and a strong and ongoing relationship with the community, which are critical to ensure that the needs important to the community are being met.

The HCZ model evolved along with the community. Community leaders and adults understood their responsibility as role models for young people, as well as how the surrounding environment strongly affected children's growth and development **(**HCZ,

2011) a value that holds true today. Dobbie & Fryer (2009) found that HCZ was effective in boosting achievement in math and English language arts in elementary school and math in middle school. They described how high-quality schools or community investments paired with high-quality schools, created positive results. The information Dobbie and Fryer (2009) disseminated is vital for domestic policy since their research is an example of how communities and public goods and resources can be allocated to alleviate racial and economic inequality.

This study

Collaborative, community-based work challenges schools and teachers to evaluate their own beliefs, expectations, and assumptions about the children they wish to teach holistically. Schools need to create interwoven approaches to teaching, learning, and living while dealing with the multitude of factors that affect urban children's environments (Ladson-Billings, 2000; McIntyre, 2006). In urban community-based education, there are an abundance of approaches to connect schools with families and communities. With so many strategies available, there is a need to examine which strategies produce positive models. That need led to the case study of the Charlotte Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS) initiative.

As the review of literature on the research of UCS initiatives closes, the reader should have a comprehensive understanding about the current state of urban education in America and Charlotte, North Carolina where the study took place. The specific UCS models explained and evaluated showcase insight and knowledge about this type of urban educational reform. Chapter 3 will detail the methodology employed by the study. It provides details about the choice of research design, the participants, the research site,

data collection and data analysis methods which were used in this case study of the CEAS life cycle.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODS

## Introduction

As previously mentioned, the urban community school (UCS) movement is an alternative approach in which initiatives can work toward success by establishing long lasting, deep, democratic collaborative partnerships with local community members (Blank et. al, 2010; Blank et. al, 2003; Halpern, 1996; Harkavy & Blank, 2009). Research (Dryfoos, 2000; Kolodny, 2001) has shown that the holistic approach (an ecological theory of understanding that multiple facets influence a child's development) is important in the successful implementation of an UCS initiative.

Many UCS initiatives have been created around the country (Coalition for Community Schools, 2003) as an answer to the need for urban educational reform. The Coalition for Community Schools (2003, 2010) assumed that each initiative was constructed with these intentions: a need to do good, to create a solution to poverty, and to help to support children's learning. Some UCS initiatives though well intended, were not properly planned out and implemented. This research built on the successes and mistakes of one such initiative. In urban Charlotte, NC, the Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS) rose out of a need to provide impoverished students opportunities similar to those of the private school students living in the same city. CEAS closed within a year.

The purpose of this dissertation study was to form a comprehensive understanding of a grassroots effort for educational reform in an urban community school initiative (UCS) called the Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS). The failed endeavor is used to uncover some of the challenges that emerged during the process. The study thickly described and analyzed the life cycle of that UCS initiative. I was included in the inception of CEAS from September 2009 through its initial implementation on August 18, 2010. I continued working with the school until June 10, 2011, when it closed.

The questions that drove this study are:

1. What is the process for the emergence of an urban community school?
2. What factors contributed to the closing of the Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS) urban community school initiative?
3. What can be learned from the grassroots approach of Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS) as an urban community school initiative?

## Research Design

To examine the Charlotte Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS), a qualitative case study was employed. Using qualitative research allowed me to understand, respect, and explain the complexity of the social interactions (Glesne, 2006; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) that took place during the study. Merriam (1998) described the purpose of the case study as gaining an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. In other words, rather than a variable, the process is where the significance lies in a case study. “Case studies are differentiated from other types of

qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a *single unit* OR *bounded system* (Smith, 1978) such as an individual, program, event, group, intervention, or community" (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). CEAS was an exceptional program and the only one of its kind in Charlotte. I found that because of this, the case study was an appropriate form of inquiry, as it allowed for a close examination of CEAS, its life cycle, and what lessons can be learned from it for future endeavors. My research questions examined the background of CEAS, what happened to the initiative, and why.

A case study focuses on holistic description and an explanation (Yin, 2003), which are vital in understanding the life cycle of the CEAS initiative. Yin (2003) found that the case study design is well-suited to situations where it is hard to separate contexts from a phenomenon's variables, which was the case with CEAS. The importance of including multiple perspectives and participants in a case study in order to develop a thorough, holistic description of the case under investigation must not be overlooked (Creswell, 1998, 2007; Stake, 1995). I examined the initiative through the eyes of its various participants, using the advantage of hindsight, and presenting information in a wide variety of ways as described by Merriam (1998).

The focus of the case study was to develop an in-depth, inductive case analysis which explained the reasons for problems, explained why the initiative worked and why it failed to work, evaluated, summarized, and made conclusions which made it applicable (Merriam 1998; Olson, 1982) for future UCS initiatives.

Sample

The specific case under investigation is the CEAS initiative, an exclusive experience. The distinctive nature of the events surrounding the CEAS initiative was a

rare occurrence in educational procedures. There are no other schools in this local area which provide a similar curriculum and learning experience for young females from marginalized family backgrounds. This case study was designed to answer questions about the life cycle of the CEAS initiative and factors that contributed to its emergence and demise.

Each of the thirteen participants was invited as a part of a purposeful sample to give a multiple-perspective point of view of the CEAS initiative. The purposeful sample was unique because the criterion-based selection states that all participants have participated in the CEAS initiative in the capacity of student, family member, teacher, administrator, or community member. The interviews included two students who attended throughout the year. The researcher attempted to reach six other students and ten who were withdrawn during the course of the year, but was not successful in connecting with them. There were two family members, three teachers, one administrator, and seven community members invited for interviews in this study. I interviewed as many of the CEAS participants as possible to create a thorough case description.

My position as a former volunteer at the school posed some advantages and some dilemmas in this research. The advantages included that as volunteer I saw the participants on a regular basis. I attended school events from the inception of CEAS through the last day of classes and built relationships with the participants. As the researcher, I recognize that my past relationships with the students and their family members influenced the course of this study including the information that my participants shared with me. I presumed it was a bond strong enough that the participants

felt comfortable being interviewed and sharing their perspectives with me. I also intended to collect any private documentation from the CEAS initiative that the participants had acquired.

Since CEAS was a small grass-roots initiative, the participant samples were small in numbers. The school had one administrator, three teachers, eighteen students and their families on the first day of school; on the last day of school there were eight students and their families. Community participation varied throughout the life cycle of CEAS.

The Students of the CEAS experience

At the beginning of the school year, the student body was comprised of 18 females. Academically, the girls ranging in age from 10 to 13 years were considered to be entering their $5^{th}$ grade year at the time of the school opening. Racially, the student body make-up identified as 14 Black, 2 Latina, 1 Bi-racial, and 1 White student. As the year progressed, 10 females were withdrawn from the school. At the end of the year, the student make-up contained 5 Black, 2 Latina, and 1 Bi-racial student. All of the students were eligible for the free and reduced lunch program in the local public school district which was a selection criterion for CEAS enrollment.

The student participants were approached primarily because of the researcher's relationship with CEAS and with their family member's permission. There was no specific criteria-based selection for interviews with the student participants who remained throughout the school year. The criteria-based selection for the students who were withdrawn included my ability to contact them for an invitation to be interviewed. As I recruited student participants, I contacted each family via phone and email (if they had an electronic address) to ask if they were willing to participate. Because the contact

information had been provided by the families for another project, it was not always the most recent, which affected the number of students and families whom I was able to contact.

The families of the CEAS experience

The students' families were an important piece of the CEAS curriculum. They were responsible for their child's transportation, attendance in activities outside of the traditional school day like evening and Saturday programs, and attendance at family meetings. CEAS students' family units consisted of varying combinations of parents, grandparents, family members, and guardians. For the sake of simplicity within this document, I referred to this group of participants as *the families*. The criteria-based selection for the families included that the student lived with them during the CEAS experience.

As with the student participants to gain a holistic perspective, I invited families that completed the school year and families who withdrew the student during the school year. The families I invited to be interviewed were a vital element to the study. It was anticipated that they would give their permission for the students to talk with me, as well as speaking with me themselves. These participants were to provide valuable added insight about the CEAS experience. I called each student's family to reconnect with them and to gain both access and trust. Since two of the families spoke limited English, I had a Spanish speaking interpreter speak to them after I did to ensure their understanding of the study.

The teachers of the CEAS experience

As previously mentioned, the CEAS initiative was a rare type of educational experience. The curriculum and instruction were less formal than that of a traditional school. The students addressed the teachers by their first name preceded with Ms. or Mr.; for example, Ms. Traci. There were just three teachers on staff who did not teach full days. The three teachers (and the administrator) split the days and week according to the subject matter being taught and/or activities which were planned. All of the teachers were present from the start of the school year until the end of its life cycle. I invited all three of the teachers Traci, John, and Page to be interviewed via phone and email. I planned to conduct the interviews in person. Subsequently, Traci had moved to India, she was to be interviewed via phone or using Skype, a technology tool used to video conference. I actually had to have her type her answers into a document as there were daily power outages in India and she had limited use of a computer. John was embarking on a new career and had moved. I conducted the interview over the phone. Page's interview took place in person.

The administrator and members of the board (which also contained the administrator's family members) interviewed and chose applicants to fulfill the teacher positions at CEAS, which resulted in the hiring of Traci, Page, and John. These teachers presented varied professional experiences. Traci is a white female in her late thirties. CEAS was her first teaching experience in a school. Her background consisted of arts education in a local museum. She primarily taught history and art to the students. Page is a white female in her early forties. Previously she was an educator for one year in a local public school and taught for 17 years in Pennsylvania. Her primary focus was

language arts education. John, a forty-year-old white male, was an assistant teacher in public schools prior to becoming a teacher at CEAS. His specialty was science education. John is related to three other CEAS participants. He is the administrator's first cousin. His mother, Jen and his Aunt Mary are board members.

The administrator of the CEAS experience

CEAS embraced a non-traditional structure and there was no criteria-based selection for the administrator. Jane, a white female in her late forties, was the sole administrator, but referred to herself as the founder and vision keeper of CEAS. Her role also included teaching the students technology, drama and subjects not covered by the other teachers. She was critical to this study as she had a complete understanding of the intentions of the UCS initiative, as well as the outcomes of the CEAS experience.

Before CEAS, Jane's professional career was in the legal arena. She was the founder of the school and this initiative was her first experience teaching in a school, though she previously home schooled her own two children.

Jane and I have continued contact since the CEAS life cycle ended. She was aware that I was using CEAS in this study and was invited via email to be interviewed. Jane requested that I schedule a date with her after June 20, 2012. When I tried to schedule the interview, Jane's contact information (school email and phone) was disconnected. I had to work diligently to renew this contact.

The community of the CEAS experience

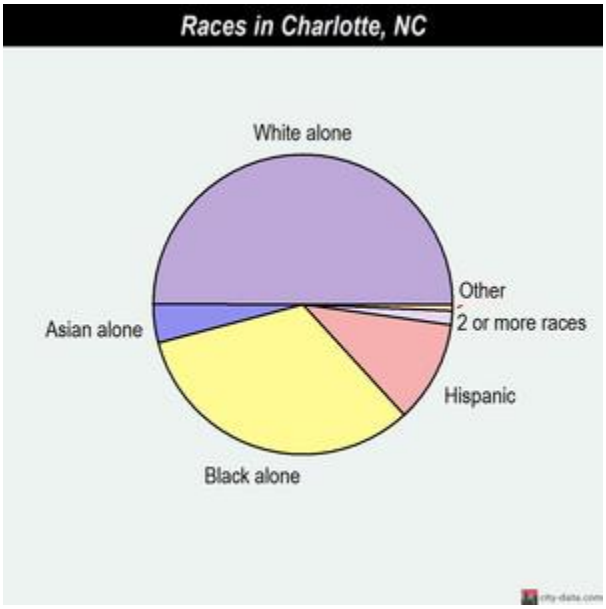
Community involvement is an essential element in the structure of a UCS. The curriculum for CEAS required that almost daily, a member of the community was instrumental in at least one aspect of student learning. Community members were

frequent volunteers who were recruited or offered to teach a specific lesson. They did not have to make specific time commitments or have educational certification. Therefore, the time and depth of participation the community members spent with the students varied greatly. I invited seven people from the community to be interviewed. The criteria-based selection was that they were willing to provide an account of their knowledge of CEAS and were willing to share their perspectives.

Participants who agreed to be interviewed included four females and one male. Hanna, a white woman in her early forties, was a community member that was part of the initial CEAS project. She worked closely with the Administration and helped to develop the curriculum for CEAS. She was completing a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction, Urban Education and originally was to hold the position of the Head of the School. Ashley was a black female in her late thirties. She was an attorney who attended schools in the local area. Historically, she volunteered and took part in educational service learning. She was a part of the Board that sponsored CEAS. Mary, a seventy year old white female, was a consistent volunteer in the school and a part of the Board. Mary taught high school Spanish before she had children. It should be emphasized that Mary was Jane's, the founder's, mother**.** Jen was a white female in her sixties, who served on the Board. Jen has experience in working with non-profits and was a professor at one point in her career. It is emphasized that Jen was Jane's aunt, John (the teacher's) mother, and Mary's sister. Curt, a white male in his forties, was a literacy professor at the local university and a part of the Board that sponsored CEAS in many capacities. He ran an urban literacy program in the local public school district.

## Site

The research site for this study of the CEAS initiative was situated in Charlotte, North Carolina. From 2000-2010, the population in Charlotte- Mecklenburg grew over 32% with 2.6 million people countywide. The city population was 900,000 people and the area was among 22 U.S. cities with at or near minority/majority populations (Charlotte in 2012, 2012). The city's racial population was reflected in Figure 3.




- White alone - 329,545 (45.1%)
- Black alone - 252,007 (34.5%)
- Hispanic - 95,688 (13.1%)
- Asian alone - 36,115 (4.9%)
- Two or more races - 13,423 (1.8%)
- American Indian alone - 2,250 (0.3%)
- Other race alone - 1,960 (0.3%)
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone - 436 (0.06%)

Figure 3: Race population in Charlotte
Note. Adapted from Races in Charlotte, NC. Retrieved from city-data.com. September 2012

In 2009, 15.3% of residents represented in Figure 3 lived in poverty. 7.8% of White Non-Hispanic residents, 20.6% Black residents, and 30.2% Hispanic or Latino residents represented in Figure 3 lived in poverty (Charlotte City-Data, 2012). The city was in the national spotlight as it hosted visitors from all over the country at the 2012 Democratic National Convention. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) was the local public school district; it encompassed the metro area and all of Mecklenburg County.

| **Student Ethnic Distribution (2011-2012)** | |
|---|---|
| American Indian/Multiracial | 3% |
| Asian | 5% |
| African-American | 42% |
| Hispanic | 17.5% |
| White | 32.5% |

Figure 4: CMS Student Ethnic Distribution
Note. Figure 4: Adapted from CMS Fast Facts (2012).

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District received the 2011 Broad Prize for Urban Education which was a competition among 75 large urban districts. The $1 million Broad Prize, established in 2002, is the largest education award in the country given to school districts. The Broad Prize is awarded each year to honor urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among low-income and minority students.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, there are 54% of students on free and reduced lunches (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2012). There was a public/private effort titled Project L.I.F.T. (Leadership and Investment For Transformation) which within five years planned to donate services and $55 million to the west corridor of the district for this purpose (Charlotte in 2012, 2012). Coincidentally, this corridor was where most of the students who participated in the CEAS initiative resided.

Since the CEAS initiative has closed, it was considered a recent historical event. The CEAS school space was a storefront located in a transitioning neighborhood in the city. The neighborhood was located within walking distance to the light rail system and was one mile from the uptown area of the city. The neighborhood mostly consisted of

small local businesses. Due to the recent recession in the American economy, there were vacant townhomes and empty half -cleared lots close by.

The CEAS space itself consisted of one large room and two bathrooms. A hallway for storage, a kitchen (consisting of a sink and refrigerator) and a second exit were created with a partial wall. A storage closet and office were also formed with doors and walls but open to the ceiling as the storefront was an industrial space, which prevented privacy within the school space. The four parking spots in the lot out front insured that there was limited space for outdoor play. There was no green space. The tenants of the building were a real estate agency, two dance clubs, a city parking office, and a furniture store that went out of business in December 2010.

## Data Collection

The intent of rigorous qualitative data collection is to develop an in-depth understanding with each group of participants and the context in which they operate (Creswell et al., 2007). Qualitative case studies primarily utilize three types of data (Creswell et al., 2007; Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 1998): observation, documentation, and interviews. Since CEAS closed, this study did not include observation. I collected interview data from five groups of participants described in the earlier section as student, family, teacher, administration, and community member. I asked the participants open-ended questions, recorded the conversations, and immediately wrote field notes. I listened to the interviews and then transcribed them. I also hired a professional company to transcribe the interviews. I read and compared each set of transcriptions to ensure accuracy. I then read each transcription a second time taking notes as I analyzed the responses. From these notes, I found my emerging themes. My goal in the interview

process was to learn about the participants' feelings, thoughts, and intentions. Patton (1990) and Merriam (1998) described the interview purpose as asking the questions to understand how the participants have organized their world, and the meaning they attach to what goes on in their world.

I kept in mind that the researcher and the participant spoke to each other from various perspectives which embody their social positions (Ezzy, 2002; Warren, 2002). My own status as an insider rather than an outsider allowed easier access to the participants sharing their thoughts with me (Shah, 2004). The insider status, along with my experiences as a volunteer, provided additional opportunities to build on prior rapport during the interview process. I built on our commonalities to allow for freedom of thoughts and feelings without inhibition. The relationship-building process created a space in which participants were able to share physical and emotional experiences. As a researcher, I could not separate myself entirely from my research, which required diligent monitoring of my own subjectivity and reactions as we conversed**.** I was technically considered a participant because I volunteered at CEAS. This position required me (as a researcher) to carefully observe, systematically experience and consciously record the details of various aspects of the interviews and situations while I simultaneously analyzed my own observations for meaning and personal bias (Glesne, 2006).

Interview Data

Student interviews

I first called the families of the students who were eligible to participate in the study. I made the calls during the day and the evening. I invited the student and/or the families to participate in the study. I set up a face to face appointment with the student

and/or families at their convenience. I explained to the families that I needed to set a time to interview them independent of the time that I interviewed the student. Interviews were scheduled consecutively or on different dates. In some cases, interviews took place in the local community and public spaces where light refreshment was purchased by the researcher. Other interviews took place in the student's home with a parent in the general vicinity of the interview.

I asked the student participants to take part in one in-depth interview that consisted of some demographic questions, but predominantly-open ended questions about their experience related to CEAS (See Appendix A). I used a semi-structured interview protocol to inquire about the student participants' experiences with CEAS, but allowed for a more unstructured interview protocol to discuss their perspective about the school, peers, and academics. I recorded each interview using a digital voice recorder and took detailed notes. I transcribed the audio. I used an active interview approach (Warren, 2002). The student participants and I co-constructed meaning through our dialogue.

Family interviews

At the time that I contacted the families about student participants, I also invited a family member to be interviewed. I set up a face to face appointment with the families based on the convenience of the participants. I explained to the families that I would set a time to interview them independent of the time that I interviewed the student. I was able to schedule the interviews consecutively. I explained that I preferred to interview the adult before I interviewed the student. I offered that interviews would sometimes take place in the local community and public spaces where a light refreshment would be purchased by the researcher. For the two Spanish speaking families, I offered the option

of using a translator. Both families accepted, I brought a translator from Ecuador who conducted the interviews in the participants' native language. She later transcribed them from Spanish to English.

I asked the family participants to take part in one in-depth interview that consisted of some demographic questions, though most were open-ended about their experience related to CEAS (See Appendix B). I used a semi-structured interview protocol to inquire about the family participant's experiences with CEAS, but allowed for a more unstructured interview protocol to discuss their perspectives about the school, their child's peers, and academics. Each interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder and detailed notes were taken. The professional translator transcribed the audio. An active interview approach was used, which allowed the family participants and interviewer to co-construct meaning through dialogue (Warren, 2002).

Teacher interviews

I first called the teachers, all three of whom were eligible for inclusion in the study, and I invited them to participate. I attempted to set up individual face-to-face appointments with the teachers based on their convenience. The exception was Traci, and we tried to set up a Skype video session. Page's interview took place in the local community and in a public space where light refreshment was purchased by the researcher. John's interview was conducted over the phone. Traci's interview had to be completed via a document where I sent her the questions and she replied with her answers in the document as there were daily power outages in India where she was living.

I asked the teachers to take part in one in-depth interview that consisted of some demographic questions, but predominantly-open ended questions about their experience

related to CEAS (See Appendix C). I used semi-structured interview protocol to inquire about the teachers' experiences with CEAS, but allowed for a more unstructured interview protocol to discuss their perspective about the school, their students, and the curriculum. I recorded each interview using a digital voice recorder and took detailed notes. I transcribed the audio initially and hired a professional company to transcribe the interviews for comparison. I used an active interview approach (Warren, 2002), which again, allowed the teachers and me to co-construct meaning through dialogue.

Administrator interview

As previously stated, I was still in contact with the administrator primarily via text and email. I invited her via email to participate in the study. I set up a face- to-face appointment based on the convenience of her schedule. I conducted the interview in a public space where a light refreshment was offered by the researcher.

I asked the administrator to take part in one in-depth interview that consisted of some demographic questions, but predominantly-open ended questions about her intentions and experiences related to CEAS (See Appendix D). I used semi-structured interview protocol to inquire about the administrator's experiences with CEAS, but allowed for a more unstructured interview protocol to discuss her intentions for the school, her perspective about the school's cycle, others who participated in the life cycle of CEAS and the school's curriculum. I recorded the interview using a digital voice recorder and took detailed notes. I transcribed the audio. I used an active interview approach (Warren, 2002). The administrator and I co-constructed meaning through our dialogue.

Community member interviews

I first called the seven community members who were eligible to participate in the study and for whom I had contact information. Five agreed to participate. I set up a face-to-face appointment with the community member based on his/her convenience. In some cases, interviews took place in the local community and public spaces where light refreshments were purchased by the researcher. In other cases, I met the participant in their work place office.

I asked the community member to take part in one in-depth interview that consisted of some demographic questions, but predominantly-open ended questions about their experience related to CEAS (See Appendix E). I used semi-structured interview protocol to inquire about the community member's experiences with CEAS, but allowed for a more unstructured interview protocol to discuss their accounts and perspectives of the school. I recorded each interview using a digital voice recorder and took detailed notes. I transcribed the audio initially, and then hired a professional company to transcribe the interviews so I was able to compare them. I used an active interview approach (Warren, 2002). The community member participants and I co-constructed meaning through our dialogue.

As I concluded each interview, I gave the participant a copy of my contact information in case there was any information they wanted to add at a later time. After each interview, I took about five minutes to record the location, time, and any extraneous events that may have affected the interview. I kept each recording in a separate protected document on my computer's hard drive. I protected my field notes in a locked cabinet in my home.

## Document and Archival Data Collection

In addition to the interview data, I asked each of the participants if I might collect private documentation related to CEAS. I suggested that this documentation would include information pertaining to school schedules, lesson plans, student application forms, journals, and correspondence. Students, family, community members, and teachers did not have any of the documentation suggested because of the time lapse. Jane was asked on seven different occasions and often said she would send documents via email. I only received one very basic outline of scholar admission criteria and the CEAS budget. I employed archival documents which were obtained through public records and newspapers. I also used data from online sources and/or information I accumulated while volunteering at CEAS. The quantity of archival data was very small and used as reference material rather than analyzed as data.

## Data Analysis

Transformation is the term Wolcott (1994) uses to describe the strategies employed to examine data. He refers to three types of transformation: description, analysis, and interpretation. Description is the way through which the data tells a story. Analysis refers to how the researcher expands and extends the data beyond the descriptive explanation, and interpretation refers to the researcher's own understanding of the data. It is paramount to acknowledge that the process of data analysis is not a distinct stage of research; rather, it is an ongoing reflexive activity that should inform the other aspects of the research process (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Data analysis is a constant interactive process, often cyclical in nature rather than linear. Creswell (1998) describes the process as a spiral in which the researcher engages in the process of moving in

analytic circles such as: 1) data collection, 2) data management, 3) data saturation, 4) data description, classification and interpretation and 5) representation and visualization. Qualitative data analysis is an interpretive task. Ezzy (2002) explains that interpretations are not found, but that they are made and actively constructed through social processes.

For the interviews, I analyzed data "establishing common patterns or themes between particular types of responses" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 242). Coding is described in terms of data simplification and reduction (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I used the data in a manner that expanded, transformed, and re-conceptualized it, to open it up to more diverse analytic possibilities. I listened to each interview three times and then thoroughly read each interview twice. After the second reading of the interviews, I took notes on the transcriptions. From these notes, I found emerging themes for each interview. I then examined the emerging themes for each participant group and tallied the quantity of each theme. Using the top five themes for each participant group, I then created the emerging themes for the study. The themes I found were Alternative Schooling and the Perceptions of Failure in Public Schools, Realities of the CEAS Experience, Funding and Planning, Cultural and Class Disconnection, and Role of One Caring Adult. I then used Vivo coding and *Atlas ti*, a software tool, to create Meaning Units for the interviews. I used the *Atlas ti* technology to create comments for each code to define the parameters of it. I also grouped specific quotes to the themes I found and compared my transcripts with my notes to make sure that they were consistent. To produce a coherent picture, I compared individual data within its sub-group and then created themes which included all of the sub-groups' data. I then analyzed the themes and assessed the interview data to see what they were telling me, rather than using my

assumptions to find what I wanted my data to say. I used the categories, meaning units, and themes to address the research questions and found specific quotes or examples from the data to elaborate as needed.

## Summary

Chapter 3 detailed the qualitative methodology for this research. It described the context of Charlotte, North Carolina, the CEAS participants and how the data was collected and analyzed. Chapter 4 revisits each of the research questions. 1) "What is the process for the emergence of an urban community school?" 2) "What factors contributed to the closing of the CEAS urban community school initiative?" 3) "What can be learned from the grassroots approach of CEAS as an urban community school initiative?" The analyzed data pointed to specific themes which were discussed in depth.

# CHAPTER 4: DATA FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION*

(*Quotations used within this document are literal translations.)

## Introduction

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to describe the data collected and analyzed for this study. The primary data was collected using a semi-structured interview with thirteen people, who participated in the CEAS experience and who were grouped into five categories including: student, families, teacher, administration, and community member. Archival data was also used to supplement the interviews.

The analyzed data led to themes that addressed each of the research questions. The themes that emerged include: Alternative Schooling and the Perception of Failure in Public Schools, Realities of the CEAS Experience, Funding and Planning, Cultural and Class Disconnection, and Role of One Caring Adult. Each of these themes addressed one or more of the three research questions, as merged below.

- What is the process for the emergence of an urban community school?

The specific themes of Alternative Schooling and the Perception of Failure in Public Schools and Funding and Planning in the data led to a discussion of the question with a combination of answers regarding the emergence process. As traditional public schools consistently failed to provide rich curriculum and experiences for marginalized students, an alternative school was sought out. The value of education was consistently mentioned by all participants. The proper planning and funding also proved to be vital in the opening and daily operations of the UCS initiative.

- What factors contributed to the closing of the CEAS urban community school initiative?

Issues surrounding the themes of Funding and Planning and Cultural and Class Disconnections were prevalent in the data to answer the second question. The CEAS resource and spending budget displayed a stark contrast in a comparison of 286 successful UCS initiatives. Culture and class played a large role in disconnections between CEAS staff and CEAS families and consistently presented itself in the data. This information revealed the importance of acknowledging and considering cultural and class differences in the planning stages of an urban community school initiative as well understanding why the CEAS life cycle ended.

- What can be learned from the grassroots approach of CEAS as an urban community school initiative?

The analyzed data pointed to the themes of Funding and Planning, The Realities of the CEAS Experience and Role of One Caring Adult. The theme of Funding and Planning in CEAS did not focus on the financial capacity to make the school comprehensive, efficient, effective, and sustainable. The Realities of the CEAS Experience revealed surprise on behalf of the teachers and board members concerning the students' backgrounds. The students and the families also disclosed surprise associated with the extended-day schedule and quantities of homework assigned. Lastly, the theme Role of One Caring Adult created an expansive understanding of the intentions of the CEAS curriculum and its lasting effects on all of its participants.

## Timeline of Events

I created a timeline (Figure 5) with the data collected to assist in understanding the sequence of events. This included the general educational environment in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) at the time of CEAS and specific educational situations in the CEAS life cycle. CMS was used as a backdrop to show the need for alternative schooling in the district and the sequence of events that supported the emergence of the CEAS experience. CMS was historically significant because nationally, it was the first district to use mandatory cross-town busing as a form of desegregation in schools. The district also articulated racial goals for student assignments and paired schools in racially distinct neighborhoods to desegregate its students (Mickelson, 2006).

The timeline (Figure 5) begins in the 1999 – 2000 school year when the legal trial of three cases against *Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education* led to resegregation in the previously court-ordered, desegregated CMS schools. Figure 5 highlights that on November 30, 2000, The 4th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that CMS was not unitary in some areas, such as facilities, student assignment, student achievement and transportation and sent the areas back to the lower court for reconsideration. Areas such as faculty, staff, and extracurricular activities and student discipline were considered unitary (CMS, 2012).

It also features how CMS attempted to correct the unitary issues described in the above court rulings. In August 2002, it implemented the Family Choice plan in the district. This gave parents the choice of sending their children to neighborhood schools or choosing a magnet school that was located within a specific sector of the family's residence (CMS, 2012). Within a year, urban schools were underutilized and suburban schools were overcrowded (Mickelson, 2006).

Figure 5 continues in the 2005-2006 school year. Dr. Francis Haithcock, CMS Interim Superintendent started a foundation to attract KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) schools and other alternative programs. She opened a Communities In Schools alternative site to upgrade options for struggling high school students. The superintendent initiated town meetings to increase communication to the schools and community (CMS, 2012), which is of particular interest to this dissertation because it supports the notion of community involvement and support in schooling.

In 2008, a report produced by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction found a six year high in CMS student drop-out rates. NC state data indicated that African American and Hispanic students dropping out fueled the increase in rates (Hodge, 2008). The number of students dropping out per school had a large variance within the CMS district. An alternative school for predominantly Minority "troubled youths" in the district was reported as having 297 dropouts compared with other predominantly White middle class schools reporting 16 and 28 dropouts (Hodge, 2008).

The timeline in Figure 5 then shifts to describe the emergence and life cycle of the CEAS experience from 2009-2011 that is detailed in this chapter. This timeline was produced to provide a sense of the local context in public schooling as it surrounded the evolution of the community school featured in the study.

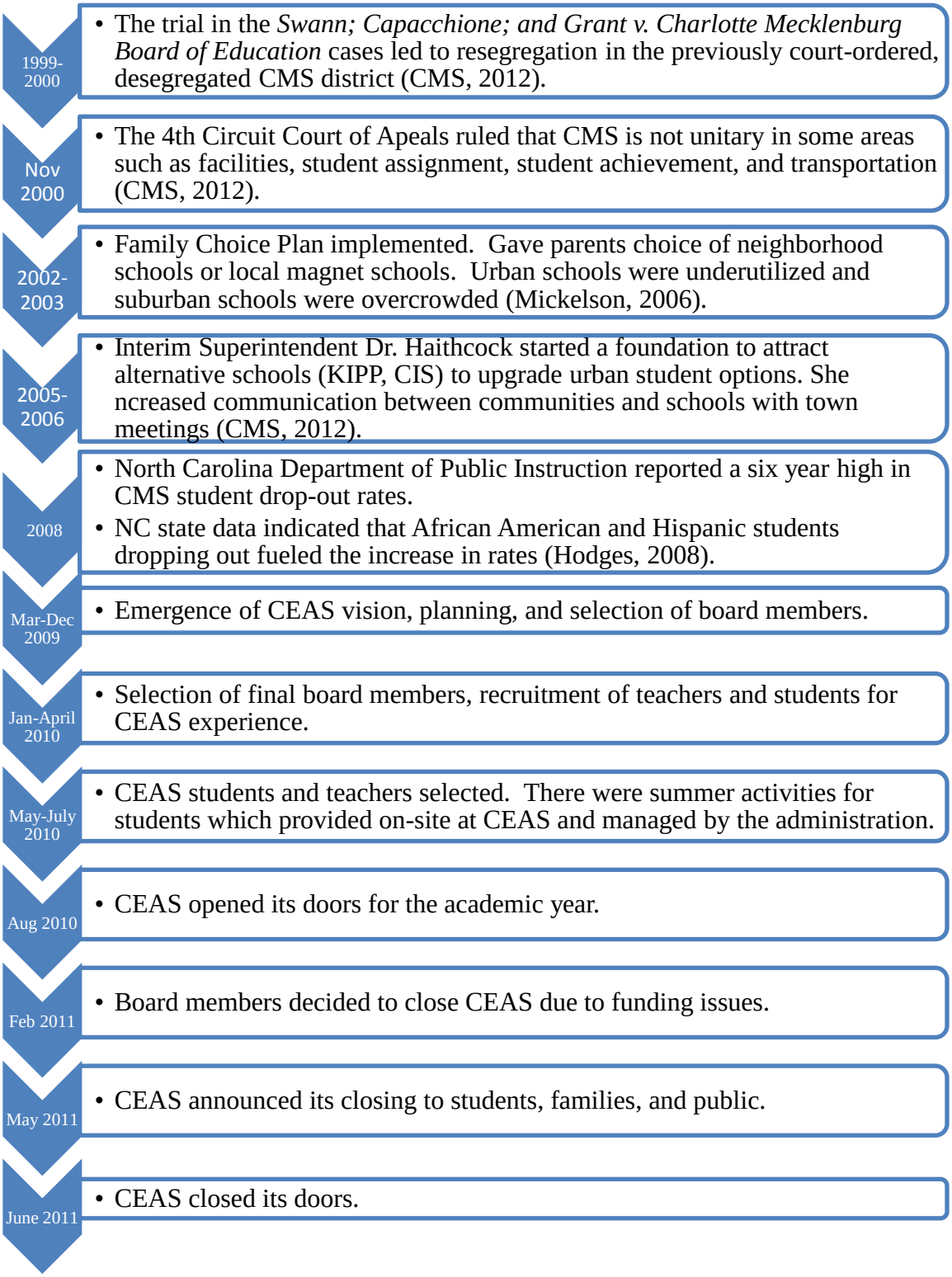



Figure 5: Timeline of Events

## Themes Found in the Data

The chapter opens with the CEAS vision as a substitute to traditional public schooling. It explores the theme of Alternative Schools and the Failure of Public Schools through the founder, board, students, families, and teachers who searched for an unconventional experience. The chapter then discusses the theme of Funding and Planning for CEAS including, an analysis of its resource use and a breakdown exploring the CEAS budget. The themes of Cultural and Class Disconnections during the experience were heavily weighted in the data collected. The Realities of the CEAS experience assessed participants' expectations and their perspectives during the school's life cycle. The last theme in the chapter explores the Role of One Caring Adult as part of the CEAS experience.

### Alternative schooling and the perception of failure in public schools: Theme one

#### Jane's initial vision

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools was providing successful experiences with its White middle class students, yet the district's marginalized and working class students were falling behind. While the schools made attempts to reach its neediest of students, a five year plan was not fast enough for some people in the community. Jane, who lived in Davidson, a suburb 21 miles north of the city center, was hard at work on a campaign to open an alternative to the public school experience in Charlotte. In the past, Jane had been an attorney for the Department of Justice in Washington, DC in the environmental division, where she was responsible for policy work, legislative work and litigation. After homeschooling her own twin daughters, Jane wanted to reach out and support other girls. When asked what motivated her to start the school, Jane remembered:

> A whole series of things, but I would say an absence that I saw in opportunity for girls in particular to experience some of the things that I experienced in my lifetime, not necessarily because of the education that I received, but because of the environment and home environment that I grew up in… All of those life experiences gave me a breadth of experience so that when I was in college, I already had a whole bunch of things to draw on and college was an expectation in my family and I saw that that was missing for a lot of kids.

Jane began to formulate her plan of creating an alternative school that provided the same types of experiences that she was fortunate enough to have herself. The scope of the school evolved and narrowed down to serve a student population of girls who were part of the free and reduced lunch program in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

Jane's family supports her vision

As Jane's plan became more focused she brought other people into the process. Amongst those people were her mother Mary and her aunt Jen, both of whom had worked in education at some point in their careers. Mary had also worked in business and could add that perspective to the school plan. When speaking about Jane's planning, Mary said:

> She had talked about doing this and talked about the model, had dreamed on it, pondered it, studied it for years and in family jokes we used to say, "This is going to be Jane's little red school house" and we all teased but one day she might really do it. So it had been a part of me for a long time before it ever happened because it was part of her thinking, and she and I are close friends, so when she would

have ideas about curriculum or about the number of students or about how the class periods fit for the day might stack up. So we had conversations about that. So I would say I was involved from the get go.

Jen, Jane's aunt, had a background in academia at a historically Black college in central North Carolina about three hours from Charlotte. At the time of this research she was working as a grant administrator at the Bio Field Center in North Carolina. It was non-profit organization that promoted the use of alternative transportation fuel. Jen recalled family history as she explained their discussions about Jane's alternative school:

> Mary's family and my family obviously went back to our childhood. Our mom and dad were social activists. They were pretty much the epitome of the stereo-typical bleeding heart liberals. They worked hard to support the have not's, whether it was daycare or senior citizens care or quality schools. That's been an issue forever. The other issue we grew up with was the thought of trying to help poverty, the idea that education is a significant player in solving the poverty issue…That was a natural. Then when Jane talked to me about the fact that she was thinking about starting a school, what role I wanted to play, did I want to be the Head of School and move to Charlotte, I didn't. I thought you couldn't be Head of School and live in a different community...I did tell her I would help her in any way that I could, including just supporting her.

Jane's revised vision

As she considered the plethora of existing programs that had already been considered for alternative schooling, Jane did not see a program that matched her ideas.

After consulting with family members and potential collaborators, Jane's motivation to begin an alternative school increased and soon transformed itself into reality, though that reality had its barriers and boundaries. Jane described the evolution in this way:

> My initial desire was to create a pre-K thru 12 kind of program, but the reality of funding caused me to narrow that down pretty quickly and then I selected a spot where I thought based upon the research that I had done I could make a definitive impact early enough to get kids into college. So that's where I started and then the goal was to grow first up through middle school and then probably grow down backwards after that. The vision for the school was to create this sort of outside of the box learning experience that was community based, creativity focused, that was more akin to the kind of learning that I did outside of the school as a child.

The board members are identified

As Jane spread the word about her vision for an alternative school, she reached out to the Charlotte community. She described contacting wealthy Charlotte citizens, businesses, and local universities as she searched for assistance in making the school a tangible resource for students. In some cases, Jane was asked to provide the quantitative data to enable her to produce a partnership with those she sought out. There was qualitative data to explain the context, but urban community schools were not uniformly produced. Therefore the research was very limited. What was beginning to happen was the launch of activity and the UCS initiatives were at the cutting edge of the activity, so there was no quantitative measurement in place. Emerging data (Doobie and Fryer, 2009) has since been made public, but at the time it was hard for Jane to provide

quantitative data to support what she knew and had researched qualitatively. She described her efforts this way:

> I called professor after professor after professor at different universities saying, "Aren't there standards, international standards, to measure the other of education that we know is so closely tied to success?" And every single one of them said "No, I wish there were," and "No, I wish there were." I was like "Can you help me to create it." So I do try to do some measures of that myself, but …

As Jane reached out to the local community, she caught the attention of Hanna, a PhD student in the Curriculum and Instruction (Urban Education) program at the city's largest university. Hanna met with Jane and had a keen interest in Jane's program. She introduced Jane to her colleagues (including this researcher), and together the group began to discuss the school in depth. Hanna was eventually hired as a consultant to write parts of the CEAS curriculum. Her own experiences were very similar to those that Jane hoped to incorporate into her school. Hanna went to a neighborhood school that was within walking distance to her house, she cooked weekly with her teachers, and experienced school in a very holistic way. Hanna remembered from her past:

> I think with parochial schools it's very involved. At least it was in mine. It was part of the church so our church was attached, literally. Our teachers back in the day, in the 80s, were the nuns and the nuns were in the church and some of the priests were our teachers. It was very community based. Fundraisers, like the yearly bazaar, were related to the church and the school. Everything was community. My family was a big,

> we were Irish Catholic, so the church was an important part of our family so then school was and all my cousins went there, and all the sisters went there.

Hanna eventually went on to teaching and opening an experiential school in Colorado before beginning work on her PhD program. Through her studies and research in the program, Hanna had an understanding of cultural relevancy (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Delpit, 1995), the culture of power (Delpit, 1995), and class inequalities (Kozol, 1991; Lareau, 2003). This made her a resource for Jane to utilize in the growth of the school. She quickly offered Hanna the position of Head of School, which she accepted. Hanna estimated that her employment began about seven or eight months before the school opened.

Jane enrolled the help of her aunt Jen, who was formally a professor in the School of Education at NC Central. According to Jen, Jane utilized that. "I also get bureaucracy. Jane really doesn't enjoy that kind of thing. I did things like create policy manuals, that kind of stuff." Jane also reached out to a large law firm in the Charlotte area. Ashley, a local attorney and a member of the CEAS Board, learned about CEAS through this connection. After witnessing the coordination of legal work and governing documents being drawn up in her firm, she called Jane and asked how she could become involved. Jane asked her to be a member of the CEAS Board and she agreed. Ashley recalled:

> Jane did a whole lot of things very smart, but I thought it was very smart to have, to try to find one of these bigger firms that see these things all the time, right? That sees non-profits a lot and had it drawn up so that we had

> everything we needed and we were, as a Board, trying to draft these kinds of things which are very, very legalese documents, but you need them.

Curt, a literacy professor at the University of North Carolina Charlotte was very involved in the urban community. He has run a Freedom School, a Literacy Roundtable, and an America Reads program, all of which provide services to urban students. Curt also became a board member for CEAS, recalling:

> Yes, I became involved because I think my name, Jane, the founder and vision keeper, it is an appropriate title. It really was her vision. She was relentless in pursuing that vision and one way she did that, to the best of my understanding was just knocking on doors. She would knock on a door for funding or information or curriculum and it would open other doors. I was just one of those doors that became opened to her. At this point, anything that involved certain community based literacy, eventually seems to cross my... not anything, but a lot of things community based literacies tend to kind of cross my radar screen at some point. Now why she did what she did, but she called me up and gave me the short talk and then we met for coffee and things went from there.

Jane had various assignments and duties for each of the board members. Ashley remembered Jane explaining "We're going to be a working Board. We're going to do a lot. Would you like to be a part of it? It won't be just, 'I serve, I give.'" Mary, Jane's mother, described being involved in CEAS planning and its growth and what she considered, "Every aspect of it, including helping of selection of students and serving as Secretary-Treasurer for the Board." She had specific responsibilities for feeding the

children and volunteered in the school often. Jen volunteered in the classroom, chaperoned field trips, interacted with parents as she served on the original selection committed to pick the students. She also did research for Jane on grants. Though she lived in Raleigh, she participated in board meetings through Skype an internet-based technology that allowed her to be a part of the group via webcam. Ashley's responsibilities were primarily administrative. She took part in half of the parent interviews during the admission process. Ashley recalled:

> I primarily, and this sounds so awful to say, I don't think of myself as a person that's very good with kids so I didn't have a ton of student interaction… I volunteered at events where students were there, but primarily on a more administrative, I'm getting things, I'm just doing whatever needs to be done type capacity.

Jane used each board member in a way that was appropriate for her or his interests and talents.

Curt defined his role as a board member who helped in the planning and implementation. He also taught some learning units, worked with the students and did some professional development for the staff. He conveyed that he had multiple roles at the school, "I got pretty involved and so I was a board member, which meant anything that had to do with hiring and firing and some of the decisions that had to be, remained confidential and ongoing issues with discipline and parents and stuff."

Curt did not see his role as a fundraiser of any type. That was not the case for all of the Board, however. Ashley and Jen both donated money. Jen explained that there was an expectation that each board member donate money. "In fact, that was part of the

agreement that you signed is that you would donate money, that you would help in their fundraising. I hosted a fundraising event." Ashley explained that she was planning on donating a percentage of her earnings and that she found the charitable cause that she believed in. Jane also hosted a fundraising event herself.

Hanna had a distinctive role in the planning of CEAS. She was considered the Head of School. She was involved in the design of the curriculum and locating the actual school space. She described it in this way,

> My involvement is unique. I am not just a community member. I was really like a staff member and treated like that, and going to board meetings and then promoting the school, by the way, and getting lots of donations from people. Tens of thousands of dollars from close friends of mine who invested in the school because I was going to be the Head of the School for my career, which you know…hopefully it, went to a good place."

(Note: Hanna was not able to continue working with CEAS throughout its life cycle because she eventually learned that she would be working without a salary.)

There were various opportunities for all of the participants to involve their talents. Board members contributed to CEAS with their time and effort, along with their passion for creating an alternative to the traditional public schools of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Recruiting teachers for the CEAS experience

Jane's vision for CEAS included finding educators who would be willing to investigate an assortment of teaching strategies. She searched for teachers who were curious, creative thinkers. She wanted teachers who were good at collaborative work,

asked questions, and who were focused on social justice issues in general. Jane described her ideal teacher as:

> Really creative, really eager to learn from the students just like the students are learning from the teacher, and incredibly flexible. So a visionary in terms of seeing what the need was in the classroom at the time and adjusting quickly to it, but also seeing what was relevant at the time and adjusting the curriculum accordingly. I didn't want teachers to be teachers who felt like they were handed a curriculum and they had to teach it in the order of A, B, C. I wanted the curriculum to be very flexible so that the content marks were there, but they were really serving more as a checklist and less as a structure.

Jane and the board interviewed a variety of applicants. There was no discernible selection criteria used for the teacher positions. Jane recalled:

> We were not concerned with teaching certification. We were concerned with teaching experience. For us, the breadth of that experience and the variety of that experience was more important than the certification so we had teachers who had backgrounds in teaching people of all ages, teaching in the area of arts, teaching in the area of outdoors, teaching academic content, teaching religious content, all varieties of what we would label as teachers.

Jane's vision for CEAS included a Head of School and teachers for every subject area. She intended that the teachers loop from grades 5-8 with the students. The plan was not implemented because there was not enough funding. Jane and the Board hired John as

the math and science teacher, Page as the language arts teacher, and Traci as history teacher and administrative assistant. Jane taught what she referred to as, "the rest of the CEAS curriculum."

From the teacher interview process, Hanna recalled her realization that funding and budget were going to prohibit certain candidates from applying to teach at CEAS. Hanna later worked at her current job with one of the candidates, whom she called "an awesome teacher." Hanna related the events from the teacher interview process:

> We didn't interview a ton of people but I remember there were a couple that were somewhat interesting and really good people. Then when the budget started to fall through or whatever the church did with the budget. It was like well, "We can only afford somebody part time or we need to make them work for free or can volunteer." I was like, "If we keep doing that, we're losing anybody who is really a good teacher who works for a living." Then she hired her cousin and their aunt and herself. Then maybe one certified teacher I think. I don't know how it ended up. As soon as that started happening I knew, even before she couldn't pay me that I was out.
>
> I had some disagreements with her at those student interviews. Then we had some disagreements after that. When it came to staff hiring, I kept voicing my opinions about that… I kept saying, "Who's teaching this?" And it just got to where it was her and her helper. Then it was like I don't know how I can keep going. Then I didn't hear from her, but I

> heard from someone else that she didn't have any money to hire me. She asked me to do it pro-bono. I didn't, obviously.

John

John is related to three other CEAS participants. He is the administrator's first cousin. His mother, Jen and his aunt, Mary are board members. John had graduated with a Bachelor of Science in mathematics. He recalled doing menial jobs for ten years until he began tutoring students in math and reading at a Title 1 elementary school. (In the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title 1 improves the academic achievement of the disadvantaged by providing federal funds to schools.) He recalled that "Everything about the job reminded me that I wasn't really part of the team; I was a federally funded afterthought." He learned about CEAS from Jane's Facebook page and then she approached him about applying for the job.

He was motivated to teach at CEAS because he liked what the school had to offer. He described CEAS as "A chance to prove my skills, launch my education career, and get in on something amazing that would sidestep the troubles that plague CMS and its educators." John's perception of the CEAS vision was "A wild, harebrained scheme that just might work. I had misgivings about the whole idea, but I hoped I was wrong. I wasn't."

John accepted the position of math and science teacher because of situations he saw as the failure of public education in the local CMS district. He said:

> I think that the taxpayers of Charlotte (and the U.S. as a whole) only pay lip service to education. We are not willing to make the sacrifices and commitments necessary to have the good schools we claim we want.

> There is no vision of what a good school even does. The guiding philosophy, therefore, is "Don't get sued. Anger no parent. Treat everyone the same." Bleah. I try to get kids to draw their own conclusion. Knowledge means so much more when it comes from their own brains. I want them (kids) to be able to create their own knowledge when I'm not there.

John also found the prospective type of classroom CEAS was offering as appealing. He recalled, "I had a small class, a well-defined role, attainable goals and a very supportive environment. That's as good as teaching gets."

Traci

Traci was in her thirties when as she described, "I got tired of chasing my own tail professionally and put myself through school at a liberal arts college." She had been working at a human services agency when she heard about CEAS from a friend. Her perception of the CEAS vision matched her teaching philosophy. Traci recalled, "I loved that the (then) Head of School (Hanna) as well as the Founder (Jane) responded to me within hours of my emailing a cover letter and resume to them. That gesture made it feel like even more of a match."

Traci was motivated to commit to the CEAS experience because of its teaching philosophy and commitment to working with students from systemically oppressed populations. Traci characterized her own teaching philosophy as follows

A. Learning should be accessible to the masses

B. That it should be liberatory (teacher as learner and learner as teacher)

C. It should be holistic – mind, body, spirit

D. All subjects should have equal value

E. Students should be in their bodies as much (or more) as they are in their chairs. We really annex the body in formal education and then we scratch our heads and wonder why kids are so hyper and disconnected.

F. I also believe that releasing a child from the chains of formal education (public school) and asking her to understand and adapt to this philosophy takes time.

This type of education involves patience and understanding. It requires that a student feel out this new way of learning because it can feel so big and overwhelming that she might shut down or act out. This type of freedom can probably feel a little unsafe to a child that has been beaten down or neglected in public education for so long. It requires safety, new learning and trust. These aren't built overnight.

Traci became the history and culture teacher at CEAS. She chose to be the part time administrative assistant at the school. In addition to these positions, Traci waited tables at a local restaurant.

Page

Page had taught 14 years and had recently stopped teaching to open her own tutoring business. She explained that she missed working with other teachers. She learned about CEAS through a friend who was interested in teaching Spanish there. The school did not have the budget to hire the Spanish teacher, but she passed the CEAS vision to Page. "As soon as I read it, I just kind of got the chill in my body and my hands

were shaking. I was like, oh my gosh. This is what I-yeah." She recalled Jane's vision for CEAS:

> I loved the vision that Jane had. She was holding a higher vision for these children. Everything that her curriculum was designed to do was to hold these children to the place of possibility that where they could be. She wasn't looking so much at "Well, this is only what you're capable of." Her whole curriculum was geared towards the children, towards moving them to "This is where you could be, this is how your life could be, and this is who you could be," and that's her moving them forward.

Page sent in her application and got the interview. She was hired as the CEAS language arts teacher. She was motivated to teach there because she saw that the school would incorporate a learning process of discovery. She shared that "One of the things that I have issues with in a public school is that with No Child Left Behind that you just kind of keep pushing along whether the child got it or not, because you had to meet the quota by the end of the year." Page explained that there were options in the way materials could be used which would reach students at their actual performance level using their preferred modality. She described how she would use more student involvement in her own teaching.

Page saw that the CEAS vision had more room for the teacher to be creative. She appreciated that the curriculum allowed for a teacher's personal assessment of teaching where the children needed to be or needed to start because of their background knowledge. Page said, "In a public school, it's just like, 'well, yeah, I know you have

trouble reading, but this is our book. Here's our goal, this is what you have to be.'" Page expounded on her own teaching philosophy:

> I believe that you have to begin where the child is at. You cannot jump in two steps ahead. You have to begin and to start where they were at and then it involves a constant encouragement to move forward, especially with children who have been burned by the system. They are scared to put their ideas and thoughts out of there. Those children in particular-- and then to push their thinking a little forward, I think that they're so used to hearing in a public school, "This is what we want from you." They learn like "If this is what you want, that's what I'll give you."
>
> Then to actually have them begin to open up their own mind to think for themselves is impossible; it's like we're sending them two messages in the public schools. "That we want you to begin thinking for yourselves and exploring deeper ideas, but yet we want you to do it our way." Some children just don't think like that. Some children are auditory learners. Some are more visual, some are global, and their comfort level. You must start with their comfort level. No child is going to learn if they're not feeling safe and comfortable. Even if you just see a stepping stone for the vision that you (the teacher) want, encourage the small step that you do see. You really got to focus on the successes they (students) do have so they could begin to see it. Make them aware, that fuels their own motivation to keep moving forward.

All three of the teachers began the school year with the students in August and worked until CEAS closed. Hanna shared, "That school needed four of the right people and it would have been super. An actual educator who wants to be there, imagine that." None of the teachers were in contact with the students at the time of the interviews for this study one year after it closed. Jane recalled that the CEAS Board recruited and chose its teachers and the students simultaneously.

Recruiting students and their families

With hiring plans in place, Jane turned to the task of student recruitment. This was not difficult because Jane and the board members of CEAS were not the only people in the city searching for an alternative to public schooling. In local public schools, students and their families were also searching for options to their educational situations. There was a surplus of reasons why students wanted a different schooling experience. Some students had been in trouble at multiple public schools, some students were two grade levels behind in their academics, and other students weren't having positive social experiences. Regardless of the circumstances, each student was seeking alternative schooling, and Jane offered that alternative. Forty young adolescent girls applied to CEAS and about 35 were interviewed. Eighteen girls were accepted to begin the CEAS experience, as the school year continued eight remained. Two of those girls agreed to be interviewed.

Quate

Quate, one of the two students interviewed for this study, was a shy, quiet girl who was successful in her previous school. She explained herself as a student:

> I don't ask lots of question or like answer the questions because I'm really shy. I think I'm a good student. They (teachers) expect good grades from me because I was good, they expect me to have stuff turned in on time but they know I like, sometimes participate, but they know I don't really participate a lot.

Quate is the only girl of quadruplets. Her mother, Daniela worked in the school cafeteria at Quate's previous elementary school. Daniela understood the dynamics of the school and remembered her daughter's experiences (translated here from Spanish to English by a native speaker):

> I was fortunate to work in the same school. Yes it shows the need in schools. When they have large groups of students, there are very smart children and no one notices, I mean go unnoticed, primarily because teachers have so many children in one room. Children want to learn more, more, more. That's what happened to my child in that school. She is very smart, all grades were "A," but many times she was frustrated because she wanted more advanced classes. Quate told me, "Mommy I want more advanced classes." I put in for a tutor and still was not enough for her, put her in all the programs that the school could give, but I saw that the girl wanted more, more and more--other things more advanced. She was frustrated to some extent.

In Quate's previous public school, she routinely received A's in her classes, yet she and her family were still in search of the right fit for her education. A specific situation in her classroom caused Quate to become frustrated with school. Daniela

explained that suddenly Quate did not want to go to school, so she told her, “Your brothers are here, I'm here.” Initially Quate did not tell her mom what was happening, but Daniela investigated and recalled:

> I think it was a science teacher, when she (Quate) asked questions and when she presented more advanced work, she felt the teacher did not love her. She said, "Mommy, I do not like me the teacher, for more I try to do things right, she does not like. Everything is wrong." The teacher was one of those idle, students only sat and she see how they manage. But my little girl put her mind to work, then I think she did not like. Then Quate started telling me she wanted to change schools.

Daniela spoke with all of Quate’s teachers and found a resolution, but the situation left the family unsatisfied. Daniela said, “Yes, that's why because she is very smart and the teacher could not handle it.” Soon after a social worker told Quate about CEAS, and she asked Daniela to apply to the school. Daniela conferred with the social worker who knew her daughter and realized it was a smart idea. The social worker helped the family fill out the application.

Alejandra

Alejandra’s story was consistent with other students in their belief that CEAS would provide more opportunities and different experiences than traditional public schools. Alejandra remembered her worst experiences in public education as:

> Probably getting picked on at school. I was shy and I was a little bit weird. I wasn't really popular I would say. I only had this little ring of close friends. I wasn't the really outgoing person or anything. I just had a few

> close friends. I was really, really shy. But the teachers said that I talk too much in class and I was surprised.

Alejandra had a strong sense of self-identity. "You don't want to be like everybody else in this world because then (pause.) You have to be different. I don't like to fit in with people. I like to be different." Alejandra's mother, Cristina, recognized this trait in her daughter. She learned about the CEAS opportunity from the After School Coordinator at Alejandra's public school. Cristina explained the ways in which she felt positive about the opportunity to explore Alejandra's educational choices (translated here from Spanish to English by a native speaker):

> The opportunity for her to be in something different, because supposedly the school was something different, it was a girls-only school, was a private school, and is working with the community, that's what I liked.
>
> We went on a Saturday for to fill some applications, and then another Saturday for a meeting with Ms. Jane to discuss the school, what their goals and their projects with the girls. As I say that my English is not so good. I did not dare go there ask her (Ms. Jane) anything because I did not want her to tell me about many things that I could not understand anything and stay stupid. That limited me a lot. Alejandra said that school was to work with the community and asking for help at different locations to keep the school going. I liked the idea. I ventured to enroll Alejandra.

Every participant revealed a situation showcasing how a traditional public school had failed in their eyes. The search for an alternative school environment came up

repeatedly in the data analysis. The opportunities that CEAS envisioned significantly excited each of the participants.

Realities of the CEAS experience: Theme two

Though CEAS was called a community school, no one who attended the opening day ceremonies lived within walking distance of the school. Hanna, the original Head of School, was the only participant who resided in the neighborhood where CEAS was located. Figure 6 shows a map of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. It identifies the location of thirteen of the CEAS students' residences as reported in December 2010. It also identifies Jane's residence in relation to the CEAS space.

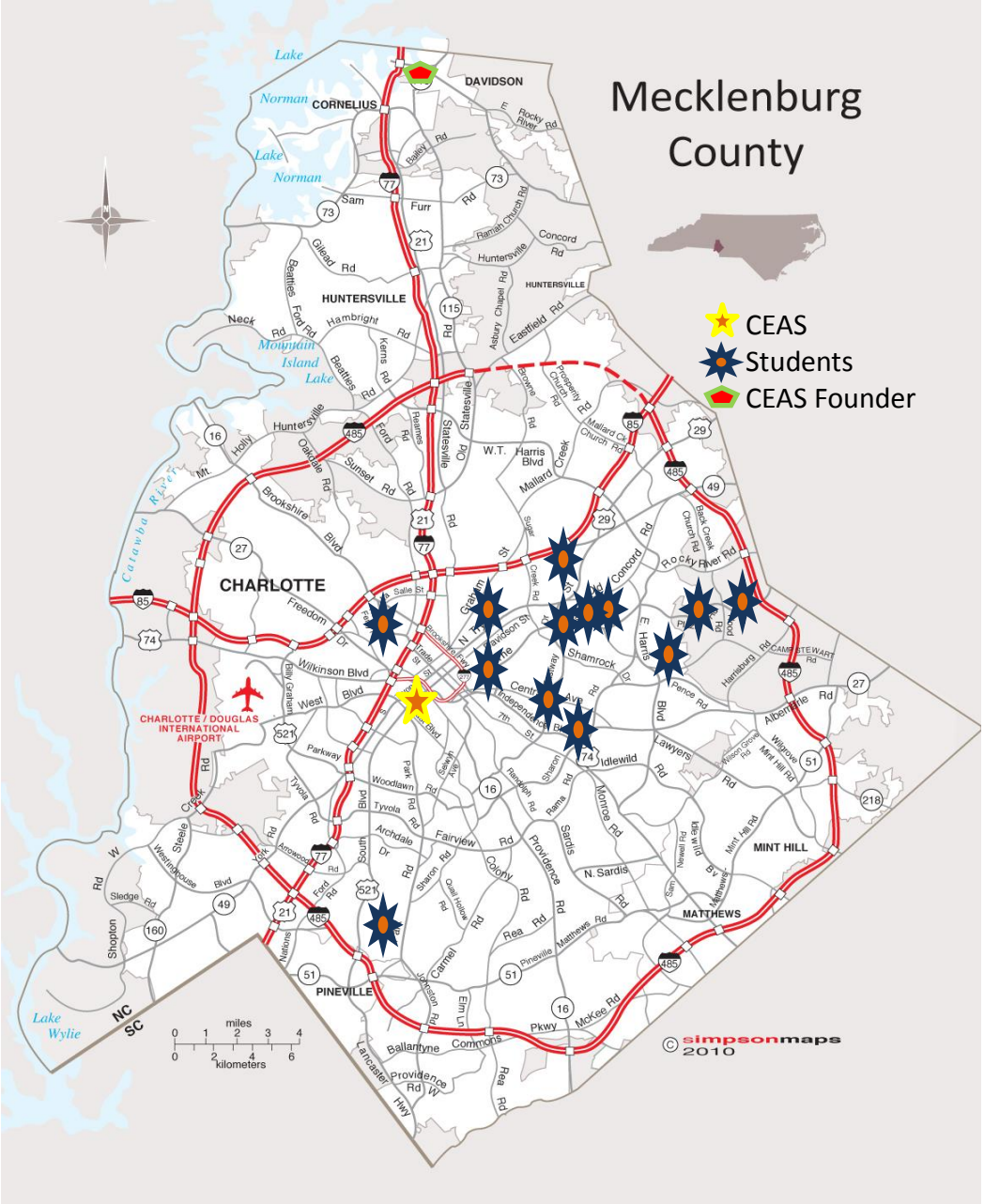



Figure 6: Community map

Figure 6 shows one student who lived in the bottom quadrant of the city in December 2010. This was the only student who had access to and used the city's light rail system for transportation each day. Jane's residence was 22 miles from the school. The city's central bus station was in the downtown area, one mile from the school. Multiple bus

lines had to be utilized to get to the CEAS space by other students and their families if they did not have access to a car. It was misleading to call CEAS a community school, as its participants were spread across the city.

Though the participants were eager to participate in a new opportunity, the alternative experience of CEAS required more from students and their families than a traditional school. The families were responsible for the students' transportation to and from school and events. The students met multiple times in the summer before the official school year began. The school days were extended from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm. There were Saturday and evening events that students and their families were expected to attend. Data from the families showed that the girls found the curriculum to be rigorous and demanding. Even after the school closed, the CEAS experience was positively remembered by the students and the families.

Daniela recalled the interview and admission process. She and Quate saw a long line with over thirty girls. Daniela asked her daughter, Quate if she thought that she would qualify and described the conversation. "Quate told me, 'Be assured that you will not waste your time, they will accept me, I will be one of the thirty-two girls I'm going to be one of them.' Daniela said, 'Are you sure?' and Quate said 'Yes.'' They interviewed separately and when they left the meeting Quate said to Daniela, "I hope you have answered well because I answered well." Quate was sure she was going to go to this school, and the assurance she gave made Daniela feel confident that she made the right choice for her daughter.

In choosing alternative schooling, the CEAS students and their families had open lines of communication about education. The families clearly sought opportunities to better fit their child's needs. Daniela understood Quate's feelings and she said:

> I'm always aware of my daughter and I also trust the academic level of the school. I always could tell the difference between public school and CEAS. I could compare, so I never lost the confidence in the school. Because in this school, it gave them all. I could notice her (Quate's) change because she had the ability and really wanted. She was happy all day at school, so many hours, but she was happy and ended the year without absences or anything.

As noted through their voices, the academic level and activities planned in the CEAS curriculum impressed the students and their families. The families made the ultimate decision to enroll their child into the CEAS; every part of the curriculum was important for them to consider. Cristina said that the activities required by the school enhanced Alejandra's education:

> Although much is stressed, they even had to go on Saturdays to certain activities. They were clearly more fun activities, for the week was heavier, but still she (Alejandra) liked. I loved that school because they did study hard. Alejandra did not like. She was frustrated, she came home crying because she was a lot of homework and went to bed late and although I helped, still ended late. At one time she wanted to leave. She said, "Mommy I want out because they sent me a lot of homework I did not want to go." I incentivized her to continue forward and I said, "Alejandra

> go, do not stay back you can do it, this opportunity you cannot lose. All they are teaching you is left in your mind and will serve you.

Alejandra heeded her mother's advice and found that she was able to understand herself as a learner at CEAS. She said, "I never really knew what I actually wanted to learn at that time. I just wanted a little bit more of the art, sort of, concept. Yeah, we started taking art classes. You know, we started drawing and all that with some art teachers. It was cool."

Unexpected realities of CEAS experience.

As any first year project, CEAS also had its adjustments for students, teachers, and organizers. The area surrounding the school was a space for small businesses with no outdoor area and there were no parks or playgrounds within walking distance. Initially, parking lots and empty lots were going to be the outdoor space for the students' physical activity. Soon after the school opened, however, some surrounding businesses prohibited the girls from being on their property during business hours. Alejandra said, "We almost never went outside though. It was sad." She and Quate recalled doing walking drills in line and sometimes taking walks outside for recess.

As described in Chapter 3, the physical space inside CEAS contrasted from traditional schools and classrooms. It was a single room with a storefront and two bathrooms. There were tables, folding chairs, and couches that were mobile to adjust the set-up of the room. For some students, this was a negative and for others it was a positive in their learning experience. One student was often reprimanded at her previous school for being out of her seat. At CEAS, she found learning success by sitting on a stability ball or a couch instead of the traditional chair found in most public classrooms.

The CEAS extended day ran until 5:00 pm and allowed for projects and learning that would not be available in a traditional public school setting. Alejandra recalled:

> It was kind of different. We got to do a lot of things. When we built that little house, I had a hammer. I still have that shirt. We got to plant those plants. We got to do a lot of projects. It was fun. It kept the girls in line.

They also had to use their extra time in the extended day for homework and individual tutoring. Quate remembered that she would usually read, but admitted that the extra time was helpful for her to get her homework done. She understood that she should take advantage of the extended day and said, "Because you would come home at six and then you'd have to do all that homework they gave us and then you still have to go to sleep and you would wake up more early in the morning." Not all students made this choice to work productively at school and some complained of being overwhelmed with too much homework. In addition, the students used this time of the extended day to assist with the aesthetics of the CEAS space, like cleaning the school. Students had to keep their work area, the bathrooms, windows, library and personal area tidy.

The CEAS space was a one-room classroom. Both students revealed that the small space made them feel trapped. They wished for more walls to look at and more places to go during the long school day. (Monday through Thursday was mostly spent in the classroom. Friday was the day for field trips and excursions.) Alejandra described it in this way:

> It was just a really small … It was like a room with a little hallway in the back where you put your little supplies and everything. We didn't have much. We had our little laptops, our supplies, our big board, a little radio

> and some couches and pillows. Basically that was it. We didn't have many students or teachers. Yeah, that was pretty cool. But CEAS was from 7:00 to 5:00 and it was so long and I was almost suffering from hunger sometimes. They said, "Oh, we have snacks." I'm like, "No. I'm too hungry. Give me something I can eat." Yeah. It was really long. At the same time I didn't want to get out of summer break in July. I remember she told us we were going to start school August 18th and then we're going to finish at the end of July. So put together. Really? You barely even give us any time for summer break. Why?!?

For the most part, the students understood the advantages of alternative schooling even as they complained about some of its aspects. Another student recognized the consequences of attending a public school, "If you miss a day of school you have to ask for your work, they are not going to come up to you and say that you're missing this." She said she knew how fortunate she and her classmates were in school because they were exposed to different opportunities than students in public schools.

The students' and families' experiences with CEAS were remembered as a positive investment in the students' education. It opened doors for opportunities and experiences that had yet to intersect in their lives. Quate described how she felt about CEAS as an alternative to public schools. "It was a good school. We had lots of help, individual help. We had good times. We had stuff that you don't do in regular schools. We had other people besides our own teachers there so we had volunteers and we met awesome people."

Alejandra described her perspective of the expectations for a student to attend any alternative school.

> You have to have more of an open mind. You have to be more creative. You have to come up with monologues sometimes for semester classes. You have all these drawings. You just have to be more creative, more open to things. You just have to be different because if you're trying to fit in then that's crap. That's why I've seen people with purple hair.

Every participant shared a level of surprise with the CEAS reality. The opportunities that the CEAS vision described significantly excited each of the participants yet the daily needs were completely unexpected. However the vision was drastically different than what occurred. Though the participants were eager to participate in a new opportunity, the realities of the alternative experience of CEAS required more from teachers, students and their families than a traditional school.

Funding and planning: Theme Three

The CEAS vision and budget

In reviewing the CEAS data it was imperative to look at the school's vision and budget. I then compared the CEAS budget to successful UCS initiatives. According to Jane, "The vision for the school (CEAS) was to create this sort of outside-of-the-box learning experience that was community-based, creativity-focused, that was more akin to the kind of learning that I did outside of the school as a child." Jane's family background was one of White middle class, where both of her grandparents were college professors and her mother ran a business. Education was a clear expectation and family value, which led her to create the vision for CEAS. In Jane's words:

> Everything was a learning experience; even my visit to my grandparents in the summer vacation was a learning experience so, whether it was going to museums, going to parks, being exposed to the symphony, going to off-Broadway plays. My mother ran a business so I was involved in that and I knew how that worked and I saw what women entrepreneurs have to go through. All of those life experiences gave me a breadth of experience so that when I was in college, I already had a whole bunch of things to draw on and college was an expectation in my family and I saw that that was missing for a lot of kids.

Comparing other UCS budgets to the CEAS budget

In retrospect, when I analyzed the CEAS budget there was almost an innocence in understanding the monetary costs of running a school. There was no evidence of the foundational research to predict budgetary needs. The Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) collected data (Blank, Jacobson, Melaville, & Pearson; 2010) from 286 community school initiatives that focused on the financial capacity to make a community school comprehensive, efficient, effective, and sustainable. From this plethora of models, it is obvious that funding sources and financing methods vary widely across community school efforts, yet it was found that similarities emerged in the types of activities that were funded by the schools, where resources came from, and how funds were leveraged through organizational structure.

Figure 7 shows a compilation of the CCS data collected as it compares to the CEAS data collected for this study. The CCS data analyzed how 286 successful community school initiatives used their resources. They named four specific areas to

categorize the data: Develop Learning Competencies, Provide Health and Mental Health Services, Support Families, and Staffing the Sites. The CEAS data did not share a clear categorization of funding. (See Appendix F for the full CEAS Budget.) In Figure 7, I deconstructed the CCS data to show a parallel comparison of its resource expenditures to the CEAS budget.

| How Resources Were Used | CCS | CEAS |
|---|---|---|
| **Develop Learning Competencies** | **57%** | **9%** |
| After-school Activities | 18% | |
| Academic Enrichment | 16% | |
| Life Skills | 3% | |
| Service learning and Civic Engagement | 4% | |
| Sports and Recreation | 8% | |
| Early Childhood Education | 0% | |
| **Provide Health and Mental Health Services** | **19%** | **0%** |
| **Support for Families** | **12%** | **<1%** |
| Family Support Centers | 8% | |
| Parent Involvement and Leadership | 2% | |
| Adult Education | 1% | |
| Immigrant Services | <1% | |
| **Staffing the Sites** | **12%** | **0%** |
| Coordinator | 7% | |
| Tutors | 2% | |
| Interns | 1% | |
| Mentors | 1% | |
| Volunteers | <1% | |

Figure 7: Comparing CCS Study to CEAS Study
**Note: The remaining 91% of CEAS Budget was not categorized.**
Adapted from *Table 3: How resources are used*. (Blank, et al., 2010).

Figure 7 shows that in the CCS research, the majority of resources in the 286 schools were committed to support student learning, which is the primary mission of every school. In community schools, 57 % of resources were allocated for funded activities strategically designed to build capacity and student learning.

Develop learning competencies

Jane's vision supported experiential learning in and out of the traditional classroom. However when I compared the CSS data in Figure 7 to the to the CEAS data it became apparent that the funds available to the school were not leveraged to appropriately support the vision of the school. The total operating budget for the school was $198,844, all collected from private donors. Jane also described donations that were provided as in-kind contributions that were not accounted for in the budget; for example a local grocer would provide his business space free of cost for the girls to hold fundraisers. Aside from teachers' salaries, $18,219 was spent on the resources (Figure 8) that directly assisted CEAS in meeting the core instructional mission including:

| | |
|---|---|
| Curriculum, books, instructional supplies | $2500 |
| Art, drama, music, technology, photography, etc | $0 |
| Data, internet, phone | $2400 |
| Field trips | $1920 |
| Insurance, liability, and property | $9000 |
| Printers, digital cameras, videos | $500 |
| Science lab material | $300 |
| Wireless installation | $2500 |
| Total allotted | $19,120 |

Figure 8: CEAS expenditures to develop learning competencies

Figure 8 shows the cost of each item that was judged expenditure to develop competencies. The CEAS budget set aside 9 % for the resources needed to meet the core instructional mission. If testing was added to meet the mission rather than assess it, then the total would move to $19,419. This 48% discrepancy between the CEAS and CCS totals was large.

Provide health and mental health services

In Figure 7, the CCS data (Blank, et al., 2010) showed the second largest disbursement of resources was directed toward health and mental health services. In the schools that CCS studied, it was found this to be an important financial investment, 19% of resources were used. It ensured that students were physically able to learn and that health barriers were identified whenever they occurred.

In the CEAS budget (Appendix F), there were line items for a part time child psychologist and part time social worker, but there was no money allotted to either.

There were no line items related to physical health. If one were to consider meals as a physical health line item rather than a requirement provided by a school, the $31,500 encumber 15% of the total budget.

The need for mental and physical health services at CEAS became apparent early in the 2010-2011 school year. Two students left within the first month because they were unable to receive the services at CEAS that their diagnosed conditions required. The staff came to understand that mental health was an issue. Mary recalled, "We had a little girl who turned out to be autistic and we had to let her go because we simply didn't have the resources to deal with her." Jane reminisced about one student who stayed enrolled the entire year. "I actually think she is clinically depressed, but I can't get her mom to get her to the doctor so…I don't know what the deal is with her mom." Page, one of the teachers, understood that "the problems were related to the whole child…the problems didn't just come with academics." She recognized that some of her students' behaviors, (for example, wetting their pants at school) was not inappropriate attention seeking but a sign that the student needed support and help from social, physical and mental health services.

In many cases, the CEAS students and their families had basic or no health insurance. If the stress of day-to-day life was affecting students' physical or mental health, they were unable to obtain a diagnosis. The students recognized that some of their classmates were suffering, but didn't always understand the complexity of the situation. Alejandra related this about one of her classmates:

> I remember when she told me, "I want to commit suicide." I like … She looked so depressed at that school and she just didn't want to be there or

> anything. She's just, "Ugh." She was always complaining and stuff and she never wanted to run with the other girls or anything and all that. Things like that. I don't think she had, she wanted to … She never really wanted to put the effort into anything. She really didn't care.

Mary, a frequent volunteer and CEAS board member, noted, "This population has a good many of them (the students) who suffer from terrible clinical depression. Oh my gosh and do some of these little girls suffer." Again, the CEAS budget (Figure 7) did not include mental or physical health services. There was minimal effort made to obtain sources from the community until a dire need identified itself.

Support for families

In Figure 7, resources which provided support for families and staffing the sites also emerged in the CCS data (Blank, et al., 2010) as activities that were necessary for ensuring that a community school was comprehensive, efficient, effective, and sustainable. Resources that provided adult education, family leadership, immigration services, and family support centers made up 12% of the CSS funding to strengthen and engage the family and the community.

In the CEAS budget there were no line items that specifically addressed resources for the students' families. Jen realized the oversight in the budget planning. She said, "The other 'oops' that was significant is we totally underestimated the needs of that population. We totally underestimated what it would cost us to adequately support those needs." However, the students' uniforms were paid for which was considered financial support in this study. The $1,875 spent provided the students with navy pants, collared

shirts, sweatshirts, and sweaters with the CEAS insignia on the clothing. This accounted for less than 1% of the allotted 12% budget in the CSS data.

Staffing the sites

The last category in Figure 7 shows that in the CCS data (Blank, et al., 2010); approximately 12% of resources supported the community schools by staffing the site. The staff at each school usually included a site coordinator, tutors, interns, mentors, and volunteers. In the CEAS budget (Appendix F), there were multiple line items indicating positions that could be considered staffing the site. However, there was 0% allocated to staffing the site. The expenditure for a site coordinator was relatively low, but the importance of coordination for CEAS and other community schools was high according to expenditures of successful schools described in the CCS data (Blank, et al., 2010).

Running costs in the CEAS budget

The CEAS administration spent 32% of its $198,844 budget on running costs. These costs totaled $64,179 and included the following line items:

| | |
|---|---|
| Space rent | $29,400 |
| Utilities | $7,700 |
| Taxes and tax preparation | $500 |
| The CEAS signage | $250 |
| Printing (curriculum, family communication) | $4000 |
| Licenses for operating the school | $2000 |
| Dues and subscriptions for professional organizations and journals | $350 |
| Bus transportation for field trips | $600 |
| Payroll, accounting fees, and background checks | $1500 |
| Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), worker's compensation, and unemployment insurance | $17, 879 |
| Total | $64,179 |

Figure 9: Running costs

These costs (Figure 9) did not directly affect student learning, but were part of the expense of running an organization. Jane and the three teachers at the school received 35% of the CEAS budget as salary (Appendix F), which seems reasonable because they directly affected student learning and the vision of the school. Their combined salaries equated to $70,920 of the $198,844 on hand when CEAS opened. In Appendix F, the budget shows two lines items for staff development ($1000) and staff meetings ($250). There was also a line item marked salary bonuses that contributed $5000 to the employees. Inquiries about bonuses were not answered. In addition, Jane was not paid a salary, and Traci was the funded part time Administrative Assistant as well as the History and Culture teacher.

It is difficult for educators, community leaders, and policy makers interested in beginning a community school to sort out and benefit from other's experiences (Blank, et al., 2010). As stated, there is not a central database for community schools. Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) offers a comprehensive collection of community school data available. This critical case study specifically offers the examination of the CEAS resource and spending budget and adds a comparison for stakeholders to consider when planning their initiative and its opening to students.

Cultural and Class Disconnections: Theme Four

Both culture and class played a large role in the disconnections between CEAS staff and CEAS families, which consistently presented itself in the data. This information revealed the importance of acknowledging and considering cultural and class differences in the planning stages of an urban community school initiative.

The CEAS student body was predominantly Black working class from poor backgrounds, yet all of the teachers were White middle class. The seven person CEAS Board was made up of five women (two of whom were Black) and two White men. All were middle to upper middle class. The board members had limited contact with the students and their families.

Lareau and Horvat (2008) showed how race acted to mediate the importance of class and had a separate significance in shaping family-school relationships. They found that it was more difficult for Black families than White families to comply with the institutional standards (rules and hidden curriculum) of schools. Social class influenced how Black and White families negotiated their relationships with schools. Lareau (2003)

described how the organization of daily life in working poor families differs from that of middle class families.

Similar to Lareau's research, this researcher discovered that CEAS family members struggled to make it through their daily activities. Because of this, CEAS family members had to face multiple obstacles and barriers that CEAS staff didn't find in their own lives. Many of the families were single mothers and had to make food last until they could afford to buy more, they had to work multiple jobs, and they had to depend on public transportation to carry out their daily duties. For example, CEAS staff sometimes complained of students' uniforms looking or smelling bad without realizing that the laundry had to be carried to public washing machines that required money. Unlike the middle class staff, in CEAS families, the adults and children understood the significance of money in their lives and the consequences of not having financial assets. In the case of CEAS, data collected continually revealed both class and cultural disconnect between the families and the school.

Cultural disconnections

This study first focused on the cultural disconnection that occurred during the CEAS experience. Research (Kozol, 2006; Delpit, 2006; Lareau & Horvat, 2008) has shown that some Black parents approach schools with open criticism, which stems from the historical inheritance of racial discrimination in public schooling. The teachers, board members, and the founder of CEAS often did not recognize the discrimination behind the families' seemingly bad attitudes.

Ashley, one of the CEAS board members, reflected on the issue of cultural differences which led to disconnections in the initiative.

> …From my perspective, it seemed like no one was ready for that to even come up, interestingly. Yeah. In hindsight, we were like, "Well, maybe we should have talked about it. Maybe we should have thought about this," but even on the Board, and maybe that was my job to think about, but it didn't occur to me. I don't think even some of the other board members, that we were going to face … It probably did occur to Curt because he thinks about these things all the time, but I didn't think about it in a way … I didn't think about it at all until it started happening and I thought, "Oh, wow."

The data exposed multiple situations where cultural differences resulted in miscommunication or misunderstandings. For example, a cultural disconnection was apparent as John described his responsibilities as a teacher.

> I had to bridge the huge cultural gap that existed between low-income, single-parent fifth-grade girls and… Ward Cleaver. I had to make science and math relevant and hands-on. I had to figure out how to motivate kids who were brought up in an environment of rampant apathy. That was the most challenging part: How do you make them care?

The reference to himself as Ward Cleaver, a 1950s white, middle class, father figure, spoke to the ways in which John perceived himself in relation to the CEAS students and families. This revealed the frustration that the miscommunications and disconnections often caused between CEAS participants.

From interviewing the families, Ashley remembered that a lot of the parents were younger women with multiple children. She also recalled that many of the women she

spoke with wanted their daughters to succeed. She recognized that there was sometimes a gap from the women's want versus the reality that they lived. "I think what I learned from that was, that it so quickly, so easily in life you get removed from challenges that often are tough to deal with for people." Ashley speculated that the families were the hardest challenges for Jane to deal with because of this cultural disconnection in understanding. Ashley, who is a Black woman, shared a story that exemplified one of these situations:

> There was a mom who came in. She was young, or may have been more young, but she was probably (pause) she was working on her degree. She was young, but she was trying. She had her daughter here because she was trying to do what she thought was right, but she was clearly (pause) she was working on her degree, but I think, and I'm doing a lot of judging without having any background, maybe even (pause). She had a high school degree, but probably not the same one I had, right? She probably didn't have the same teachers I had. She would not have been prepared to go to NC State or a university where I went, but maybe was doing the right thing by starting at a community college, but doing it the right way and the best way she knew how to do it. She's on her own. Her mom came in too.
>
> I remember the day she came in; Jane had told us, "Just be ready. I felt like she was aggressive when I talked with her." I saw her and I saw exactly what Jane meant, but I also saw my cousin (in her) and I knew this isn't her being aggressive. This is just her not knowing what to do.

> Because I'd seen someone who was not at all being aggressive, to me it looked exactly this way and that was what I thought of. I was like, "Oh, these are the kinds of small cultural things that happen that there's no way in life for Jane to have had that experience. I've had that, seeing my cousins become the same way because they were in very similar situations." Two of them at least I have of mine, are younger with kids and would respond immediately defensively to the situation we were dealing with. I also know what those two look like when they're really being aggressive and I'm like, "Oh, she's not, but it looks like it." It looks like it.

The Black families were not the only ones who were misunderstood during the CEAS experience. The two Latina families in the CEAS program often had to depend on their children to communicate and translate any information related to school. Quate's mother spoke some English, but her father spoke only Spanish. Alejandra's mother spoke very little English and understood some. Both families spoke only Spanish in the home. Daniela, Quate's mother admitted "The limitation in the language that I have sometimes I'm a little awkward, but still if the teachers see that I care that my children are current on their tasks so they also put more interest in helping."

Both of the Latina families discussed how they would make extra trips (across town) to evening events at CEAS to communicate with their actions since they were unable to communicate with their language. Cristina described:

> Well the truth that my English is not one hundred percent good, but it helped a lot when you have to decorate a room for an event they would

> have. Helping to sweep and make the room after the event, I was voluntary for all in school.

Quate and Alejandra were very helpful when translating and writing for their families. When it came time to answer Jane's year-end surveys and questions about the school and student learning, the eleven-year-old girls admitted that they sometimes inserted their own opinions or did not understand what was being asked of them (since the questions were designed for adults). The families may have missed important CEAS information because of this situation.

During the interview, Jane recollected that at times she was overwhelmed and tired by the actions (or non-actions) of students' families. Jane described Alejandra as possibly having Attention Deficit Disorder, "But I think more importantly I think that their values are off and that her mom values her and her music." It was noted in the data that the mother, Cristina, to whom Jane referred was going through a divorce the year her daughter was at CEAS, and she was working two jobs as a school custodian and cleaning in a beauty salon. When discussing another student, Jane said, "And Quate's family has real values." Quate's family was the traditional nuclear family with two parents, four children and pets. Quate was the only student who remained at CEAS the entire year, whose family structure closely mirrored Jane's own family.

Families' structures were also different from each other. The CEAS students lived in many types of structures that were considered family. They lived with a single parent, between two single parents, with a grandparent, with aunties and cousins, or in a multigenerational structure. There were also students who were separated from siblings, separated from divorcing parents, or constantly moving between households. The

varying situations occasionally led to a student's encounter with cultural disconnections from both the school and other students' families.

One mother expressed concern and negative feelings about her daughter's classmates' motives, without knowing about their cultural differences. Her thoughts were:

> One of the things that annoyed me was that when I went to meetings of parents, other parents instead of support, encourage their daughters to go ahead, what they were doing is giving the reason that girls did not want to go to school because they sent a lot of homework, or many hours of class. That was one of the worst situations that I could see and taste, not by the school but by the same parents, dammit! Not appreciate what teachers are doing, do not support their children, and give them a nudge to get ahead, because everyone has the ability but simply having the courage to succeed. That's what I like. Some cursed and complained about everything. Well, there was when I pulled out my conclusion "Like father, like sons."
>
> I can be witness and confirm that many of them, they really had no desire to overcome it, simply gave up and withdrew from school. That was a big change, I saw that the number of girls was declining because the academic level was very high and was demanding, you understand me? If that person did not have the desire and will themselves were retreating from the classes, I think that was a big change, the power to see who was actually the person who was interested in getting ahead.

From the start of the CEAS initiative, the cultural disconnection was apparent to Hanna and this researcher. We conferred with each other and advised Jane to include culturally relevant, culturally understanding, and culturally respectful pieces in her school curriculum and professional development. I created relevant units including Latina, Muslim, and African American cultures for all subjects. Hanna worried about cultural disconnections because of specific experiences she had with Jane. One example was when she was at a meeting and listened to Jane speaking to the parents about how they should be investing in their child's education and that CEAS was not a hand-out. Hanna shared an experience:

> It came out in her speech and I don't think she meant it, but it did. She said that she felt that they (the families) weren't very helpful. It was inevitable and she was getting more resentful. I am sure that they (the families) were getting more (pause) like, "I will just go to my regular school where there is nobody telling me to bring toilet paper, arrive on time, and be like a White person."

As a first year teacher, Traci explored Native American culture in her social studies teaching to expose her students to other cultures. She explained that she felt unprepared and that there was "…not enough training for teachers/staff/board members in regards to the community we were working with." Traci saw the lack of congruence in the cultural backgrounds of the CEAS families and the school as an issue to be explored. She conveyed that, "Also as a 'community school' we ideally should have had more people in power (examples of 'power' include teachers, staff, board members) that came from the same community as our learners."

In retrospect, Mary, who was a board member, agreed that the people in power at CEAS learned from the experience. She revealed:

> They really did have a learning curve there and having been through that now and working with the families like I do now, I see that whole larger picture. There are issues in the homes of those children that affect greatly, whether they are able to be successful or not, and if you look at each of the girls that we have. You just sort of know them as human beings and you know what their life at home is like and see now how they grew through that period and then also how they are doing since CEAS ended.

It was apparent that each board member of CEAS recognized the importance of including people from the community that they were serving at different points during the experience. Mary's retrospective point of view was that "… racial differences are also very noticed. That's another thing that probably would change a little bit, in terms of the Board make up and in terms of the staff make up. I might change the racial mix-up a little bit up there." The teachers and board members felt that perhaps there would have been more cultural understanding and respect if it happened earlier or during planning.

Ashley evoked an image from her experience interviewing prospective families. "That was enlightening. That was really interesting and their (the families') energy behind their girls doing well didn't sound any different than any other parents I've talked to which, of course, colored good conversations that we ended up having later with the challenges." Ashley wondered if the CEAS outcome would have changed had board members conducted conversations regarding cultural and class backgrounds.

Class disconnections

Lareau (2003), states clearly that American society is stratified. Possessions of wealth, high paying jobs, a good education, and home ownership are highly valued in our society. These resources are not evenly distributed, however, because our country's history has created generational patterns of poverty in marginalized groups. The inequality of resources has led to variations in the life experiences and routines of people in different social classes.

The life experiences of the typical CEAS family were distinctly diverse from the life experiences of the CEAS founder, teachers, and board members. CEAS recruited students who were part of the free and reduced lunch program. Jane recalled:

> We went through service organizations that we knew already worked with low income kids. So we did presentations to those students and their parents. Then we had an open invitation to other social service organizations where we hadn't done presentations, but we shared all of our marketing materials and then we advertised in the paper as well. So we recruited from a whole variety of different places.

The marketing materials included the wording "educating and empowering the leaders of tomorrow…private tuition-free schooling for girls" along with promises of breaking the cycle of poverty and a free laptop for each student (CEAS Brochure, 2010).

Alejandra's family heard about CEAS through the After School Coordinator at the child's school. The family inquired about the academic level and the ability for the student to return to her public school if things didn't work out. The mother said, "I did not think twice. I said if it's a new opportunity, we will see what happens…It was

something different, a private school, working with the community, that's what I liked." They filled out the applications and went to a Saturday meeting with Ms. Jane and then proceeded with the interview process.

Quate's family recognized the differences in our society as affecting education and the resources families are able to provide. The mother's opinion was that a child's behavior depended on the environment in which s/he is being raised. She said:

> The society in which we live, if we live in marginalized areas, many times a child's self-esteem is very low. They have very bad behavior and no desire to overcome because they no longer care. They would like a different life, but if resources do not allow us, you cannot and sometimes do not pay attention to excelling.

Lareau (2003) found that American society is more comfortable recognizing the power of individual initiative than recognizing the power of social class. Some participants in this study blatantly understood their own positions of power. Other CEAS participants did not.

The founder, teacher, community and board members interviewed for this study were all from middle class backgrounds. Their experiences contrasted to those of CEAS students and their families. For example, the data pointed to Page, the only teacher at CEAS with classroom experience. She grew up in a middle class area, went to college an hour away from her home, and returned to the district where she attended school to teach. Until two years before she came to CEAS, her experiences were limited to working with White middle class children in the school district which she lived in all of her life.

Jane, Mary, Jen, and John were also brought up with middle class values. Jane's grandparents were described multiple times by their relatives as educated social activists. Jen recalled some of the issues that the family worked to change. She remembered, "What we grew up with was the thought of trying to help poverty, the idea that education is a significant player in solving the poverty issue." In each of these college-educated CEAS participants, educational experiences were valued and achieved. As well, their social agendas were directed at solving issues of poverty through education.

Life experiences are not always the same

While the student interview and selection process strived to choose students in an alternative way, the first signs of class disconnection were apparent to some members involved in the process. There were five interviewers asking the parents questions and interviewing them about their aspirations for their child, participation in their child's lives, and their child's educational past. There were also five observers watching the students navigate their way through a series of activities. The interviews and tasks did not consider what the family's daily routines exposed them too. Jane described the process:

> We did a very short abbreviated lesson on an artist. We gave the kids a plain cake, divided them into groups, and gave them cake decorating materials and said decorate it like one of the artists that we just learned about. In that process we were looking for what their collaborative skills were, what their analytical skills were. In other words, were they taking what they learned and were they able to apply it, whether they were creative, whether they were thinking outside of the box, and whether they

> were enjoying that activity? What their response was- was that something that was engaging them or was it not.
>
> Another one we did was we gave them a bag and in it, it had paper, a piece of chewing gum that was in the wrapper, a couple of paper clips, I think we might have had a pencil and a couple of Band-Aids, and we said build a structure from these materials. We gave them no other instructions and when they asked questions, we said we are giving you no other instructions. So we looked at what they created and in that we were looking for their independence, their problem solving skills, again creativity, motivation, persistence. We had one child that we admitted solely because of that process where she put the house together and it fell, and she put the house together and it fell, and she put the house together and it fell, but she wasn't giving up and that's really what we were looking for.

The students came in waves, spending a half a day with CEAS members, while the family interviewed simultaneously. The interviewers and observers sat down in a full committee and compared lists. They had a note-taking checklist where they marked student qualities like persistence, creativity, and collaboration. (The researcher requested the family checklist. One was not made available.) Of the forty students interviewed, eighteen were selected to participate in the CEAS experience. Hanna described how the activities chosen to judge the students led some interviewers and observers to wonder if the students and their families had the experiential background knowledge necessary to successfully complete the interview process.

Hanna and Curt, both of whom have graduate degrees in education, understood the importance of recognizing class differences immediately. Another example of class disconnection occurred early in the students' CEAS experience. Hanna recalled the first day that all of the CEAS students were together during the summer, before CEAS officially opened. Speaking of Jane and then a student's mother she explained:

> Breakfast didn't come through. She (Jane) thought they (the students) should have eaten before they came. I work with kids like this so I'm not surprised. One of the moms who didn't have a car said, "Well we thought that they were going to eat here…I'll take care of it." She walked to McDonalds and got two huge bags of dollar burritos and hash browns and bought them for everybody. A woman who had zero money, her kid was hungry, but she wasn't going to feed just her kid. She got for everybody.
>
> Later that day, a catered lunch arrived. It was a dish of lemon-saffron chicken and couscous with salad and orange slices, and flan for dessert. It was served with chop sticks! The kids were like, "What is this? Can we have some peanut butter and jelly?" and trying not to be rude…It was like, "I'm in a place I don't know anybody. I'm trying out for a school; I don't even know I want to come to." It was bad planning. She (Jane) didn't have that in her head yet.

Both Hanna and Curt understood the reasoning behind Jane's choices as being part of her own life experiences and not intentionally meaning to cause discomfort. He said, "The teaching profession is predominantly White, female and middle class. Did we see that in CEAS? You bet. I wrestled with that issue internally…it was kind of wait a minute,

these are urban adolescents coming from low SES families." Jane was White from the middle class; her students were not, that fact becoming obvious in the CEAS experience.

Throughout the year, incidents and situations arose where there were class disconnections. Jane and the teachers were trying to teach lessons about community, leadership, and the expectations in middle class scenarios, yet the lessons would miss their objective because of class inequality. Jane and Mary both told about how CEAS was trying to teach the students a lesson about community. Mary recalled the story:

> One day she (a student) went into the bathroom and opens the cabinet where we had toilet paper stored for the whole year and she poured liquid hand soap over all the toilet paper and ruined all the toilet paper. We said to all the kids in the class, "This is a community, so we are all responsible for the actions of that one, so each of you is going to need to bring in a roll of toilet paper tomorrow." One parent was livid with us over that because that's hard for them but we felt so strongly that we were teaching the concept of community, that we made them do that.

Transportation issues were not always appreciated by the CEAS staff either. The middle class CEAS staff members were used to driving their own reliable cars to work. Unlike the CEAS families, they did not have to rely on public transportation or borrow a car to get to the school. Hanna recognized and discussed this situation with Jane as an issue early in the school year.

> Yeah, we argued about transportation a lot, because she would get frustrated with tardiness. Kids came an hour early, which we know, means Mom had to be at work at seven, so she drops them off at seven even if

> school starts at eight. It's just what you do. She (Jane) didn't want to let them in. She doesn't want to set a precedent. The precedent is that it is hot outside, or come an hour after, and you have to end school (pause) open two to three hours after and have somebody on staff. That's what you do, especially if you are not providing transportation.

As the school year went on Jane's awareness of the issue of transportation grew. She and Traci would often take students home or pick them up for special events. She began to see the issues surrounding transportation as a situation that had to be considered for her students and their families to succeed.

Ashley and Mary appreciated the effort put forth by the families to transport their child to school every day. Ashley related:

> In my whole life transportation had been an issue when I was 16 and my dad wouldn't buy me a car, right? Just that quickly. For my family that's one generation of transportation just being something we don't think about. Talking with these women, for these families, that's a big deal. Sometimes we had girls who were transient that lived different places depending on what was going on with mom or dad or whoever, or grandma. Hearing (pause) just talking to them it was evident that these were (pause) that when I was finished, I thought, "These women just committing to getting their girls here every day are committing something big for them."

Mary's realization that the families' daily tasks still had to be completed, regardless of transportation, made her appreciate the barriers and situations that middle

class families are often unaware of. "I thought 'And how am I supposed to do this without a car?' I only know that really well now because I've seen it first-hand. So that's real broadening to me and makes me a better human being." Mary and Ashley each expanded their own world-view to incorporate the reality of the CEAS students and their families.

Value judgments by the participants

In each social class, there are specific skills and expectations in social settings that are valued. The students and families of CEAS could all read public transportation schedules, knew how to navigate within social services' systems, knew what tasks were needed for their children to eat, and knew where to get a phone without having to sign up for a two year activation plan. Initially, the CEAS staff did not know how to do these things. Jane recalled her struggle as she made what was her first call to the Department of Social Services regarding a CEAS student. Similar to the lunch situation mentioned above, the CEAS curriculum worked to expose its students to middle and upper class values. Members of the CEAS board thought that this was beneficial to the students because it exposed them to things beyond their own homes. For example, Mary described:

> This lovely lady, a powerful lady, in the Third Ward, she has this lovely home and had the girls for lunch. It was a very fancy lunch with lovely china and all kinds of finery. A dish for this and a dish for that and it was lovely. That was very important for them to see how that is. And you know what? Their manners were impeccable that day. They were impeccable that day, so that's a big thing for them to be exposed to.

The class disconnection led to false beliefs and assumptions about the families' values (or lack thereof.) Some members of the board and some of the teachers mistook families' actions for lack of caring because their actions looked different from middle class values. The families' values were often blamed for how the students were performing academically. Mary discussed a student:

> When she's with you and you are with her academically, from the beginning of that day to the end, she can be engaged and she's gifted, she's motivated, she learns it, she's smart as a whip, but there is nothing, nothing at home. I'm not suggesting that her mother doesn't love her…Her mother does not value education as a means to an end, so she's not performing well.

Teacher participants of CEAS never visited this student's home and her family was not very active in the CEAS community. It was unlikely that they knew each other or much about the other's values.

The family members interviewed were asked about their educational past and desires. The data overwhelmingly told stories of families who concentrated on getting the best education available for their child and themselves. Daniela, a participant who was raised in a Latina country, spoke about the lengths she would go to as a child to get to school. Her own future plans include education:

> To this day I wish I had time to study. I have many years in this country, but throughout the life I have worked for my family. I have always had many responsibilities, but if at some point I have only one job in the day,

> count me in. In the evening I am going to CPCC or anything that has to do with overcoming.

Throughout the course of the CEAS experience four families' members mentioned returning to school for their own education. Though the outcome is unknown, the intention was there. In the working class poor, it is commonly assumed that the need to financially support their children keeps some family members from pursuing their own educational goals.

Certain members of the CEAS board and CEAS teachers did not comprehend the class disconnections. It was they who blamed the school's issues on the way the school was run or the students themselves. John disclosed his thoughts:

> We needed to only admit scholars that were ready to make a commitment to their own education. I think, even though we were intentionally dealing with families with limited resources, we needed to make it more difficult to get in. The families we wanted to be a part of CEAS would have found a way to put in the volunteer hours, or do whatever we required of them.

Another example that showed a class disconnection based on middle class values was when board member Jen blamed the type of promotion that was used for CEAS. She felt that the students who were recruited were the reason why families could not reach the expectations of Jane and a few CEAS board members. Jen communicated:

> I think that the mistake was in the promotion of it. We said, "You're going to get this free. You're going to get this free. You're going to get this free. You're going to get this free." Then what we had wanted to do is setup an economy where they earned things. Well, at the get-go we had

> told them everything was free. I think that was another mistake we made. It was a very successful recruiting tool. We recruited the wrong students with that.

These two instances showed ignorance about the barriers that plagued the CEAS families in the data. Each of these participants was raised with middle class values that varied from those of the working poor CEAS families.

Class difference and teachers

Chapter 2 reviewed literature that discussed the implications of White middle class educators teaching marginalized poor students (Delpit, 1998; Kozol, 2006; Kunjufu, 2006.) As with many schools, CEAS experienced a time of growing and learning by its teachers. Though Page had fourteen years teaching experience, only one of those was in an urban setting. She recalled:

> I think we did not expect to have some of the problems as far as their backgrounds, or their family issue problems…They did have some really, really troublesome family problems. Sometimes they were the adults, just what they were exposed to at such an early age. They knew a lot about different dangers of the world. I don't think we anticipated that.

Traci expressed her doubt about being able to meet Jane's ambitions for the CEAS vision in a short timeline. She felt that she was torn between Jane's impressive goals and her own observation of what the students needed to learn more thoroughly and holistically. When describing Jane's vision and teaching, Traci said:

> I think she struggled with the notion of slowing down and meeting the students where they were. I felt she had wonderfully ambitious notions of turning around the lives and learning styles of students around, but in amount of time that was too soon for our kids.

Page also understood the importance of appreciating how a child's past experiences impacts learning. She explained her perspective of the CEAS students:

> They did not have the background knowledge to understand a concept just by saying it. They did not have that privilege. They had to experience experientially. Everything was--somehow having to tie it experientially and in order to even teach them something that was more rote like helping verbs, linking verbs, I had to either just to have them and say, "Well, you need to memorize this." Well, these kids are going home to home lives where they weren't sure what's happening at home.
>
> I guess the thing was when I went into CEAS, I realized, "Oh, I cannot teach these kids the way I've taught in the past." I cannot do it. It's not going to work here. No teaching could be done until there was structure. When I say structure, I don't mean like a classroom. I mean like just until everybody knew the boundaries. When children didn't feel safe, when the teachers didn't know where their boundaries were--nobody had a sense of things enough to proceed into the actual teaching. We had to be clear about our environment and that was a little bit of a balancing act. The other thing was learning--when I realized, "Oh, my gosh, I

> cannot teach these kids the way I've taught in the past," well, then my whole lesson plan structure had to change and I had to use--I mean I really had to dig into myself and do research.

Traci and Page identified the students' past experiences as a piece of how they would craft their lessons and reach the students. These teachers empathized with the students' situations and created rich lessons which were not based on middle class assumptions of learning.

The disconnection in class values was a bit harder for John to consider in his teaching, which led to some of his frustration with his students. He and Jane had planned on using a program in which the students earned 'money' for performance like good behavior, turning in homework, and helping in the classroom. With their 'money' they could 'buy' school supplies, snacks, and other school-related items as a reward. John stated:

> We assumed that if we gave them something that was better than what they were used to, the students would come to value it and support it. But most of them were still in the mode of "gimme free stuff" until their last day.
>
> We also assumed that if we treated them as mature people, then they would act mature. The bullying did not stop, the bad manners did not stop, and lack of personal responsibility did not stop. We needed an iron fist inside CEAS' silk-gloved social reform program.

Hanna foresaw the implications of the middle class CEAS staff 'giving' the working poor CEAS families a free laptop and free education. She said, "There are often other ways to approach it. That you can have parents invest or feel invested so financially where they don't feel like it is a handout and that must have been the feeling. If I felt like that, then they must have felt like that."

When John described an empowerment incentive program that was planned but never put into action at CEAS, he said, "We never got beyond the greed that would have made that process very difficult, especially since we were in the mode of giving everything to them for free." The people that were 'giving' sometimes misconstrued the situation. This can be illustrated in John's statement.

The data collected about the CEAS experience exhibited a variety of perceptions and experiences related to class and cultural disconnect. Each of the participants expressed her or his feelings and judgments. They were presented with information about their own lives and then witnessed the lives of others. Each of the participants jumped into an unknown learning experience to better the education of the students. Hanna spoke of Jane:

> I think she had a big heart. I don't think she ever meant to do harm to anybody or really do anything wrong. It was such a good idea, it was just not well informed and not from an educator. She didn't include the right educators when she needed to say, I don't know how to do this. Which would have been perfect.

Each CEAS participant was able to experience a culture other than her or his own. All of the participants were able to interact with a person in a different social class, to encounter

first-hand the assortment that life has to offer. As a result, the data clearly showed learning and growth for CEAS participants. Mary concluded that the experience was beneficial:

> Well, it's broadened my horizons in a million ways. The one that comes to mind first is that I now get it. I don't think that I did before. I think that I always cared about the poor; I always took up for them. As part of my rearing and the family that I was in, to really care about that and to care about it as a society, as a nation, as our player in the world. I always felt like I knew it. I really cared a lot, but I didn't get it, until I really was into it enough to know that when you are a poor person and you have to get up every day and you have to be this, this, this and this, it's not as easy as it is for me. Until you walk in their shoes or find some way to be so close to them that you get it. That to me is a real broadening of my horizons; it makes me a better human being. When people say to me… They're saying on television these days that about the welfare. I want to scream and I want to jump up and down and I want to say, "Okay, you're making ten bucks an hour and you're working full time…"

Every participant revealed a situation which exposed a cultural or class disconnection relative to the CEAS experience. The data analysis showed a significant quantity of these disconnections from the inception of CEAS, through its life cycle and after it closed.

Role of one caring adult: Theme Five

The last theme the data in this dissertation exposes is the role of one caring adult. The collected data continually discovers specific instances of CEAS participants having a positive role model or one caring adult in their lives. The role model or caring adult mentioned in the participants lives were relatives, teachers and in many cases, the founder of CEAS, Jane. The data describes the importance of a role model or one caring adult in young lives and then progresses in relation to CEAS.

Family members as one caring adult

The CEAS participants answered a question pertaining to the most important people in their lives. Almost all of the participants considered a family member as this figure. Stories about motivation and inspiration from family members unfolded in the data. Ashley, who was a board member, remembered from her childhood an aunt who was her role model:

> She loves kids. She's a kindergarten teacher. She taught me so many things I think. I don't know if she deliberately was doing it or not. She had a lot to do with me loving to learn. She ended up being a lawyer after just kind of bailing on teaching and deciding she wanted to go another route… Thinking about her life and her willingness to make a decision had a lot to do with me feeling comfortable doing that. She has just kind of lived her life in a way, from my perspective as a kid in a way that I wanted to. It was nice.

Ashley's family had moved and her mother made sure she was with that aunt when she travelled to see her father. Ashley thought it was "Smart of my mom, my number one

person, to think to put me around family so much. It was just a lot of effort on her part. My aunt, I think, was great to assist her with that."

After CEAS student, Cameron, was removed from her mother's home, she moved in with her grandmother. She told Mary that her grandmother was her role model. Mary recalled the situation and recognized that it did not take money to show a child that she was cared for:

> She lives with her grandmother and three other little girls too. Well that grandma has a tough, tough life, she works full-time and she's got to support these four kids on ten bucks an hour, which you can't really do that on ten bucks an hour, but she really is that force. She knows how to do a couple of things that someone has to have taught you to do this. Number one: to say to your children all the time, "I love you." Grandma Beverly says that to her children all the time. Second thing she says to them all the time, and I hear her say that to them all the time is, "I am proud of you." That is huge! If you say to a kid from the get go, "I am proud of you," they want to make you proud then, so they're going to do well. Thirdly, she has a little chart on the kitchen wall that says, "When you get home from school, this is what you do. You know so and so you scrub the kitchen floors, so and so you do this and oh by the way you're homework better be done."

CEAS students most often named their families as the important people in their lives. Alejandra discussed how she leaned on her mother for support when she was struggling in math. She had a tutor after school once a week, but it was her mother that

she went to when she needed something. The families too considered themselves to be role models for their child. Cristina said, "Counseling, talking, that's the way how I helped my daughter, putting examples and talking a lot. I feel great because we as parents are very important to the learning for children."

Substitutes in the role of one caring adult

In the CEAS vision, the role of a caring adult did not always come in the form of a relative. Volunteers, teachers, and community members who spent time with the students also felt that they were available to be the one caring adult in a student's life. Jen believed that her interactions with the students were beneficial to them, "I think it was I was just another person, it was another generation. I was somebody that had different skills, kind of a grandparent connection. I think that I taught them some content and developed support materials for them. I never felt that any of my hours were wasted."

Mary expressed her perspective of the need for an adult to support each student's success. She understood that the funding issues CEAS faced would not allow her idea to come to fruition, but described:

> Well, for example, if there were a person who could take that little girl after school and say, "You're mine until 6:30 tonight, and we are going to sit here together, and we are going to do your homework, and you are not going to bed until it's done." First of all, it's very hard to find a volunteer who's going to do that every day of an entire school year. Okay, and then you're to pay somebody to do that, "Oh gee that cost a lot of money." So anyway, that one caring adult, that one person is so, so critical!

Past relationships with schooling and teachers

Each participant's educators enacted a schema for how they perceived teachers in their lives. Some participants had negative experiences in their past and did not trust education as a result. Other participants had positive situations in their past and expected the educators to create strong bonds with the CEAS students.

As a child, Daniela had lasting relationships with her teachers. Her non-American schooling experience included having the same teachers from kindergarten through sixth grade. She explained that the schools were small; teachers were in the same schools until they retired. Her family had a relationship with the teachers. They communicated with each other about Daniela. She recalled:

> What I heard from teachers when my mom went to the meetings is that they said they were proud of me, I gave them no problem, I never got in trouble with anybody, I never punished. That's what I heard that they thought of me. If I continued as I was going to become someone in life, they told me so.

Daniela saw her teachers outside of school. They were visible in her small town. She shared that this was the type of relationship she expected in a school and was happy with this aspect of learning that CEAS provided for her daughter.

Cristina's image of one caring adult included a child's family and also a child's teacher. She clarified how she thought a teacher should work with students:

> This is an excellent teacher; the student is given a lot. Not only limited to teach the class, but also had moments of fun with the students, and that

> makes a joke like the kids. Not a teacher who gives the class up and says goodbye. No! as she wants to be friends with them.

Cristina felt that she found this at CEAS with her daughter's female teachers. Cristina's daughter, Alejandra, remembered Ms. Page as a teacher who connected with her in the way that Cristina described.

Quate spoke about her bonds with past teachers. She said that she liked to bond with her teachers. She remembered one teacher prior to the CEAS experience in particular:

> He was very free in that we would both talk to each other. And he would learn Spanish from me because he had a wife that was Spanish too and he didn't know that much. He knew us (she and her brothers) from kindergarten because he knew our mom (she worked in the school). There was one time when I wrote a letter about what grade and what teacher I wanted to be, and I had chose him because lots of people said he was a good teacher. And you know when they do the morning announcement, I showed up then, and I just had the letter, and said I wanted to be in Mr. Cunningham's class and I thought he was amazing.

Importance of the role of one caring adult at CEAS

The CEAS curriculum was planned to include the Charlotte South End community in its students' learning. Local churches, businesses, outreach services, and restaurants welcomed the students. Ashley believed "I think our girls, at least as a group, became part of that little community. Maybe a rambunctious part, but … You know how you have people like that in your family, 'These are ours. They belong to us.' I think it

seemed that way to me." Students were able to paint with artists in local studios and investigate science topics with the owners of the neighborhood hardware store.

The larger Charlotte community also embraced the CEAS students. Page recalled how the students acquired exposure to many types of people. She remembered when chefs came to CEAS to work with the students:

> Some of them came with a hard-knocks background and showed that they were making something of themselves or just showing them. They became just role models for them (the students) or showing them things that they just never experienced before like the whole cooking thing. Having those people come in and cook. I mean they made fabulous meals and those kids were so proud of the meals they made.

One caring adult as a role model influenced Felicia, a former CEAS student, whom Mary kept in contact with. Mary found that Felicia was empowered by strategies that she learned from Mary, her caring adult:

> Felicia has done really well in school, in her school. Part of the reason is that she learned how to study. She learned how, that when someone, that the teacher is talking to you in class, she learned how to take notes. That's not something you just decide, somebody has to teach you how to do that. You just don't just write down everything, there is a way and a method and we have those methods. She knows how to do that and when she goes to study she's got these notes there and she can study and she does much better. So that influence, that one person and it's not like you have to be a genius to do it well, just do it.

One student reminisced, “CEAS, it was a good school. We had lots of help, individual help. We had good times. We had stuff that you don’t do in regular schools. We had other people besides our own teachers there, so we have volunteers and we met awesome people.” The portion of the CEAS curriculum that focused on volunteer interaction was clearly validated by the students interviewed.

CEAS participants’ commitment

Board member Curt recalled his dedication to the students of CEAS, “It was not something you could do halfway because you could not be sort of casually involved with it.” Traci understood the importance of her job; she expounded that, “All kids need to feel special but our students *really* needed that. I was telling a friend that schools need retired folks to come in on a weekly basis as ‘love squads’ for students.” She wrote her job description as a teacher for CEAS as follows:

a. Accompany kids on field trips (drive them)
b. Parent/teacher calls and meetings
c. Test preparation
d. Grade homework
e. Offer love and limits (encouragement and discipline) to kids
f. Various teacher trainings
g. Be willing to change the time you taught class
h. Be willing to work overtime
i. Be willing to read the students’ needs and abilities that day/that hour/that minute
j. Be willing to meet the learners where they were
k. Be willing to hit the ground running!

Traci’s self-defined job description allowed her as to build bonds and relationships with the students that transcended academics. Despite this commitment, Traci noted that during her employment with CEAS she did not have much time to see her students outside of the school day.

> I worked a second (part-time) job that usually started 30 minutes after I finished at the school so there wasn't much opportunity other than picking some kids up in the morning and driving them home from time to time. Still, I had relationship with a couple of the girls that exceeded my time at that school.

Page illuminated the details of beginning to see her students with their multiple identities. They were not just her students who received a score from her; they became individuals with interests outside of their schooling.

> On Fridays, I wasn't teaching but I would go to CEAS or sometimes I would work with a small group at the school. Then on some Fridays, I actually went with them when they did their Friendship Trays and worked filling trays for the homeless. What was great was those girls; they really were interested. They really wanted to know about you. They wanted to know who you were. The tough exterior wasn't so tough and so there really was (pause) you got to see more of the child in them. When you shared something with them, it was always very respectful and it was very accepting of who they were, and never making them feel inadequate or stupid, or anything like that. But they felt free to like come in and say maybe like, "Oh, what do you mean by that Ms. Page?" They go, "Well, you think that?" I'm like, "Yeah, I do. What do you think?" We would have real conversations.
>
> They loved to play. I mean they just loved to play. Yeah, and so we would just have these different--for lack of better word, would do like

> a patty cake kind of thing, but it was like a speed game and they would just love to just come and play with it and compete with it. They really loved to joke around and they really loved to--they wanted to connect more than you would think. In the off times, you got to see more of their real--you got to have more conversation and dialog, and it wasn't just, "Well, let's focus on what we're doing right now." They were able to be more free flowing and get to know one another. And, again, help them feel confident or encouraged them, or complimented them or validated something for them.

Families noticed the extra effort these teachers put forth to work with their children. Daniela spoke about some of her daughter, Quate's, teachers:

> Something about them is that they were persistent for girls to reach the academic level they had come to have. They provided the material and were always willing to provide help at any time. They were there forever. There were teachers who came up here to take her to school, I mean who does that?

The summer after the CEAS school year ended, some of the teachers maintained contact with the students and their families. One mother recalled:

> I saw the math teacher, I forget his name, I am very bad with names, but is the cousin of Ms. Jane. He has his son in the same school where my children are attending, and as my children began the middle school this year, I met him there. It was very nice because when he saw me, he helped me with regard to all the information I had to know about the school. He

> said, "Anything you need I am here to help. I have also seen another teacher who even come to visit my child here at home.

In student interviews, the students remembered the actions of their teachers. They explained ways in which their teachers connected with them. One student said:

> I think my favorite teacher was Ms. Page. She was very more high spirit and she liked to cheer up our attitudes during the day. She would do all these movements with her hands, she went fast and she would do funny stuff that would make us laugh and do stuff that's more energetic besides sitting and being a boring class and having a person talk.

Another student remembered Page in a role other than just a teacher. She said, "I really remember Ms. Page. She was a nice person." Quate smiled when she recalled, "Last summer Ms. Traci came and we went to lunch and we went to the museum." She said she was happy to spend time with her teacher outside of school.

How some CEAS participants' dedication turned to frustration

The issue of planning arose in almost every area of discussion about CEAS, but was most prevalently discussed in relation to hiring staff and teachers. The lack of planning, which was described earlier by community and teacher participants, led to primarily four people doing jobs assigned to 19 separate positions on the CEAS budget (Appendix F). The teacher participants, along with Jane, held the bulk of these responsibilities on their shoulders. In some cases, this led to their frustration with the CEAS students and their families. In these instances, it was difficult for the participants to connect and create relationships.

Earlier in the interview data, John expressed frustration with the students and their families' participation with CEAS. He first described himself:

> I am a man who put his life on hold in order to raise a family. I am in search of a career that can get my own life going again, without costing my family dearly. I am a versatile, skilled and ingenious technician. I am shy, complicated, and difficult to get to know. I am an empathic metamorph, capable of changing who I am to match the needs of those around me. I can be arrogant and bombastic when I am put in a position of authority, or tender and kind when I am with someone who is hurting…I only called home when absolutely necessary, to discuss behavior issues or falling grades, or to ask parents to come get their kid because school ended an hour ago.

John then explained his response about the opportunities he had outside of the CEAS school day to see the students:

> The girls' feelings for me were confused enough; I intentionally avoided any contact with them outside the school day. I even turned down Facebook requests. I mean, come on: A 40-year-old White guy is Facebook friends with a 12-year-old Black girl? How creepy is that?

John said that CEAS was the pinnacle of his teaching career. He said that he learned a lot about himself and the world around him. He also stated, "Unfortunately, it made me a bit more cynical, too." Hanna foresaw this situation during the interview process:

> You couldn't imagine a school day in the hands of these people. Like the hovercraft guy (John.) Most public schools wouldn't have hired him. Maybe they would of actually, maybe they would have. But not for an all girl's school and not for girls who are living at the poverty level, who need role models. I'm not saying you had to be a woman even; it's just he could not have been more of a different fit from what they needed. Not flexible, didn't know cultural relevant anything and couldn't connect with them at all. Even though his heart probably was in the right place. He probably took $20,000 to do the job or whatever he did. Still it doesn't matter, it wasn't the right person.

There was no data which suggested that the students felt connected to John. He was not mentioned as a role model or a caring adult in any of the interviews.

Page explained how she began her school year unprepared for the CEAS students' and families' past experiences. She described how she did research and learned to connect with the students. While data indicated that the students felt connected to Page, she admitted that by the year's end, she was unsatisfied and had mixed feelings about CEAS closing.

> I had actually reached another frustration level of ten with the girls at the very end of the year. They needed so much individually on a reading and writing level. At the end, Jane and I made an arrangement where I could come in and actually tutor and she would take over the classroom portion. I felt like I got a lot further that way, the one-on-one. At the end of the year--part of me was relieved because it was a lot of work and time, and

energy. It really did max me out, I thought.

I have such a respect for teachers who take on students from that lower socio-economic level. There's a lot of heart that you have to have to keep going with that and I felt bad, but I had to trust. I felt like there was a trust for me and this is my own personal belief, that the trust that whoever needed to be there got what they needed. For some reason, the conditions didn't work out to continue. These children need to be birthed into a new arena but this provided a passage way to that. Jane really did with several of the students, shook up communication, tried to maintain and helped them out in various ways, and encouraged them. She's become a mentor for a few of these kids. Not all of them but there were a few grains of sand that stayed in the palm that she had become a mentor to. For whatever reason, I trusted that decision that that's right for now.

That experience even though there was a lot of time and energy given to it, what I'm left with is a lot of compassion and love for those girls. A lot of memories of the hugs and a lot of memories of just bonding with them. There was just a lot of gratitude for that time in my life. And I proved to myself, it validated for me again that I think I need to work when I'm one on one with kids versus in the classroom. Kind of pointing my compass back in a different direction.

As Mary, a board member, volunteered through the year, she continued to work with the students and some of their families. She learned about specific situations that were occurring in the students' lives. She was still discouraged by what she considered

the lack of family input. When speaking about the students, Mary said:

> The ones who do the best are the ones where there is somebody, I don't care who that somebody is, if it's a mother, a grandma, a neighbor, a daddy, it doesn't matter who it is, if there is somebody who cares about the concept that they face and who get that. You can't get from here to there without education. If there is not that person in the home, you can beat your brains out all day long and we can't really fix it.

At the time the data was collected, Mary was enjoying her retirement, travelling and playing golf. She no longer volunteered daily with students. John had recently been certified as an Emergency Medical Technician and was seeking work. Page was working with students one-on-one through her tutoring business. Mary, John, and Page had daily contact during the CEAS experience with its students. In the early stages of CEAS planning, they described feelings of commitment and excitement in relation to the school. As voiced above, the effort and energy that was required of them during the school year left them feeling frustrated. After the CEAS experience, they were no longer physically or emotionally available to most of the CEAS students. The data showed that Jane continued to be available for the students, however.

The prominence of Jane in the role of one caring adult

The data overwhelmingly presented Jane as an integral role model and the main force behind the one caring adult ideal in the curriculum. Community and board members disclosed that Jane's commitment to CEAS was vital in starting the initiative, as well as maintaining it during its life cycle. Teachers, the families and the students imparted anecdotes that filled the data with details about Jane's ability to be a role model.

Ashley admired the way that Jane put her energy, passion, and effort into CEAS. Ashley recalled that Jane had her daughters, (who often volunteered after their own schooling) and husband there with her as part of the CEAS community. She thought that Jane put her everything and her family's everything into the school. Ashley said:

> I think it's funny how often I'll mention the school, which I still do often, and people, because of Jane's sheer personal efforts, the number of people she touched just doing that and getting people to even think the thought that something like that is possible, was huge. People have heard of it. I don't talk to big-time movers and shakers, so she talked to them on down. I've never seen anyone work like Jane. I had never seen anything like it.

Each of the teachers specifically mentioned how Jane was partially responsible for their dedication and hard work. John was impressed with what he called "her amazing openness." He said, "Jane helped me quite a bit, at every stage of planning, at one time or another. I think I leaned on her more than a professional educator should have. She didn't pay lip service to 'open door policy' stuff; she lived it. I could go to her with almost anything." Traci appreciated Jane's encouragement of her creativity. She shared that Jane always found the finances to support her ideas for field trips, and class activities.

Page said she was very humbled and grateful for the support of Jane and the teachers. Page said that Jane helped her discover that there were choices in her own life, she remembered, "She (Jane) was just like, well, you can say this, so you can be that. She just had such a healthy way of looking at things. It really opened my eyes to what I

can and cannot do and that was very beneficial for me." Each of the teachers discussed how they appreciated the support that Jane provided for them.

Page also found that Jane was integral in the role of one caring adult to her students. She described how she learned from Jane to set boundaries with the CEAS students.

> I think that Jane provided an excellent role model of somebody who set boundaries. Like respectful boundaries that still allow the students to be who or what she (the student) was and not try to put her into her box. But she said, "This is our expectation. This is what we need from you in order for this to work." She was able to set really healthy boundaries and a lot of those children had no healthy boundaries, no consistency. There were no healthy boundaries. They didn't know what was appropriate or not appropriate and she was a real model for them.
>
> She showed the children, "I'm going to take care of myself, I'm going to take care of the school, and this is what you need to do to respect the boundaries but I am going to offer what I can to you. I still accept and love you." She always came back to that message of "This behavior is not appropriate and I still accept and love you." She was very good about communicating that to children.

The teachers were not alone in their gratitude for Jane. The students' families had not experienced a school like CEAS or a person like Jane who was willing to offer her time, money, and self toward students' success. Daniela felt like Jane was always aware of her daughter, Quate. Daniela said, "Thank God that child has the support of Ms. Jane.

Every time she is confused, she called and Ms. Jane is helping. In other words she has had almost all year tutor." Jane assisted Daniela if her daughter needed a guardian for an activity, needed help with a project, or needed a ride. Daniela recalled that Jane would take her daughter to her home and to restaurants.

Cristina described her feelings about Jane when she learned that CEAS would be closing after its first year as a school:

> The school was very good, I liked it. I cry when Ms. Jane gave us the news that they was not going to continue with school and they were going to close. It really hurt me. Ms. Jane was kind to girls. She had many activities for the girls to test out all the skills they have and it demonstrated what they could do.

Cristina said she was thankful that Jane followed the students to their next school. She recalled that at the start of the year, Jane was there regularly (two or three times a week) to support the small group of girls who went to the school.

Most significant to this study is the perspective of the CEAS students. Jane had stayed connected to most of the students in the year that followed the CEAS experience. Jane remembered details about each of her students' lives during the interview process. For example, she listed the students' grades before, during, and after CEAS from her memory. Alejandra said, "Ms. Jane sometimes helps us with our homework when we've been at Norris School and math is killing me." Jane also followed some of her student's personal lives. She checked in with them to see who they were living with and where they were living. She said she tried to stay in contact with all of her students, but had not been able to maintain a relationship with all of them.

Furthermore, Jane remained in contact and continued to provide varied experiences to some of the students. Quate revealed:

> Last summer, Ms. Jane took me and Juana to have a sleep over. Then there was one day when Ms. Jane took me and my brothers to go tubing for the first time and we went tubing on Lake Norman. It's like right behind her house.

Alejandra, who had concerns with the extended day and year incorporated into the CEAS curriculum, still felt sympathy when she learned the school was closing. She said, "It was sad. Ms. Jane started crying and everything. I was, 'Aw, I feel bad for her.' I feel bad because she worked so hard for that school and then they're going to close it down." The two students interviewed also explained that they did not know if they would have gone to their current performing arts school if Jane did not assist them in the application process. The data collected showed that Jane was the one caring adult and role model for many of the CEAS participants.

The analyzed data found the role of one caring adult to be an integral part of the success that CEAS participants experienced. One family described the CEAS experience thoroughly when she said:

> So much for me as for my daughter was a beautiful experience. I could look at her academic growth as her self-esteem started to rise. She was very quiet and at CEAS began to develop more; I say it was a beautiful experience, and sadness that good does not last forever because it was only a year. I say that programs like this are what the government should support more. Many institutions have much money and should support

> education for children to be someone in life and have a great future. So they can see a different and better world, with better opportunities. There are very smart kids who need attention and one hand from someone to succeed. And what better way than with a school like this?

The role of one caring adult emerged as a significant theme in the data analysis. Each participant recalled a memory that expanded on an adult who was influential and important to her or him. The memories often related to caring support of the participant from the individual.

## Summary

Chapter 4 detailed the five themes that emerged from this case study's data collection. The themes I established were Alternative Schooling and the Perception of Failure in Public Schools, Realities of the CEAS Experience, Funding and Planning, Cultural and Class Disconnection, and Role of One Caring Adult. Each of the research questions was revisited, and the established themes unearthed a comprehensive investigation into their answers.

1. What is the process for the emergence of an urban community school?

Alternative Schooling and the Perceptions of Failure in Public Schools, Funding and Planning

2. What factors contributed to the closing of the CEAS urban community school initiative?

Funding and Planning, Cultural and Class Disconnections

3. What can be learned from the grassroots approach of CEAS as an urban community school initiative?

Funding and Planning, Role of One Caring Adult, and Realities of the CEAS Experience

# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

## Introduction

Urban community schools: Do they work as an educational reform strategy? Literature (Blank, Jacobson, & Pearson, 2009; Coalition for Community Schools, 2010; Dobbie & Fryer, 2009) and federal policy (Murrel, 2007; Powers, 2009; Promise Neighborhood Institute, 2011) believe that if properly planned, an urban community school is a strong viable option for marginalized students in public schooling who are falling behind.

A critical perspective recognizes that information about urban community schools is not abundantly available in educational research. Community schools are loosely defined and each school has multiple unique qualities. We lack comprehensive data to look at the overall success of community schools. Questions surrounding this urban educational reform strategy may include: How does an urban community school emerge? Does a grass-roots initiative yield positive results? What lessons are learned from the circumstances surrounding a UCS life cycle? How is a school that only targeted females considered an urban community school?

By examining one case of a school that failed, closing within a year, this research sought to uncover some of the challenges associated with community schools. The purpose of this dissertation study was to form a comprehensive understanding of a grassroots endeavor of an urban community school initiative (UCS) that was not a

Promise Neighborhood candidate. This effort, called the Community Empowerment and Agency School (CEAS,) was intended as an urban educational reform strategy.

This chapter reports on the findings of this qualitative case study to offer guidance for future UCS initiatives. Five key themes emerged from the 13 participants. First, it is evident that the perception of failure in traditional public schools led to the search for alternative schooling. Some of the participants acknowledged that structural barriers such as generational poverty limited their access and opportunities to educational experiences in traditional public schools. Historic and more current situations in the local district, CMS, allowed a ripe environment for the CEAS experience to blossom. Second, the realities of the CEAS experience were different from what the participants' expectations intended the initiative to be. The third theme reflects the issues of funding and planning, which were grossly underestimated before CEAS opened. The fourth describes the situations of cultural and class disconnections which took place in the UCS initiative. An understanding of these disconnections proved vital in the participants' experiences and the life cycle of CEAS. The fifth and final theme highlights the role of one caring adult in participants' lives and as a part of the CEAS experience. The analyzed data confirms the social and academic support provided through this role of one caring adult who was significant in participants' lives.

Like the CEAS participants have voiced about themselves, the occurrence of critical examination has impacted my life as a researcher and taught me many lessons about school reform. Examples of these lessons can be found in the changes that I now know would have not only improved the CEAS experience, but probably ensured its success. These suggested changes include: incorporating and including the traditionally

silenced voices (Delpit, 1998), use of families' and communities' funds of knowledge (Moll, et.al, 1992), longer planning periods that include a sustainability aspect, proper funding in place to support the positions required for a holistic approach to education, and creating classrooms in both higher education and basic schooling that value diversity, foster critical awareness, and allow participants to be empowered and agents of social transformation.

The literature in Chapter 2 described factors that successful UCS models embrace in their educational strategies. These factors included: commitment; strong support from the principal; open communication among all stakeholders; careful planning; access to technical assistance; leadership of a full-time, on-site coordinator; integration of educational and support components; and strong initial financial support. There is acknowledgement at the outset that collaboration is hard work, takes endless time, and requires meetings, patience, and understanding. In addition, schools and community agencies had to learn each other's language, perspectives, concepts, and prejudices.

CEAS did not take into account the lessons learned by successful UCS models before opening its doors to students. There was no community mapping, asset based development, or consideration of its financial future. I will now turn to a critical discussion of the data presented in the last chapter to that includes: the Theoretical Framework Discussed, Five Themes Discussed, Research Questions Discussed, The Significance of the Study, Limitations, and Implications for Future Research and Additional Work.

## Theoretical Framework Discussed

The data I collected in this dissertation was analyzed using Critical Theory as a framework. I utilized Critical Theory to support my findings that recognize and analyze the role of power, structure and agency in the reproduction or transformation of social conditions. A critical framework challenges the relations, structures and discourses that support social reproduction and mask forms of oppression. CEAS emerged as an alternative to public schooling to provide educational and life experiences for students without privilege. Each of the students was qualified to receive a free or reduced lunch in the local district so it was assumed (by Jane) that they were unable to afford enrichment activities in their education. The experiences were conceived as a weapon to combat poverty, but were implemented without comprehension of the complexity of the educational and social structures in America.

Hill Collins (2010) described how the conception of community asserted by participants who are positioned differently within power relations is vital. Those with the most power in the CEAS experience claimed to want to create a positive learning environment which bonded the students, their families and the community to the school. The atmosphere that they created was one of social reproduction, not a participatory democracy and community as Addams (1910) and DuBois (1903) envisioned.

CEAS categorized and advertised itself as a community school for girls, it was assumed by the founder that its participants would feel immediately bonded. This did not happen; the data was filled with stories of unfulfilled expectations. Community is a relational process lived through the experiences of its participants across differences in power. Community was not a lesson to be learned or achieved. Jane did not plan on

having equal reciprocal relationships with the other participants. This urban community school initiative was the vision of one person, not a group of people who worked collaboratively to provide the unique needs of a specific community.

Role of power

As discussed in Chapter 2, Freire's concept of the Banking Approach perceives students as empty, passive vessels in which knowledge must be deposited by the teacher, who is the owner of the knowledge (1970), which privileges the teacher and oppresses the students. This approach silences students and contributes to their further marginalization. The Banking Approach to teaching is popular in urban classrooms in traditional public schools partially because of the structural inequalities that result in large class sizes and a lack of adequate resources. The pedagogy and practice in such classrooms often serve to reinforce the types of knowledge, behaviors and language valued by the dominant class, so that the school spaces act as sites of social reproduction (Freire, 1970; MacLeod, 1995).

Many teachers fail to engage students in the meaningful practices that foster critical thinking skills regarding issues that are important to students' lives. There was structural inequality at CEAS. This was unrelated to large class size and instead was caused by a lack of resources. During the data collection, Jane and I discussed the teacher interviewing process. Jane said that she turned down teachers who were, "Very traditional, worksheet driven. For example, wall words, sort of the very traditional tools that we might see in a very ordinary average American classroom." She described how some of the candidates were immediately dismissed from a teaching position at CEAS:

> We did almost all of our interviews in the physical space, not 100%, but a good percentage of them. So people would walk in the door and say "This is a school?" And we'd say "Yeah, it's a one-room school." And that was hard for people to process. A lot of them were not understanding that we wanted something different.

Jane said that she intended to hire teachers who were facilitators and able to learn with the students. The budget did not allow her to hire those types of teachers. Jane recalled:

> The staff wasn't structured exactly the way that we would have liked to have structured the staff. My role wasn't exactly the role I thought it would be. The implementation of our technology curriculum was harder for our teachers than I anticipated. I would have liked there to have been more.

The structure of the staff resulted in three out of four teachers who were not qualified and did not hold state licensure to teach. One of the inexperienced teachers was related to Jane. Additionally, none of the people in power at CEAS were from the population represented at the school or the community where it was situated.

Structure and agency in reproduction of social conditions

Problem posing is a teaching methodology that promotes critical thinking (Freire, 1970). This type of pedagogy is often absent in the field of urban education and the CEAS experience. A problem posing pedagogical approach is vital to combating curriculums that serve an oppressive and hegemonic function. The staff and founder of CEAS had an interest in helping the poor, but they did not necessarily employ the

methods to actually empower the students and their families. For example John described his daily teaching methods in math**:**

> My math class usually started with a timed arithmetic test, differentiated by mastery of 1x1 digit addition, subtraction, multiplication or division. Then I would do a short lecture on some strategy or another, sometimes with guided practice. Finally, we would go into unguided practice or homework, usually a worksheet. This sounds boring, but the method works, and I tried very hard to keep the subject matter interesting, such as multiple strategies for multiple-digit multiplication, cryptography, or Ken-Ken puzzles.

His teaching employed the assumption that students needed to be filled with information that he could provide, reminiscent of Freire's empty vessel concept. Educators who implement a Banking Approach deny students opportunities to develop the critical consciousness necessary to analyze materials and structures in a way that empowers them, rather than oppresses them (Freire, 1970). Banking instruction diffuses students' development of a critical consciousness and contributes to social reproduction.

John spoke of the rampant apathy he incurred with the students and their families, not realizing that his teaching methods were actually perpetuating the cycle he found to be destructive. Banking ensures that individuals are not engaged in a dialogue that allows them to co-construct knowledge with the teacher; but rather the teacher informs them of their places and roles in society through the hidden curriculum.

The banking approach was utilized to educate CEAS students as evidenced in the data. Returning to a story Mary detailed in Chapter 4, approximately 50 rolls of toilet

paper were damaged by a student's vandalism. Jane chose to use this situation as a teachable moment to connect to the theme of community. The students and Jane did not work together to create a solution for the ruined toilet paper. She directed the students to bring in a roll of toilet paper the next day to replace the lost rolls. She informed the students that they would be turned away from school if they did not comply. Jane communicated to the students that as a community they were responsible for finding a solution to the problem, yet she had already determined the answer. The CEAS community lesson with toilet paper was an incident where the banking approach to education was indisputable.

## Structure and agency in transformation of social conditions

### Social capital and education

Education can liberate people and transform society, but it can also oppress individuals and reproduce social inequalities (Freire, 1970). With all education, the knowledge held by families, the knowledge produced and language used are not neutral. Students' funds of knowledge versus educators' funds of knowledge require constant critical analysis to deconstruct masked forms of domination that oppress marginalized groups. If education is a means for economic progress and improving society, then critical approaches to theory, pedagogy and methodology are necessary.

Students' economic, social and cultural capital impacts their academic and occupational attainment (Lareau, 2003; MacLeod, 1995; Zhou & Bankston, 1994). Bourdieu (1997) defines three types of capital: economic, social and cultural. Economic capital refers to financial and material wealth. Social capital refers to relationships and networks of influence people can access as a result of their social position. Cultural

capital refers to individuals' knowledge base, including preferences, funds of knowledge, and language use. Bourdieu argues that the power in different fields depends heavily on different forms of capital (1997).

Cultural capital is central to Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction and serves to explain the stratification of social classes. Individuals develop habitus regarding linguistic and behavioral patterns that impacts their academic achievement (Lareau, 2003). The data in this dissertation highlighted the well-intended CEAS initiative as employing strategies that actually oppressed student and family participants.

Unintentionally, CEAS reproduced social inequalities by devaluing the knowledge held by the students and their families. In the previous chapter, the students' funds of knowledge versus educators' funds of knowledge were often negatively compared by the educators.

In Chapter 4, the data presented multiple perspectives, situations, and ideologies that highlighted the cultural and class disconnections in the CEAS experience. Traci described her philosophical belief that the purpose of education was to liberate. She and board member Mary attributed instances of disconnect to a lack of representation among people in power during the CEAS experience.

The founder, teachers, and some board members from CEAS expressed frustration with students' and families' funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) because they competed against these individuals' own cultural and class beliefs. Students and families who followed the hidden curriculum of CEAS were successful in attaining the respect of the people in power at CEAS. Yet the perception of inadequacy by the people in power further oppressed the non-respected individuals who did not follow the rules of

the hidden curriculum. The data showed that families accepted the CEAS ideology without a critical perspective of the historical structures that have caused their marginalization (Freire, 1985).

Ignoring single gender education

CEAS marketed itself as a community school for girls. However, the data revealed few instances of understanding the magnitude of educating and empowering women. If each of the CEAS participants were not conscious of specific feminist issues, then that in itself becomes a social justice issue.

The CEAS participants understood that an all-girls school would provide specific attention to the female learners, yet that is not enough. I believe that Jane valued women's rights and being a woman. Initially, she set out to cultivate the specific and distinctive abilities of womanhood. On the surface, parts of the CEAS curriculum involved practical learning and education that supported holistic learning by encouraging women as learners, social members of society and family (Addams, 1910). But below the surface, Jane did not understand the lack of validation and isolation that women and African American people received from the hegemonic forces in American society (Hill Collins, 1997; Lorde, 1984; Wells, 1970).

Wells (1970) described the roles valued in American society and found that they create both gender and racial stratification in school curriculum. The second wave of Feminism included Black Feminism which is relevant in education today especially when dealing with the social location of minority women. It is acknowledged that there is success in the small gains made by these groups, but it is also recognized that there are still weighted values for the White European Males in American society (Hill Collins,

1997; hooks, 1984). This results in continual preferential treatment in educational institutions.

Considering its recruitment strategies, CEAS sought to offer women a better education. Yet, John specifically embodied the attributes of a traditionally valued member in our society and the school's population did not. The data revealed tension between John and many of the female students and their families. John admittedly did not attempt form relationships outside of the classroom and did not feel connected to his students.

Though three of the teachers at CEAS were female, all of them were White. Most of the board members were White. The CEAS population consisted of Black and Latina females. There were no Black or Latina teachers available for the students, no one outwardly resembled the complexity and variety of the female figures required for holistic support and empowerment.

Addams (1910) believed education must be brought to children and families in a way that would ultimately allow social problems to be solved by the very people they involved. Unfortunately, Jane did not recognize the significance of educating females which would have allowed this empowerment to occur within the CEAS experience.

## Themes Discussed

### Alternative schooling and the perception of failure in public schools: Theme One

The first theme specifically answered the first and third questions of this study which concern how a UCS emerges and what lessons can be learned from the CEAS experience for burgeoning initiatives. The value of education was regularly mentioned by all participants in the data, yet the traditional public schools in Charlotte were

consistently failing to provide a rich curriculum and experiences for marginalized students. Schools had resegregated themselves in the previously court-ordered, desegregated CMS district. After the *Swann; Capacchione; and Grant v. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education* ruling in 2000, schools in the urban center were left without opportunity. Teachers in the district were frustrated in their current positions, which led to many students and their families to search for options in these educational situations.

The climate in Charlotte led to parents who were prepared to seek out an alternative schooling experience. The CEAS vision promised a curriculum that was project-based and would support outside-the-box learning experiences in a school that was to be community-based, and creativity-focused.

In the data presented, the students and their families discussed how CEAS offered the ability to explore new activities. The exposure to the arts, photography, building, cooking and service-learning projects has forever changed the students' perception of education. In Chapter 4, they described these experiences as new and 'cool' in their lives. For six of the students, the CEAS experience guided a change in their educational trajectory. When CEAS closed, Jane assisted them in the application process to attend the CMS magnet school her daughters attended. Quate reported that she "…had never even heard of the school before Ms. Jane told me about it." With her help, the six students were able to join one of the most holistic and academically successful public schools in the CMS district. The students and families interviewed attribute that to the CEAS life cycle. Furthermore, the students had a positive outlook on their education and what their futures held for them.

Nationally and in the Charlotte area, alternative avenues to public schools are evolving at a brisk rate. The perceptions of Marginalized populations are that traditional public schools are failing their children. In the search for opportunity and access, urban community schools are a promising option.

Realities of the CEAS experience: Theme Two

The second theme specifically answered the third question of this study which concern how the lessons learned from the CEAS experience can provide guidance for local and national blossoming initiatives.

CEAS was conceived as a creative environment filled with experiential problem solving and impacting relationships that drew in students, families, and community. This vision did not evolve into a successful reality, however, for the reasons presented. For example, most of the people involved in the CEAS experience were not educators. They made major mistakes because Jane, most of the teachers and the board did not understand pedagogy. Freire's (1998) concept of the teacher as a cultural worker would have proved useful for the educators in the CEAS experience. "The importance of the identity of each one of us as an agent, educator or learner, is clear, as is the importance of our identity as a product of a tension-filled relationship between what we inherit and what we acquire" (p. 70). If the staff was able to understand the ideology that each person acquires through their social and cultural experiences of class, it may have assisted in prolonging the life cycle of the school by creating a trust and understanding between the educators and the families.

The CEAS intended curriculum of project-based learning supplemented by culturally-relevant strategies (Ladson-Billings, 1994) would have welcomed families as

contributors to their child's learning. In this role, families may have been empowered to use their voices to become agents of change within the school and their communities (Anyon, 2005). Instead, the data showed that CEAS educators chose to often blame the families and even the students themselves for being silenced (Delpit, 1998) and for not showing up in their own lives.

Another glaring inconsistency in the experiences reality was the fact that CEAS considered itself a community school. There are specific contradictions to this model in the core vision of the school. The first, only in certain circumstances (a convent comes to mind,) do communities consist of only one gender. The second issue is that the students, teachers, and founder did not reside in the same community. Figure 9 showed an approximate 30 mile radius between Jane and her students.

It must be regarded that the realities of a UCS initiative rarely match the vision of one person. It is imperative to consider the specific local needs of the community being served as well as contemplating state standards and national policies in education.

Funding and planning: Theme Three

The third theme provided answers for all three of the questions in this study which examine the emergence of a UCS, the factors that contributed to CEAS closing and the lessons learned from the CEAS experience for new initiatives around the country.

Proper funding and planning for any type of organization is critical, but with an urban community school initiative it is pivotal to its success. The data continually described issues that could have been corrected with additional funding. Board members Jen and Mary validated my assumption that if there had been more pre-implementation

planning then CEAS would have likely raised enough funds to be a sustainable model. Mary described this with a clear illustration of the consequences:

> If we had had the staff that we really needed to have, and that's something I don't think people really understand either. I mean we really needed, when you consider how few students we had a fairly large staff. We had three teachers, and we had Jane. Then we had all of us volunteer folk. But it takes more than that because, for example, we really needed a social worker. I mean, when you have kids telling you stories of sexual things happening at home and such, you really need someone who is trained to deal with those. We did our very best and we found services for them, but it took all of Jane's energy and time to find them because we didn't have someone on staff who was trained in that kind of way.

Urban community school initiatives are exploding as an educational reform strategy due to the perception of failure in public schools and federally funded Promise Neighborhoods grant. As these initiatives develop all over the country, it is essential to properly plan and create financial sustainability regardless if they are candidates for the grants.

Cultural and class disconnections: Theme Four

The fourth theme explicitly answered the second and third questions of this study which was concerned with the factors that contributed to the failure of the CEAS experience and the lessons learned for emerging UCS initiatives. This theme has significance in all areas of education. It affects how curriculums are prepared, how teachers and board members, and who represents a school's population.

Based on the literature (Bourdieu, 1973), the data collected from the CEAS experience found that status, privilege and social rewards were to be earned from its students. These attributes were perceived by the educators as a result of intelligence, talent, effort, and other White middle class expectations which students displayed. Cultural and class differences were not considered before they revealed themselves during the CEAS life cycle.

Mary recalled Jane's lesson on community where she had students bring in toilet paper. I found that the results of that lesson led to an example of class disconnection. I was actually at the school the next day when students had been turned away from school if they did not bring toilet paper. I spoke to Jane and told her that I disagreed with using this mandate to teach this lesson of community. I suggested that Jane speak with the students to try and find a solution together and then give the families a week to get the toilet paper. This approach could still teach the intended lesson and have the same effect.

From teaching in lower SES schools, I understood that the families working second or third shift may not have time to get toilet paper. Even the extra cost to take public transportation to the store and pay for a single roll may not have been easy for CEAS families. I privately observed that one toilet paper roll brought in was enormous in size and thin, like those available in big-box store public bathrooms.

In a middle class situation, bringing a roll of toilet paper to school would not be considered more than a slight inconvenience. I understood why the CEAS families were irritated by this situation and immediately recognized the class disconnection. There was no value put on the CEAS families' time, skills, finances or funds of knowledge.

All educators can learn from this theme, it is not specific to UCS educational reform. It is vital to consider the assets of students, their families, and their community. When a school elects a board, chooses a staff, or reaches out to the public, members should represent the student population. This is critical when a school calls itself a community school.

Role of one caring adult: Theme Five

The first theme specifically answered the first and third questions of this study which concern how a UCS emerges and what lessons can be learned from the CEAS experience for burgeoning initiatives. The role of one caring adult was significant in each participant's interview. Whatever the title of this person, the participants were motivated, supported, and most importantly, felt cared for by her or him.

The data overwhelmingly presented Jane as an integral role model and the main force behind the one caring adult ideal in the curriculum at CEAS. Community and board members described that Jane's commitment to CEAS was vital in starting this initiative and overseeing its implementation during its life cycle. Teachers, students and their families sheared anecdotes that filled the data with details about Jane's ability to be a role model. She was admired for her energy, passion, and her determination all of which she applied to the CEAS experience.

A reliance of these affective characteristics may have been the downfall of Jane's plan. Without considering the researched models of urban community school initiatives, she believed that with her good intentions, hard work, and some funding that she could make it happen. Emerging initiatives that are considering the role of one caring adult as

part of the curriculum must consider the importance of having more than one person in this position.

## Research Questions Discussed

The rationale for this dissertation was to describe the structures of education, family, and community as a holistic part of a person's identity through the lens of Critical Theory. The functions of the three structures do not happen in isolation. Often each of these structures is viewed as its own entity, yet we recognize that when there is failure in one structure, a person's complete identity is not lost; all human beings have multiple identities and facets in their lives. We are holistic beings. Education, family, community, and success are intertwined the moment a child is born.

This study was concerned with how identities are formed within the institutional structure of American public education. Traditional schooling that contributed to structural domination by one group over another led to the search for alternative education. A detriment to personal identity and progress is the public labeling and punishment of specific schools, students, and communities, which are overwhelmingly located in impoverished urban areas (Anyon, 1998, 2005; Lipman 2004). Students in these schools have historically experienced the silencing of their voices (Delpit, 1998; Lipman, 2004) and feelings of alienation by educational institutions (Delpit, 1998; Fine, 1991; Freire, 1970; Kozol, 1991) that have the power to suppress students' language and cultural identities. Issues related to the politics of who knows how and with what authority were found in the answers to the research questions.

Urban community school (UCS) initiatives have been recommended as a solution to serve the marginalized students who have been overlooked in traditional schools

(Blank, Jacobson, & Pearson, 2009; Coalition for Community Schools, 2010; Dobbie & Fryer, 2009; Murrel, 2007; Powers, 2009; Promise Neighborhood Institute, 2011). The UCS initiatives search to answer questions of how education and power are contested in social interactions in such a way as to bring about widespread cultural and social change. Such questions are more likely to be studied qualitatively. This dissertation answers the questions with a case study of one specific urban community school initiative in a city that was ready for a new experience.

1. What is the process for the emergence of an urban community school?

Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) contributes heavily to what we know must happen at a minimum to ensure the success of a new urban community school effort. Initially, the environment in the local district indicates that students, families, and communities in low-income neighborhoods are finding that public schools are failing them. The need for alternative schooling in impoverished areas opens the door for planning to take place. All stakeholders in the initiative need to have equal power and access to provide their individual *funds of knowledge* (Moll, et al., 1992) to the process. The planning period should last for three years prior to the initiative opening its doors to students (Coalition for Community Schools, 2010). The planning process for a UCS initiative must include a sustainable funding component to be successful.

2. What factors contributed to the closing of the CEAS urban community school initiative?

Three major issues contribute significantly to the question's response: not enough planning, the budget, and cultural and class disconnections. The CEAS planning period was just one year, two years short of procedures conducted by similar initiatives that

were successful. In thriving schools, effective planning led to the recruitment of high quality teachers, local business partners, and community members. The one year planning period did not allow for relationships and input from the above stakeholders to form at CEAS. The initiative attained its start-up funding from one-time private donors. There was not a financial sustainability plan in place at CEAS. The calculations for running an urban community school initiative were grossly underestimated.

There were many incidents of cultural and class disconnections, which led to perpetual miscommunications. This situation was constant throughout the CEAS life cycle because there was not time in the planning stages to establish relationships and input from stakeholders. In the analyzed data, CEAS family members had to face multiple obstacles and barriers that CEAS staff didn't find in their own lives, so they often misinterpreted situations. This data revealed the importance of acknowledging and considering cultural and class differences in the planning stages of an urban community school initiative.

3. What can be learned from the grassroots approach of CEAS as an urban community school initiative?

Three essential lessons were acquired by the CEAS approach as an urban community school initiative in this study, including: planning and budget issues, the realities of running a school, and the role of one caring adult in a child's life. The first lesson learned is the essential function of proper planning and funding required for an urban community school's success and sustainability.

The second lesson learned by this grassroots approach is one in which reality was frequently altered from its original vision. The realities of the CEAS experience often

astounded each of the participants in a different way including: how it provided exposure to new activities and the evolution of ideals and personal perspectives. For example, Mary recognized that her own horizons were broadened in relation to generational poverty. She said, that her opportunity to interact with the CEAS students and their families allowed her to have a glimpse into their everyday lives.

The third lesson learned by the CEAS experience was the significance of one caring adult in a person's life. Each participant's own hero who contributed to the individual's identity by recognizing that every child is not just a student, a daughter, a teacher, a friend. The role of one caring adult was crucial so that participants saw themselves with multiple identities that were part of a holistic education.

## Limitations

In this study, there were limitations that may have altered the outcome of the lessons to be learned specifically by CEAS. Yet the broader implications of the limitations of this study highlight the need for UCS initiatives to understand that transparency is critical. Documentation must be readily available for disclosure of any issues with teachers, financial reports, student achievement, board meetings, and sustainable planning.

### Sample

The sampling was to be purposeful and include multiple participants from each group whom shared the CEAS experience. The sample became a convenience sample based on who I was able to contact. Only the Latina voice was attained in student and family interviews. I was unable to contact the remaining students who were Black and Bi-racial.

I was also unable to contact students and their families who left during the CEAS school year. This limited the multiple perspectives intended for this study.

Lack of transparency

Jane steadfastly ignored my repeated requests for archival information, information that may have contributed to the understanding and lessons that this study sought. This lack of transparency displayed by the founder and some of the board members (especially those related to her) caused me to wonder, Why? I considered that Jane was an attorney and that non-disclosure and keeping information close to her may be her natural tendency. I also considered that this was her dream and it did not conclude as she envisioned, so perhaps she was reluctant to dig into the particulars.

As I reviewed email correspondences, text messages, and my field notes, I found multiple requests for this information. Jane initially agreed to share this so as to illuminate this case study, but this did not happen. I could not help but wonder about the reasons. I am wary of the information that Jane offered from memory; for example, when I interviewed her, she was able to rattle off the students' scores on state achievement tests, yet I never saw any documentation of the students' achievement levels to verify this.

Two issues provide illustrations of this lack of transparency: 1) An issue with John, who was a teacher, and 2) this lack of communication over the school's documentation.

The first issue with John and an inappropriate communication with a student had crossed my mind several times. Was there more to it? In separate interviews, a student and her mother said that John wrote a note to another student that said "You look good in

pants." The student I interviewed said that she and the other students told Jane and she said that Jane did not believe John would do something like that. The transcript below is part of the verbatim interview that I had with a participant. I am Speaker 1and she is Speaker 2. In her conversation, Speaker 2 refers to another student, her friend Tina who attended CEAS:

> Speaker 2: I remember Tina. She told me that Mr. John told her that she looked good in pants. That was disturbing. Everybody is like, "Awkward. That little creeper."
>
> Speaker1: That is really awkward.
>
> Speaker2: I was so creeped out. He just put down a note right there where she was standing and then she tells me later and I'm like, "What? What the heck?"
>
> Speaker1: Oh my God. That's just crazy.
>
> Speaker2: I was so scared. I was like, "What?"
>
> Speaker1: Did he do stuff like that a lot?
>
> Speaker2: No. He only did that to Tina once and all of us were just, like … We tried to tell Miss Jane and she's like …
>
> Speaker1: What did she say?
>
> Speaker2: She's just like, "No. I don't believe what you guys are saying. He's a nice person." Besides that, they were cousins, right?
>
> Speaker 1: Yeah.
>
> Speaker2: Yeah. She wouldn't believe that. Like her cousin would do that. She (Tina-the student) showed me the note and I was like …
>
> Speaker1: She showed it to you?
>
> Speaker2: I was like, "What the heck is that?" I was so scared. I was so creeped out.
>
> Speaker 1: Did you tell your mom?

> Speaker2: Yeah. She was … She said, "Oh my gosh. If he would have sent that note to you I would have gotten that guy arrested."

The student and her mother both said that the situation prompted four other students to leave the school further reducing the enrollment at this point to eight. The mother said that she told her daughter to never be alone with this male teacher.

Without any proof or corroboration of the story, I was unsure how to move forward. In my experiences as an educator, I had never heard a student make an allegation against a teacher behaving in a way that was sexually inappropriate. I was unable to reach the students and families involved in the situation at CEAS during this study. I don't know, and never will know, the absolute truth about the situation. After further investigation, I found that John was no longer working in education. He had moved to a new career as an Emergency Medical Technician.

The second issue also illustrates the lack of transparency as a limitation. Jane had many opportunities to provide information to this study that would have been very useful. She said that she was busy until a specific date (June 20, 2012) and after that date, the email address we had used to communicate was suddenly no longer valid. I had to dig back through old emails to find her personal information in order to telephone her for the interview. She continually put off providing documentation in regards to current student contact information, student grades and growth, board minutes, the hiring process for educators, the selection process for students, and how the budget was spent. I eventually received the information presented in Chapter 4 as through her mother, though Jane was clearly reluctant to share it.

As we were sitting together for the interview, I asked for board members' contact information, but she did not initially provide it. Even the information for her mother Mary and aunt Jen were delayed for a few weeks while Jane went on vacation. Later, her aunt gave me a time to call and then did not answer the phone. In an email she mentioned that if the interview would really take only 30 minutes, then she would participate. Budget information was locked in Jane's mother's (Mary's) house, which postponed its arrival until she returned from an overseas vacation.

When the budget did arrive, it was a very basic outline and was titled Budget 2011-12 (Appendix F). The CEAS life cycle ran from approximately March 2009 through June 2011, so this was clearly a partial budget. Mary also questioned my intent for gathering the board meeting minutes (Appendix G). She asked me via email, "Tell me how board mtg minutes would help you Quite honestly they are all taped up and stored." I was eventually told by Mary, "It is just too complicated to get to the minutes" (Email correspondence 10/7/12).

I will never know what actually happened with the documents. I just know that after multiple requests via telephone, text, email, and in person, I never saw many of them. I suspect Jane offered some of the information from memory, but there was not written documentation to support that. It may have been as simple as a case of disorganization, but not being truthful with that information came across as a lack of transparency which caused this researcher to ponder, Why?

## Significance of the Study's Findings

This study contributes to the continuing discourse among community leaders, policy makers and educators concerning educational reform in traditional public

schooling. As discussed in Chapter 1, The Federal Promise Neighborhoods Program is an initiative to break the cycle of generational poverty by improving the educational outcomes and overall life prospects of low-income children and their families with a comprehensive place-based approach to support children from birth through college (Promise Neighborhood Institute, 2012).

The Promise Neighborhoods' vision is that "all children growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to effective schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and career" (Promise Neighborhood Institute, 2012, p. 1). Twenty one communities in America have received federal funding to create a community school model that encompasses the local community's specific needs. However, not all communities who need the funding have received it. This study assists in the continuing dialogue among community leaders, policy makers and educators and benefits all schools, whether they are applying for a Promise Neighborhood grant or starting up independently. Public schools may also find themselves situated within the lessons learned.

For the unfunded urban community school initiatives like CEAS, the collaboration of community organizations, schools, and families is essential in the creation of a holistic education for this country's children. In my data analysis, I found examples to support that the community-based school curriculum encompassed the multiple identities of the students. Throughout this study, the student participants at CEAS described their accumulation of positive experiences. I found that these

experiences linked their education to other parts of their lives and contributed to their multiple identities.

Research on community-based education does not often appear in traditional education publications because it is seen as an alternative approach to school reform. This dissertation has the ability to expose educators and administrators to the idea of promoting community engagement in urban areas through education. It addresses specific challenges within the CEAS Charlotte location, yet it also provides insight for other urban communities and UCS initiatives.

This dissertation focuses on the lessons learned by CEAS, which was run as non-profit organization. The initiative began with the best of intentions: a need to do good, to create a solution to poverty, and to help support children's learning. Yet the realities of running CEAS were trickier and more extreme than the intentions ever considered. The questions posed in Chapter 1 foreshadowed the events of the CEAS life cycle, its unfulfilled dream and its failure as an urban reform strategy. What happens when a school initiative, though well intended, lacks strategic planning and implementation? What happens if there are not enough funds to support the initiative? What happens to the students if the partnerships dissolve? What happens when there are class and cultural disconnections in this model? The data in this case study addressed these questions and examined the lessons learned from the successes and mistakes of a UCS initiative. This dissertation vividly describes the consequences of those lessons drawn from the CEAS life cycle.

# Implications for Future Research and Additional Work

## Implications

Traditional American educational practices and policies produce a context that devalues the experiences and cultures of anyone other than White middle class Americans. Society, schools, and sometimes even students' own parents reiterate the message of negativity. Culture and language were a part of individual and group identities in the CEAS program. The messages that devalued students' cultures negatively impacted a number of CEAS students' and their families' perceptions of themselves and their funds of knowledge.

Acculturation for some students entailed the abandonment of their funds of knowledge and culture because they did not perceive them as necessary to provide the social capacity and cultural capital essential for academic achievement and social mobility. The CEAS students were outside of the dominant culture and did not always assimilate to the norms of the CEAS staff, which represented the dominant class. Some students resisted the systemic discrimination through actions that influenced their academic achievement, like choosing to leave the school or on the contrary, exceeding expectations in spite of oppressive circumstances. The data highlighted the students' resistance, showing that ten of the enlightened students left the CEAS experience after the school year began. The counterpoint, according to Jane, was that all eight of CEAS remaining students ended the year at or above grade level in their academic achievement.

Many urban schools operate amidst a complex array of challenging social issues including poverty, racial and socioeconomic segregation, discrimination and poorly trained teachers. The students in CEAS and their families were not unique in this

reality. They, like their teachers, were socialized to believe that if students work hard, and learn and study enough, then they can attend the college of their choice and pursue the career of their dreams. For many students, hard work may have paid off in some respects, but it did not necessarily result in the equitable access of experiences that middle class families have to academic and employment opportunities. The unfortunate fact remains that this urban community school served as site of social reproduction that may have limited some students' potential.

As Chapter 4 discussed, Jane, some of the teachers, and some board members were exhausted and jaded by the realities of the CEAS experience. They voiced their frustrations during the interviews; for example Page found that

> It was like I was holding a certain type of student in my mind and it wasn't the type of student that we received. I had to revamp everything with the type of students that I got… Whenever I was teaching, if I was lecturing something, their attention was off. They were used to tuning things out. I'm betting (pause) well, this is my guess, that given where they were, generally in a public school, these kids did not get (pause.) They were not in the upper part of the class. They were used to being kind of ignored and left behind. They really didn't feel like what (pause) they didn't have a sense that their input mattered much. And so they took the attitude of, if it didn't hook them in some way, they just weren't going to be involved. I mean they really set their boundary right away like, "You're going to have to try and get me because I am just not going to entirely be there."

Through this experience, Page took her students' stance as a source of motivation to reach them, which also served her own personal growth. She explained:

> Initially, there was the hard lesson for me that I can't teach these kids the way that's easy for me to teach. There was my own growth of doing the best I can and learning that I have to be willing and open to make the effort to reach them where they're at and let go of the rest. I could really only do so much and then I have to let go of the rest.

It was suggested in the data that if CEAS had implemented a strong discipline plan from its inception, teachers like Page and John may have felt less of the frustrations that they referred to in Chapter 4. Page explains this discovery:

> By the end, we had more of a disciplined structure. But because it was formulated throughout the year, it wasn't consistent. It didn't work as well as we would have liked. One of the biggest things was (pause) we would have known that next year, what our discipline plan would have looked like. We would have known more about some of the hiccups that could come about and so we could even present that to the girls. As far as if this happened, this is what you need to do. We had a lot more preventive measures. I think we also had a better idea. I certainly would have had a better idea of what kind of lessons really worked, and what kind of teaching styles really worked and what didn't.

The teachers were not alone in their dissatisfaction. In the data, Jane and some board members expressed their own and other participants' angst. Page defined her own perception of one of Jane's source of frustration:

> I think Jane had to keep a standard. She had to keep a standard in order to achieve the vision. Some parents were not willing to stick to the standard. She really gave them ample opportunity to live up to that standard or at least be willing to live up to that standard. There were some students who pushed the envelope and she had to hold to the standard, because what she did was a saying that I personally loved and lived by: "Personal progress depends upon unity." She had to keep the vision of the unity of the group, of the community, and she couldn't just let the compassion or the empathy for one child or the consistent misbehavior of one child sway the good of the community… I think that there were the difficult positions and yet I think she did it beautifully.

In the data, the students and their families were regularly mentioned as a portion of the unexpected realities of CEAS. Board members Mary and Jen, along with teachers John and Page, specifically named student recruitment as a source of contention. Jane herself described the types of students and families she envisioned participating in the CEAS experience:

> We wanted kids that we thought would interact well with other kids. We wanted kids that we thought would thrive in a setting where they were given some independence and some ownership. We wanted kids who were going to be motivated and we wanted kids who were thinking in the vein that we were thinking sort of outside-of-the-box education. So, kids who were particularly artistic or particularly dramatic, kids who were unusual problem solvers were, we thought, good fits. We didn't have any

> expectations in terms of academics. We knew that if we chose children based upon that we would have high academic success with some and we'd have academic failure with some and that's exactly how it came out and that's what the spread was.
>
> We expected the families to be engaged and we wanted them to be invested in the process. I think that was probably one of the harder things for us to do…the parents weren't there and what we were doing was completely foreign to them. So that was hard to gain the level of investment that we would have liked to have had from the parents and the level of engagement.
>
> Then the other barrier that we came up against was just practicality. They were working multiple jobs; they didn't have their own transportation, so we were not in a community where those kids were walking to school. Had we been in that type of community, I think we would have had the higher parent engagement.

The unfortunate conclusion of CEAS reproducing social inequality was embedded throughout the data. Regardless of its well-intentioned motivation, CEAS did not incorporate cultural relevancy, agency, or empowerment strategies in its teaching.

## Future Research

First, significant shifts in discourse and research paradigms, the development of critical consciousness and an inclusion of silenced voices in the dialogue are essential toward dismantling the oppressive social constructs that perpetuate social inequalities in American schools. Poverty, limited access to resources and structural barriers restrict

student opportunities for educational attainment and social mobility. In educational research marginalized groups, for example, CEAS students and their families, are often viewed either as the subjects or as the participants in the studies, rather than as an influencing voice toward a solution. Research must include the space for their authentic participation in dialogues regarding their experiences and in the creation of the proposed solutions.

Educators must regularly interact with the students, communities and contexts they are writing about. Marginalized and disenfranchised groups are essential to the dialogue. The works of Anyon (2005) and Freire (1998) must serve as examples of scholars working toward social transformation. Education and social mobility mask the structural inequalities that exist in education and serve to perpetuate the reproduction of social stratification. The multifaceted lives of each student must be taken into consideration for research, policy and practice. The complex intersections of culture, social class, and education have important implications in American public schools.

Critical researchers and teachers are essential at all levels of education. Shifts in curriculum and pedagogy toward those who value diversity, foster critical awareness, and commit to social transformation are essential. Teachers, families and community members are powerful agents who can facilitate change and spark student agency through problem posing approaches to learning that encourage individuals to question, redefine and construct knowledge. Classrooms can be spaces of transformation that challenge students to develop critical consciousness about their social historical identity, or they can become centers for the perpetuations of disconnections. The development of a critical

consciousness requires specific changes in teacher education programs that go beyond merely promoting student-centered learning**.**

## Recommendations for Practitioners and Researchers

### Practitioners

The CEAS experience is a cautionary tale that pleads to be taken into serious consideration by groups that are in the planning stages of an urban community school initiative. To mitigate CEAS actions, the following changes are suggested for emerging UCS initiatives to consider: incorporating and including the traditionally silenced voices (Delpit, 1998), using families' and communities' funds of knowledge (Moll, et.al, 1992). Practical and action-focused recommendations include: establishing full planning periods that include a sustainability aspect, securing proper funding to support the positions required for this holistic approach to education, and creating classrooms in both higher education and basic schooling that value diversity, foster critical awareness, and allow participants to be empowered agents of social transformation.

Practitioners can apply these recommendations in urban community school initiatives. Practitioners can produce an action plan to utilize the community's established bonds and networks (funds of knowledge). The first step is to begin by creating a partnership with community educators who reside within the neighborhood where the school is situated. It is essential to form the partnerships in the planning stages of the initiative. All participants need to support community educators' transformation which may include, negative perceptions of self and low expectations from others to the recognition of having essential competencies and contributions. The next step is to consider when initially preparing and supervising community educators, it is essential for

practitioners to provide empowerment and effective training to develop skills. Empowerment is not a product; it's ongoing and marked with equity and social value. The last step is that practitioners must continue to have high expectations for their community educators to make valuable contributions to children's learning. The community educators must be involved throughout the program to inform practitioners of current and relevant issues in the community.

Researchers

A critical awareness of the social context that impacts the educational experiences of diverse populations must be integrated throughout teacher training programs. Pre-service teachers need more than one class designated as "diverse learners." One course centered on educating students from various racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds is inadequate and insulting to the populations that are the course's intended focus. The dedication of one course to address the vast diversity among all students is not adequate. Diverse students and the social context of schooling must be integral components in all education courses. Teacher preparation programs must require students to leave the classroom and work within the communities of the students they will serve, while engaging in a critical dialogue about their experiences.

Second, academic program changes are also needed, including pedagogical shifts which must be accompanied by political action and policy revisions to truly transform education. Fostering a critical consciousness among students and their families must be coupled with organized efforts of the people aimed at social change. Previously silenced groups can use critical consciousness to find their voices, but other forms of agency are necessary to deconstruct the social inequities that exist in their communities and schools.

Conscientization must be accompanied by praxis, an act that must be done by the people themselves.

Third, the prospectus in the higher education must truly incorporate actions, curriculum, and role models that empower its students and their families. A service-learning project united with leadership and partner roles in the community are an example of a program which supports a school's commitment regarding empowerment. The students and their families inspire and encourage each other towards their liberation, and away from their previously prescribed futures in American society.

Changes in social and educational policies must be implemented to eradicate the disparities in access that have historically served to oppress groups not afforded the same power and privilege maintained by the dominant class. The work ahead of educators and researchers is to deconstruct the discourses of power and privilege that have existed for centuries. It is substantial, but it is necessary to bring about change. As Jane learned, the unfortunate truth is that one person alone cannot create a sustainable school for marginalized students. Everyone in a child's life must be included in her education from her parent to her government. As the African proverb reminds us…It takes a village to raise a child.

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# APPENDIX A: STUDENT INTERVIEW

Questions to warm –up and establish rapport with the participant

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself so that I understand who you are better in relation to the school?

2. Tell me about the three most important people in your life.

3. List three adjectives that best describe you and why.

Questions to probe social and cultural dispositions

1. Tell me about the people with whom you live.

2. Tell me about the people that are important to you, like your family or close friends.

3. How much time do you spend with these people?

4. What, if any, special memories have you shared with your friends and/or family.

5. Describe your weekend activities.

Questions to probe student learning dispositions

1. There are many different types of students at school. What type of student do you think that you are?

2. What type of student do your close friends think you are?

3. What type of student do your teachers think you are?

4. (If different from each other) Why do you think your friends (teachers) think differently?

5. List three adjectives that best describe you at school.

Questions to probe participant's previous experiences with school

1. Before you came to CEAS, tell me what you remember about school.

2. The summer before CEAS started, you made a puppet and drew a poster to share a good experience and a bad experience at school (show a picture). Can you tell me about a good experience you remember at that school?

3. What did a bad experience look like?

4. Tell me about one of your teachers who you remember best.

5. Where did you get help with homework?

Questions to probe CEAS experience

1. Tell me about CEAS.

2. What did your school day look like at CEAS?

3. Tell me about your friends at CEAS.

4. Tell me about your teachers at CEAS.

5. Did you see the teachers outside of school? If yes, where? Describe what it looked like?

6. Tell me about a time when a family member came to CEAS. Why did they come?

7. How did you share your thoughts about what you wanted to learn at CEAS? What did teachers and volunteers do to show you that they were listening?

8. What types of responsibilities did you have as a student at CEAS?

9. Where did you get help with homework when you went to CEAS?

Questions to probe student's perspective of CEAS experience

1. Tell me the best things about CEAS.

2. What did you like least about CEAS?

3. Tell me about how you felt when you learned CEAS would close.

Questions to probe students' current school experience

1. Tell me about your school this year.
2. Tell me how it is different from CEAS.
3. Tell me about one of your teachers.
4. Tell me about your friends at school.
5. What types of responsibilities do you have as a student this year?
6. Where do you get help with homework this year?
7. Do you see your teachers outside of school? If yes, where? Describe what that looks like?
8. Tell me when and why your family comes to your school.
9. What are the best things about school this year?
10. What do you like least about your school this year?

Questions to reflect and probe influence of CEAS

1. When you talk about CEAS with your family now, what do you say?
2. Tell me about times you talked about CEAS with your friends.
3. Tell me about your goal or dream for the future.
4. Is there anything you learned from CEAS that will help you with your future goals?
5. (If yes, how?)

# APPENDIX B: FAMILY INTERVIEW

Questions to warm –up and establish rapport with the participant

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself so that I can get to know you better?
2. Tell me about the three most important people in your life.
3. List three adjectives that best describe you and why.

Questions to probe social and cultural dispositions

1. Tell me about the people who live with you.
2. Tell me about the people that are important to you, like your family or close friends.
3. How much time do you spend with these people?
4. What, if any, special memories have you shared with your friends and/or family. What do your daily activities look like?
5. Describe your weekend activities.

Questions to probe family participant's learning dispositions

1. What are your memories of schooling?
2. There are many different types of students at school. What type of student do you think you were?
3. What type of students did your close friends think you were?
4. What type of student did your teachers think you were?
5. (If different from each other) Why do you think your friends (teachers) thought differently?
6. Please describe how your family participated in your schooling.
7. List three adjectives that best described your schooling experience.

Questions to probe participant's experiences with child's previous school

1. What type of student do you think (child) is?

2. Why do you think (child) is this type of student?

3. Please tell me about your experiences with the previous school that (child) attended.

4. Tell me about how you interacted with teachers and staff at the school.

5. Describe your responsibilities as a parent at that school.

6. Tell me where and how your child would get instructional help with homework while attending that school.

Questions to probe the decision-making which lead to the CEAS experience

1. How did you hear about CEAS?

2. Describe what made you decide to enroll (student) at CEAS?

3. Please describe if any, what input your child had into the decision to attend CEAS.

Questions to probe the CEAS experience

1. Tell me about the interview process.

2. Describe the types of responsibilities you had as a parent, related to your child attending CEAS.

3. Before the school year started did the teachers from the school visit your home? If yes, can you describe those visits?

4. Tell me about the input you had into the school's activities before the school year started.

5. Describe the trust you had in CEAS? Did this change throughout the school year?

Questions to probe family interactions with CEAS

1. Describe a time when you expressed your thoughts to school faculty. Can you share the outcome?
2. Tell me about the teachers at CEAS.
3. Did you see the teachers outside of school? If yes, where and what did it look like?
4. Tell me about a time when you went to CEAS. Why did you go?
5. Describe how you provided instructional help at home.

Questions to probe the participant's perspective of CEAS

1. Describe how you feel CEAS valued you as part of (child's) learning.
2. Tell me about any changes you saw in (student) while she attended CEAS.
3. What were the best things about CEAS?
4. What did you like least about CEAS?

Questions to probe the current school experience

1. Tell me about (student's) school this year.
2. Tell me how it is different from CEAS.
3. Tell me about one of her teachers.
4. Tell me about her friends at school.
5. What types of responsibilities do you have as a family member this year?
6. Where does she get help with homework this year?
7. Do you see her teachers outside of school? If yes, where and what does it look like?
8. Tell me when and why you visit the school.

9. What is the best thing about the school this year?

10. What do you like least about the school this year?

Questions to reflect and probe influence of CEAS

1. If the school remained open, would you have sent (student) there this year?

2. When you talk about CEAS with (student) now, what do you say?

3. How do you feel about the CEAS experience?

# APPENDIX C: TEACHER INTERVIEW

Questions to warm –up and establish rapport with the participant

1. Can you provide a brief introduction so that I may know you better?
2. Tell me about the three most important people in your life.
3. List three adjectives that best describe you and why.

Questions to probe teachers' K-12 schooling experience

1. There are many different types of students at school. What type of student do you think that you were?
2. What type of student did your teachers think you were?
3. (If different from each other) Why do you think your teachers thought differently?
4. Please describe how your family participated in your K-12 schooling.

Questions to probe participant's college educational experiences

1. Tell me about your educational background.
2. List three adjectives that best describe your college educational experience.
3. Describe your first job after college.

Questions to probe participant's motivation to work at CEAS

1. Tell me about your job prior to the CEAS experience.
2. How did you learn about CEAS?
3. Please describe your perception of the vision of CEAS.
4. What motivated you to commit to teach at CEAS?

Questions to probe the participant's teaching philosophy

1. What is your current view of education?

2. Describe your teaching philosophy.

3. What did you believe the CEAS students needed to succeed?

Questions to probe teaching practices at CEAS

1. Please describe a typical day at CEAS.

2. Tell me about your responsibilities as a teacher.

3. Tell me about the input you had into planning the school's curriculum and activities?

4. Describe what lesson planning look like? Did you plan alone or with the other teachers?

5. Describe the opportunities you had to see the students outside of the school day.

6. Describe what your daily communication with students' families looked like.

7. What comes to mind when you think about expressing your ideas and opinions at CEAS?

8. Describe how you were professionally supported through the year.

Questions to probe participant's perspective of CEAS

1. What were the best things about CEAS?

2. Tell me what did not go as planned?

3. If the school had continued, in what ways could the school have improved?

4. In your opinion, what contributed to CEAS closing?

Questions to reflect and probe influence of CEAS

1. Tell me about how you felt when you learned CEAS would close.

2. How do you feel the CEAS experience has impacted your life?

3. What are your current professional goals?

# APPENDIX D: ADMINISTRATION INTERVIEW

Questions to warm –up and establish rapport with the participant

1. Can you provide a brief introduction so that I can get to know you better?
2. Tell me about the three most important people in your life.
3. List three adjectives that best describe you and why.

Questions to probe participant's K-12 schooling experience

1. There are many different types of students at school. What type of student do you think that you were in school?
2. Describe how your family participated in your K-12 schooling.
3. List three adjectives that best describe your schooling experience.

Questions to probe participant's educational and professional experiences

1. Tell me about your educational background.
2. Describe your first job after college.
3. Tell me about your job prior to the CEAS experience.

Questions to probe participant's motivation to begin the CEAS process

1. Tell me what motivated you to start a school?
2. Tell me about the vision and intentions for the school as you began the process. Describe how they changed or evolved as you got further into the process.

Questions to probe CEAS process

1. Please explain the process for CEAS to come to fruition? If you are able to, please describe a timeline.
2. How did you initiate support for the school?
3. Tell me about the community school models that supported your vision.

4. Tell me about the community organizations were you involved with?

5. Describe the access you had to existing community services, resources, and programs.

6. What type of input did the community have into the planning of the initiative?

7. Why did you choose the specific location where the school opened?

8. Describe how the local resources in the immediate area would support the school.

Questions to probe curriculum and teacher choices

1. Tell me about the school's curriculum and how it was created.

2. How was it decided which curricular materials to use?

3. Describe how the curriculum was to be implemented.

4. Tell me about the type of teacher you envisioned supporting the school.

5. Please describe the personal qualities you expected in a teacher.

6. What were the educational and professional requirements for applicants?

7. Tell me about the interview process for the teachers.

Questions to probe student population

1. Describe how you recruited students.

2. How did you gain community and family trust for the students to be enrolled in the school?

3. Tell me about the criteria used in student selection and why you chose the criteria.

4. Describe the process for accepting the students.

5. What were the expectations of the students?

Questions to probe family population

1. Describe the expectations for family involvement.

2. Tell me about the actual responsibilities the family members had.

3. Before the school year began, what type of access did you have to the students and their homes?

4. Describe the families' and students' input into planning the curriculum and school activities.

5. Is there anything you can remember about an experience with a student's family member? Why do you think you particularly remember that experience?

Questions to probe about the CEAS activities

1. Tell me about a typical day at CEAS.

2. How would you describe your position at CEAS?

3. Describe how you were professionally supported through the year.

Questions to probe participant's perspectives about CEAS

1. What were the best things about CEAS?

2. Tell me what did not go as planned.

3. In which areas do you think the school could have been done differently?

4. In your opinion, what factors contributed to CEAS closing?

Questions to reflect and probe influence of CEAS

1. Tell me about how you felt when you learned CEAS would close.

2. How do you feel the CEAS experience has impacted your life?

3. What are your current professional goals?

# APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY MEMBER INTERVIEW

Questions to warm –up and establish rapport with the participant

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself so that I understand who you are better in relation to the school?
2. Tell me about the three most important people in your life.
3. What do your daily activities look like?
4. Describe your weekend activities.
5. List three adjectives that best describe you and why.

Questions to probe participant's learning dispositions

1. What are your memories of schooling?
2. There are many different types of students at school. What type of student do you think you were?
3. List three adjectives that best described your schooling experience.
4. Describe how your community participated in your schooling.

Questions about CEAS interaction

1. How long have you been in this community? In what capacity?
2. Describe how you came to be involved with CEAS?
3. Why were you motivated to work with CEAS?
4. Tell me about the types of interactions you had with CEAS.
5. Describe your input related to your interactions with CEAS.
6. Tell me about the long term commitment you had with CEAS.
7. Please describe the financial expectations of being a board member to create sustainability for the school.

Questions to probe participant's perspective of CEAS

1. Describe how the experience was beneficial to you?

2. How do you feel the interactions were beneficial to the students of CEAS?

3. Tell me about any difference CEAS created for the community.

# APPENDIX F: CEAS 2011-12 BUDGET SCANNED AND ORIGINAL

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Salaries | | |
| FT Head of School | Cathy at $0 salary | |
| PT Head of School | | 0 |
| FT Assoc Head of School | | 0 |
| PTAssoc Head of School | | 0 |
| PT Head of Teachers | | 0 |
| FT Administrative Assistant | | 0 |
| PT Administrative Assistant | | 10920 |
| PT History/culture teacher | | 15000 |
| PT Math/Science Teacher | | 30000 |
| PT Language Arts teacher | | 15000 |
| PT Science teacher | | 0 |
| PT World Topics teacher | Cathy at $0 salary | |
| PT PE teacher | | 0 |
| PT foreign language teacher | | 0 |
| PT Child psychologist | | 0 |
| FT Development Officer | | 0 |
| PT Development Officer | | 0 |
| PT Grant writer | | 0 |
| FT Grant Writer | | 0 |
| After-school instructors | | 0 |
| PT Social worker | | 0 |
| Art, drama, music, tech, photogr, etc | | 0 |
| Salary Bonuses | | 5000 |
| Contributions to empl health ins pkg | | 0 |
| FICA, worker's comp, unemply ins, etc | | 17879 |
| Payroll, acctg fees, background chks | | 1500 |
| Bus Transportation | | 600 |
| Computers | | 0 |
| Curriculum, bks, instructional supplies | | 2500 |
| Data, Internet, Phones | | 2400 |
| Development | | |
| Consulting Firm | | 0 |
| Development meetings expense | | 0 |
| Dues and subscriptions | | 350 |
| Field Trips | | 1920 |
| Insurance, liability and property | | 9000 |
| Legal Fees | | 0 |
| Licenses | | 2000 |
| Meals | | 31500 |
| PE Equipment | | 0 |
| Postage | | 2000 |
| Printers, digital cameras, video | | 500 |
| Printing | | 4000 |
| Rent | | 29400 |
| Repairs | | 0 |
| Reusable water bottles | | 0 |
| Scholar interviews | | 1800 |
| Science lab material | | 300 |
| Security | | 0 |
| Sign | | 250 |
| SMART Board Pkg | | 0 |
| Staff Development | | 1000 |
| Staff Meetings | | 250 |
| Taxes and tax prep | | 500 |
| Teacher apparel | | 0 |
| Testing | | 1200 |
| Uniforms | | 1875 |
| Utilities | | 7700 |
| Website maintenance | | 0 |
| Wireless Installation | | 2500 |
| | | |
| Total | | 198844 |

APPENDIX F: Continued

Budget 2011-12

Salaries

| | |
|---|---|
| FT Head of School | Cathy at $0 salary |
| PT Head of School | 0 |
| FT Assoc Head of School | 0 |
| PTAssoc Head of School | 0 |
| PT Head of Teachers | 0 |
| FT Administrative Assistant | 0 |
| PT Administrative Assistant | 10920 |
| PT History/culture teacher | 15000 |
| PT Math/Science Teacher | 30000 |
| PT Language Arts teacher | 15000 |
| PT Science teacher | 0 |
| PT World Topics teacher | Cathy at $0 salary |
| PT PE teacher | 0 |
| PT foreign language teacher | 0 |
| PT Child psychologist | 0 |
| FT Development Officer | 0 |
| PT Development Officer | 0 |
| PT Grant writer | 0 |
| FT Grant Writer | 0 |
| After-school instructors | 0 |
| PT Social worker | 0 |
| Art, drama, music, tech, photogr, etc | 0 |
| Salary Bonuses | 5000 |
| Contributions to empl health ins pkg | 0 |
| FICA, worker's comp, unemply ins, etc | 17879 |
| Payroll, acctg fees, background chks | 1500 |
| Bus Transportation | 600 |
| Computers | 0 |
| Curriculum, bks, instructional supplies | 2500 |
| Data, Internet, Phones | 2400 |
| Development | |
| Consulting Firm | 0 |
| Development meetings expense | 0 |
| Dues and subscriptions | 350 |
| Field Trips | 1920 |
| Insurance, liability and property | 9000 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Legal Fees | 0 |
| Licenses | 2000 |
| Meals | 31500 |
| PE Equipment | 0 |
| Postage | 2000 |
| Printers, digital cameras, video | 500 |
| Printing | 4000 |
| Rent | 29400 |
| Repairs | 0 |
| Reusable water bottles | 0 |
| Scholar interviews | 1800 |
| Science lab material | 300 |
| Security | 0 |
| Sign | 250 |
| SMART Board Pkg | 0 |
| Staff Development | 1000 |
| Staff Meetings | 250 |
| Taxes and tax prep | 500 |
| Teacher apparel | 0 |
| Testing | 1200 |
| Uniforms | 1875 |
| Utilities | 7700 |
| Website maintenance | 0 |
| Wireless installation | 2500 |
| | |
| | |
| Total | 198844 |

# APPENDIX G: CEAS EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

**Bold font is Mary's email messages**

*Italics font is my email messages*

**I will be en route to Pinehurst on Tuesday, playing golf en route. I can probably be reached on my cell mid-afternoon...555-555-5555. Jane can be reached at 555-555-5555.**

*Thank you- I just hate to be annoying... I was trying to spread my requests around;) But I'll most likely give you a call on Tues, let me know a time that works well for you.*

*Talk Soon,*

*Kerri*

**Kerri,**
**It is just too complicated to get to the minutes. If you have questions about any of the things you mention, please do not hesitate to call me or Cathy; we will likely remember the detals of what you seek.**
**Mary**

*So with the board minutes, I was hoping to create a more in depth timeline of the process for opening the school, the decision-making process involved in a grassroots initiative, And the process involved in deciding how/when to close. The sustainability piece continues to arise as an important part of the data - planning for other initiatives to use what we learned as lessons for success. I hope this makes sense :) I'm kind of beat today, but if you want to chat more, I can give you a call tomorrow!*

*Thanks again for your help Mary:)*

**Tell me how board mtg minutes would help you**
**Quite honestly they are all taped up and stored**
**Actually the number of Bd members changed over time///we started with 7 and ended with 5 and Jane was considered part of the Bd**

*Oh Mary- Many thanks! I hope that your trip to Germany was amazing:). I was thinking about you when I heard about the meningitis from the steroid shots- I'm trusting you are feeling well (and your knee is too).*

*I am working on the data analysis now... If you have a copy of the minutes for Board Meetings, that would be great! And just to double check, did you consider there to be 7 Executive Board Members (wasn't sure if you counted Jane and the teachers too). The more info to tell the story, the better. I'll keep you posted on the progress-*

*Take Care of You,*

*Kerri*

**You replied on 10/7/2012 4:46 PM.**

**Attachments:**

**CCSG - budget scenarios.xlsx (11 KB)[Open in Browser]**

**Jane says you need a copy of our budget. I am attachig it. Please note that we combined administrative support with the history/culture teacher/ Traci Smith filled both f those roles for us.**

**Hope this helps.**
**Eager to hear how you are doing?!**
**Mary**

# APPENDIX H: TERM DEFINITIONS

## Funds of knowledge

A theory developed by Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, (1992), funds of knowledge includes an examination of social networks and a community's use of them. The term *funds of knowledge* refers to bodies of knowledge that are historically and culturally developed. These skills are essential for household and individual functioning in society or the community. It is encouraged for educators to utilize family and community involvement as resources to educate their children. There is reciprocity between the school, the family, and the community which builds respect and trust as all participants recognize their input and culture being valued.

## Social capital

A theory first developed by Bourdieu (1986), *Forms of capital* is a conceptualization and systemic analysis of social capital with the inclusion of social reproduction and symbolic power. Social capital is described as the aggregate of resources linked to possession of durable networks of institutionalized structures. In most studies in educational research literature, Coleman (1988) defined social capital by its *function and consists* of social norms and social control. Social capital is intangible and has three forms: trust levels, information channels, and norms that promote the common good. The findings of this research are the most frequently cited in educational literature. Of particular importance is research by Dika and Singh (2002) which is a critical synthesis that incorporates educational research on social capital since the late 1980s. Using original conceptualization of the theory by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), the synthesis examines gaps in the conceptualization, measurement, and analysis of social capital in

educational literature. The findings reveal that educational literature most often does not acknowledge differential access to social networks and resources.