PRINCIPAL LEADERS AND COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS PROGRAMS

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the intersection of high school principals and college and career readiness initiatives in five high school contexts. Because school principals are responsible for setting the vision in a school, college and career readiness initiatives have the potential to overlap significantly with the principal's direction of the school. Moreover, studies indicate college and career readiness programs might rely on the active support of the school administrator if they are to succeed. What the school leader cares about tends to be what staff focus on; therefore, this study examines how three factors influence the effectiveness of a college and career readiness program: (1) the relationship between the principal and the college and career program advisor, (2) the principal's contributions to the program, and (3) the principal's perceptions of the role such programs play in connection with their vision for the school. The findings of this study indicate each of these factors influence the extent to which a college and career readiness program is allowed to permeate a school's culture and ultimately its effectiveness.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

College and career readiness programs are rapidly growing across the state of Idaho and the country. While this dissertation draws on national research and data, the context of the study is Idaho. In 2010, Idaho's State Board of Education established a goal that 60% of Idahoan's between the ages of 25-34 would have a postsecondary degree or certificate. Significant local, state, and national resources are being invested to prepare students for success after high school and college and career advising staff at the school level are charged with the task of implementing such programs with fidelity (Idaho State Board of Education, 2012, Idaho Code 33-1212A, 2016, Richert, 2017).

The quality, depth, and breadth of college and career readiness programs in schools across the state of Idaho varies widely. Some school districts are in the beginning stages of building a program, while others have a robust spectrum of opportunities for students to explore college and career options in their high schools. In 2016, the Idaho legislature dedicated funds specifically earmarked as resources to hire college and career readiness advisors and implement programs and activities to serve all students in grades 7-12 (Idaho code 33-1212A, 2016, Idaho code 33-1002, 2016). The legislature originally dedicated five million dollars to these efforts for the 2016-2017 school year, increased funding to seven million dollars for the following year, and most recently nine million dollars for the 2018-2019 school year (Idaho Legislature, 2018). The need for resources targeting student advising originated, in part, from a parallel program called Advanced Opportunities, which significantly increased the number of high school students

participating in college level coursework such as dual credit and Advanced Placement across the state (Idaho State Department of Education, 2018). In an effort to foster post-secondary aspirations in students and create avenues for them to pursue those aspirations, policymakers believed there was a need for increasing the number of trained staff, capable of building relationships with students, and allocated funds for this purpose in the state's education budget. Since the passage of this legislation, the Office of the State Board of Education, under the direction of Idaho's Governor, has given guidance to school districts on a variety of models that can be implemented with the use of these funds. These include, but are not limited to, the American School Counselor's Association (ASCA) model, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) model, Near Peer model, Transition Coordinator model, and Remote Coaching model (Idaho Division of Career Technical Education, 2016). Idaho's state agencies are focusing their efforts on how to create a system that expands opportunities and decreases barriers to students 'going on' to complete some form of education or training after high school (Idaho State Board of Education, 2018).

Advanced Opportunities is a statute in Idaho code that governs funding appropriated to secondary students, grades 7-12, for various activities (Idaho Legislature, 2018). Dual Credit, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Career Technical Education are the four types of Advanced Opportunities in Idaho (Idaho Department of Administration, 2018). Each of these is defined in the following way:

- Dual Credit is the opportunity for a high school student to earn high school credit and college credit in the same course. This occurs in a variety of settings including the high school campus, college campus, and online, and is taught by

staff that is recognized by the postsecondary institution as college/university faculty. Dual Credit across the state is also recognized as dual enrollment, concurrent credit, and/or concurrent enrollment in other parts of the country (Idaho State Department of Education, 2017, National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partners, 2018).

- Advanced Placement (AP) is a type of course that is taught at the same rigor of a college-level course. At the end of the year, participating students have the option to take an AP exam, which results in a score of one through five, five being the best. When student matriculate to their postsecondary institution their score may be transcribed into college credits. AP courses and exams are facilitated by the College Board (College Board, 2018).
- International Baccalaureate (IB) is a curriculum pathway implemented on a school wide level that prepares all participating students for college level coursework in their junior and senior years of high school. IB schools implement a school-wide curriculum that focuses on life-long learning. As students near graduation, students can work to earn an IB diploma. They also have the option of taking IB exams, which can result in college credit after they matriculate to the postsecondary level. IB is a trademark, which authorizes IB schools (International Baccalaureate, 2018).
- Career Technical Education (CTE) is known as a series of courses that set students onto a career pathway by exposing them to workforce training. These courses are known to be more hands-on than traditional courses, and expose students to the type of training are not typical of a traditional academic setting.

Common CTE courses include fields such as welding, automotive, certified nursing assistant, machinery, and others.

When participating in these types of classes, students are often charged additional fees for exams, labs, textbook, or tuition. Idaho's Advanced Opportunities aimed to decrease the financial burden for Idaho families who paid out of pocket for their children to take advantage of advanced and accelerated coursework. In 2016, these various programs were rolled into one, and every student was appropriated $4,125, in grades 7-12, to use toward dual credit tuition, overload courses, and post-secondary examinations (Idaho Legislature, 2016). Over the course of two years the program nearly quadrupled, growing from $4.6 million to $16.4 million in expenditures, and saved Idaho families $55 million in college tuition (Idaho State Department of Education, 2018). While a great opportunity for students and families, successfully navigating the complex systems of dual credit offerings, transferability, registration, multiple deadlines, and paperwork requires assistance from knowledgeable and skillful advisors at each high school. The legislature wanted to ensure that the coursework they were funding through this program resulted in meaningful outcomes for students, and that students were not simply taking random courses that did not specifically contribute to their career pathways. For this reason, the legislature amended the statute to require that students receive advising from a college and career advisor if they planned to use these funds to their maximum benefit[1] (Idaho Legislature, 2018).

These investments are just two examples of how Idaho policymakers have injected the education system with targeted resources in order for more students to exit

[1] Idaho code 33-4602 requires all students, who wish to Advanced Opportunities funds for more than 15 dual credits, to receive post-secondary advising.

high school ready to go to college or successfully begin a career. As schools evolve in their approach towards college and career readiness efforts and barriers such as adequate fiscal resources are addressed, the need to study the program's efficacy emerged, as a successful college and career readiness program may well depend on more than financial support from state government alone. In this study, I examine the relational forces that contribute to a college and career readiness program's success. Specifically, to better understand how principal leadership impacts the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of college and career readiness programs, I examine the relationship between the school principal and the college and career program advisor, the principal's perceived contributions to the program, and their perception of the role college and career readiness programs should play in the school.

Positionality

A number of experiences influence my positionality as I approach this qualitative study. As a professional, I am an employee of the Idaho State Department of Education and coordinate the Advanced Opportunities programs. As such, I have acquired a great deal of information and knowledge regarding the history surrounding these efforts over the years. My work experiences have shaped my understanding and opinions of college and career readiness programs in a way that, although relevant, may bias this study. These biases simply stem from my proximity to the work, and it is important to make them known (Bourke, 2014). It is my interest to see these programs be successful because my professional work surrounds the implementation of these programs. My biases and perceptions have been cultivated over time through thousands of conversations with various stakeholders. These conversations have included students, parents,

administrators, school counselors, legislators, and other stakeholders both in the state of Idaho, and around the country.

My proximity to the issues discussed in this dissertation is both a hindrance and a strength (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). I acknowledge my bias towards the college and career readiness efforts, because I have spent years of my life cheerleading the efforts and working to make them successful. It is important that I acknowledge risks associated with researching a programmatic area to which I am so close and committed. State agencies are often perceived as a form of authority by local school districts; for this reason, my affiliation with the Idaho State Department of Education may have influenced this research in ways that are outside my control. Conversely, my involvement in these programs allows me to bring a multi-faceted lens to the analysis because I have an insider's perspective on the system as well as access to its members (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Being an insider in these efforts serves as a strength in informing the study; as Dwyer and Buckle (2009) state that in this type of research "participants are typically more open with researchers so that there may be a greater depth to the data gathered" (p. 58). It is my intention to leverage my proximity to the research topic and uncover meaningful ideas and approaches that will benefit practitioners in their day-to-day work in high schools.

In an effort to be further transparent, it is important to note that prior to my work at the Idaho State Department of Education, I also served as a principal in a secondary summer school program, and as an instructional coach at a middle school. These experiences influenced my opinion and approach to school leadership. Noting this connection to the field is important because positionality influences the quality of

qualitative research (Bourke, 2014, Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, Seidman, 2006). As Bourke (2014) states, "the nature of qualitative research sets the researcher as the data collection instrument" and it is expected that my background and experiences will influence the lens with which data are collected and analyzed. He continues by highlighting the importance of establishing trust with participants in order to collect accurate data (p. 2).

I acknowledge my positionality as a both an educator and a government employee. The methods section includes more information regarding how I guarded against bias considering my positionality.

Hunch to Hypothesis

My interest in this topic resulted from experiences I had serving in the roles previously described. As a statewide coordinator, I have hosted and participated in trainings all over the state; from statewide conferences to school-specific technical assistance sessions. For nearly four years, I have had the privilege of working with the many high school counselors, college and career advisors, and administrators in Idaho, assisting them in their efforts to expand and grow college and career programs in their schools by way of training or technical assistance. Several years ago, when conducting a training session with a group of college and career advisors, as one counselor was finishing his presentation on strategies he had implemented in his school, when another counselor from a neighboring school district responded to him saying, "You're able to do that because you have support from your administration." Many other college and career advisors echoed in agreement, nodding their heads. During another training session for school principals, I became curious when a principal said to me, "What you're talking

about is not easily done; some of us have college and career advisors who aren't willing to implement this or try something new." Again, this statement was met with an echo of agreement from other attendees. The nexus of these two experiences led me to wonder about the relationship between principals and college and career advisors, the role of each individually, and the role that a principal plays in providing support and opportunity for college and career readiness programs to thrive. On the one hand, it seemed college and career advisors were calling out for administrative support and on the other; principals seemed frustrated by a lack of initiative and innovation on the part of college and career advisors. This site of discord between principals and college and career advisors crystalized my interest in exploring the relationship between the two roles and its influence on college and career readiness programs, and led to my hypothesis that the principal's contributions and perceptions of the program somehow affect the effectiveness of the program.

As many educators do, I have worn many hats throughout my various roles; moving from teacher to administrator, instructional coach to program coordinator, my studies of educational leadership have heightened my sensitivity to observe and seek to understand the type of leadership under which I operate. On a personal level, I found that certain leaders exerted behaviors that empowered me to be innovative and inspired a willingness to take risks with new ideas and practices, while other leaders discouraged questioning of the status quo, and diminished opportunity for creativity by exerting distrustful behaviors and hoarding power. These experiences made me wonder if perhaps college and career advisors who do not feel supported by their principals experience the same success as their counterparts who do feel supported. I was curious if the blame-

filled statements made by both college and career advisors and principals were linked to the manner in which leadership was exerted over the college and career readiness program. The nexus of these two experiences informed my hypothesis that the relationship between the principal and the college and career readiness program somehow influenced the effectiveness of the program.

Significance of the Problem

With the large investment in college and career readiness across the state of Idaho, it is important to investigate the relational influences that might make a college and career readiness program effective or ineffective. These influences include the relationship between the principal and his or her subordinate college and career advisor, (which is affected by constructs such as trust, empowerment, collaboration, and leadership style), and also the principal's perceptions of college and career readiness efforts and the role he or she believes these efforts should play in a school. The role of principal leadership in the context of college and career readiness efforts is largely absent in literature; thus, it a topic ripe for studying. Given the state and national focus on postsecondary aspirations in the context of college and career readiness programs, this topic is worthy of further exploration (Callan et al, 2006).

Research Question

This study explores how the school principal's relationships, contributions, and perceptions potentially influenced the college and career readiness program in five high schools in Idaho. Specifically, the study explores the following research questions:

1. *How, if at all, does the relationship between the principal and the college and career advisor influence a school's college and career readiness program?*
2. *How do principals perceive their role as relevant to the college and career readiness program?*
3. *What do school principals perceive to be the role of a college and career readiness program in a school, and how, if at all, does this perception influence the college and career program?*

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The topics of principal leadership and college and career readiness programs have been primarily studied in isolation from one another and for this reason the intersectionality between these topics warrants further study. The success of a college and career advisor is highly dependent on the culture and setting, in which they work; and an important role of the school principal is to cultivate a positive school culture (Laturno Hines, Lemon & Crew, 2011, DiPaola & Hoy, 2008).

I began the literature review with a two-fold strategy. A two-step process was necessary because the two topics of leadership and college and career readiness rarely intersect in scholarship. Studies of the school principal's relationship with subordinates are typically associated with classroom teachers and connected to instructional design (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2010, Fullan, 2008, Marzano, Water, & McNulty, 2005, Nehrig, 2009). Educational leadership studies related to the how school leaders interact with staff who are not classroom teachers, such as school counselors, speech therapists, psychologists, instructional coaches, and supplemental personnel are limited. Support from principals for school counselors, who most often serve in the role of college and career advisor, is referenced in the research somewhat as a side-note or something "good to have" (Laturno Hines, Lemons, & Crew, 2011). For this reason, I investigated both areas thoroughly, but in isolation. I first focused on the elements that make up an effective college and career readiness program in a school to understand the context for college and career readiness programs. Next, I delve into the general topic of leadership

as it applies regardless of setting, as well as literature specific to educational leadership, which largely define a school principal's role. Throughout the literature review and the dissertation as a whole, the terms 'principal' and 'administrator' are used interchangeably. In this section, the literature review will uncover how leaders engage subordinates when it comes to organizational outcomes. Connections are drawn to build an understanding for how the principal's role might influence the college and career advisor.

The Study of College and Career Readiness Programs

College and career readiness is often referred to broadly in research; it includes curriculum, instructional staff, classroom methodology, and more (Camara, 2013). The scope of this literature review is limited to college and career readiness programs in schools, with the role of the college and career advisor as a focal point. When referring to college and career readiness programs, I am addressing all activities targeting a student's postsecondary ambitions outside the traditional classroom experience. Such a program in a given high school may include the following activities: developing student learning plans, college visits, career fairs, college-entrance exams, financial planning, interest inventories, etc. These are the types of activities that college and career advisors are generally tasked with conceiving, planning, implementing and measuring.

It is important to note college and career readiness activities are situated in the context of a larger national movement focused on raising the educational standards for students. This movement to set high expectations in instruction, curriculum, and overall instruction is associated with standardized assessments, and nationwide standards (Conley, 2007). Forty-one states in the country have adopted the Common Core State

Standards, which in turn has led many states to develop and adopt college and career readiness standards as a means to school improvement at the local level (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018). Additionally, testing vendors for assessments such as Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), American College Testing (ACT), and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) are now reporting measures of college and career readiness for students who partake in the assessment. Amid this broader trend, the term 'college and career readiness' has become a catch-all phrase for the systemic implementation of rigorous instruction. There is research that addresses college and career readiness in this way (Camara, 2013, Conley 2007, Hooley, Marriot & Sampson, 2014, Mueller & Gozali-Lee, 2013). I mention this because it is important for readers to note that the intent of this study is not to capture college and career readiness in light of this larger trend related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. I acknowledge the presence of this national trend; however, the scope of this study involves surveying, understanding and theorizing targeted at college and career readiness programs as coordinated by a school's college and career advisor.

College and career readiness studies are typically related to specific practices and strategies that certain staff members implement in order to ensure students leave high school with a practical and thorough plan for their future (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012, Dunlop Velez, 2016). Depending on the setting, college and career readiness initiatives may be under the jurisdiction of a counselor, advisor, or mentor. Throughout this paper, these roles are referred to as the college and career advisor, who owns the charge of college and career readiness efforts in a school setting, and, depending on the school size, may be one individual or a team of people.

The Goal of College and Career Readiness Initiatives

Prior to delving further into the topic, it is important to recognize there is significant discussion and debate around the goals related to college and career readiness. A common debate stems from the following questions: Should all students be required to become 'college-ready?' Is college for everyone? Is it reasonable for schools to set goals related to a 100% Go-On rate? Furthermore, many initiatives advocate for inclusion of Career Technical Education (CTE) for students who might not be interested in a traditional four-year college route. The purpose of this study is not to debate these questions; but rather to frame college and career readiness as inclusive of all postsecondary options including 2-year college, 4-year college, military, and career technical opportunities. Effective college and career readiness models are not centered on a college-for-all mentality, but rather a career-for-all mentality (Perna, 2015, Perry & Wallace, 2012). The bifurcation of the college and career pathways in a high school is problematic, and can lead to tracking of students into discrete pathways based on assumptions about their abilities and ambitions, which awaken deeper issues of social justice (Perry & Wallace, 2012). Hooley, Marriot, and Sampson (2014) offer a less dualistic perspective, stating that "National policy currently emphasizes the importance of making young people 'college and career ready' and career development can support the realization of this vision" (p. iii). It is important to note that going to college is not an end for students in and of itself; instead going to college is a means to an end, which serves as a springboard for their future. The state of Idaho defines college and career readiness as "the attainment and demonstration of state board adopted competencies that broadly prepare high school graduates for a successful transition into some form of

postsecondary education and/or the workplace" (Idaho Department of Administration, 2018). Hooley, Marriot, and Sampson (2014) put it this way, "in order for young people to be genuinely 'ready' for both college and career they need to have attended to their academic achievement, their aspirations and plans for the future, their ability to make transitions and their ability to direct their own careers" (p. iii). Therefore, when discussing the goal of college and career readiness efforts, I am referring to deliberate steps that are taken to create seamless transitions beyond high school, which allow students to achieve goals and maximize opportunities related to professional fulfillment, regardless of whether that route is through college or via one of the other tracks. The goal of these programs and activities is to empower to students with the skills and knowledge to make an informed choice about their future (Bosworth, Convertino, & Hurwitz, 2014, McCullough, 2011). At face value, these deliberate steps may include activities like career fairs, college visits, and mock interviews, but can also include targeted efforts related to resilience, self-advocacy, and belonging.

Access to postsecondary opportunities is a focal point because it is considered by many to be the great equalizer. Postsecondary education can lead to a better paying job, which may lead to a better quality of life, and is understood to be a ticket out of poverty or unfortunate circumstances (Howard, 1994). Castro (2013) refers to this as "educational equalization" and states "the viability of the readiness agenda relies on the academic success of the most neglected students in our nation" (p. 2). An effective college and career readiness program in a school has the potential to become a headquarters for social change in a community. For example, first-generation students (those who would be the first in their family to go to college) would benefit greatly from a high school career

center and a relationship with an advisor that could assist them in developing college and career awareness, unlocking possibilities and opening doors to career development. Therefore, the success of these efforts is a moral imperative of sorts. It's possible that an effective college and career readiness program is a means by which leaders can begin to dissolve racial and socioeconomic stratification that perpetuates achievement gaps in a school and social discrepancies within a community (Castro, 2013, Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014, Holten & Pierson, 2016). This area of research draws in factors that influence personal, local and national development.

Attributes of an Embedded College and Career Readiness Program

A vigorous, effective college and career readiness program is not simply a set of initiatives led by a college and career advisor, instead, it is a program that can infiltrate a school's culture (Bosworth, Convertino, and Hurwitz, 2014, Conley, 2007, Mueller & Gozali-Lee, 2013, Dunlop Velez, 2016). For this to happen, it is important to first understand what school culture is. Hoy (1990) defines school culture stating, "Organizational culture is a system of shared orientations that hold the unit together and give it a distinctive identity" (p. 157). Gruenert (2000) defines culture in the following way:

> Organizations develop means for reinforcing…norms through rewards and punishments, and the strongest norms become rituals, traditions, or rules. People within organizations become "trained" to follow these norms, gradually becoming unaware that they have been trained. This is organizational culture at work (p.14).

School culture is beliefs, values, and behavioral norms shared by individuals in the organization and constitute the school's identity (Hoy, 1990, Bolman & Deal, 2010, Gruenert, 2000). As college and career readiness program are most effective when they are embedded into the beliefs, values, and behavioral norms of the school, in what follows I further explicate what that looks like in action.

In *How Can High School Counseling Shape Students' Postsecondary Attendance,* Dunlop Velez (2016) points out the proportion of a student's close friends who plan on attending college is correlated to a student's postsecondary aspirations. It appears that social pressures may be a significant factor when it comes to postsecondary planning, and college and career readiness becomes relatable to students when it is embedded in a larger school culture. Culturally embedded practices contribute to students feeling like they 'belong' at school and vary given the culture of the students being served (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012). College and career readiness efforts should resist any notion that may appear exclusionary to any subgroup of students (Castro, 2013). The expectation that all students *can* and *will* achieve a level of readiness can catapult students into a successful career transition, and establish an equitable playing field for students as they move forward. This is an example of a shared belief that can be present in a school's culture.

In reviewing the literature on college and career readiness programs, a number of themes emerged as critical elements for defining an effective college and career readiness program including academic options, career awareness, college awareness, communication, data-driven and student-centric artifacts, and financial planning. In discussing these themes, I will also make connections on how these themes materialize when they are embedded into the school's culture and implemented in a manner that

reaches beyond the confounds of merely a college and career resource center. The following elements are described in literature with references on how they can be embedded into a school's culture for maximum effectiveness.

Academic Options and Support

Academic options and robust supports for students at all levels are a critical element of an effective college and career readiness program (Conley, 2007). This includes both course options and interventions as key elements to robust college and career readiness. To build an effective "Go-On" culture, a school must work to broaden challenging course offerings to the majority of students and make sure that struggling and average-achieving students have supports necessary to be successful in even the most challenging of courses (Mueller & Gozali-Lee, 2013).

Equitable access to courses such as dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), and CTE prepares students for a smooth transition to postsecondary pathways because they become familiar with high-rigor coursework. Having completed these courses, students gain confidence in their own abilities, realizing that they are capable of succeeding in college (Gaertner, Kim, DesJardins, McClarty, 2014). Wide accessibility to this type of coursework also provides opportunities for students to make personal connections with postsecondary staff that are not recruiters. These individuals can also serve as a mentor and resource as they look to make the transition to their postsecondary education.

In addition, supports for students to succeed in these courses is also important, which is why tutoring is a critical. For example, some schools choose to take on a system-wide AP philosophy, encouraging and providing supports for all students (not just high achievers) to participate in rigorous coursework; as a result, these schools are

recognized as some of the top performing schools in the country (Morse, 2018). Additionally, tutoring opportunities give students access to resources for academic achievement, which sets students up for postsecondary success. Students who would benefit from remediation in college are more likely to dropout after their first year; therefore, providing the support structures to students struggling academically prior to entering college contributes to college retention (Castro, 2013, Cates & Schaefle, 2011). Academic supports that are customized to individual student needs can be the catalyst for students to grow in self-efficacy and confidence (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012, Martinez, Baker, & Young, 2017). With supports in place and frequent monitoring of student progress, students are more likely to be successful in transitioning to a postsecondary pathway (Lapan, Poynton, Marcotte, Marland, & Milam, 2015).

Academic options and supports are visible in the school's culture when rigorous and meaningful coursework is made widely accessible to all students and not only students who are high achievers (Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014). This is visible when school staff values broad access for all students and share beliefs about potential success with their students.

Career Awareness

Developing career awareness is another common thread found within the body of research related to college and career readiness programs in high schools. This includes opportunities related to job shadows, internships, and apprenticeships. According to Perry and Wallace (2012), opportunities for job shadows and internships in STEM are a critical element of college and career readiness programs that need to be widely available to students. Hooley, Marriot, and Sampson (2014) refer to these as "work-based

interventions." Within a school setting, these opportunities will surface in the form of job or career fairs, work-study for credit, guest speakers from various career fields, and CTE opportunities. Career awareness activities can provide students with tangible, concrete understandings of what specific professions entail. Interestingly, these activities can serve to ignite passion in students as well as help them identify and confirm career fields for which they are not suited. It is easy for these types of career activities to become isolated to the career center of a school. However, when embedded in a school's culture, career activities should surface in every course offered in the school. Every course that student's take in school should contribute to their success after high school, and helping students understand the relevance that each subject area will have on their future careers in important. This can be as easy as inviting guest speakers from relevant careers to visit a teacher's classroom, or perhaps engaging students in rich problem-based learning experiences that guide students to make content connections to the real world (Perry & Wallace, 2012).

College Awareness

Students develop an awareness of college possibilities through exposure (Conley, 2007). Activities such as college visits, college fairs, school college days, alumni guest speakers can be organized by college and career advisors to help students build an understanding of the college culture. These activities can often be difficult to organize because they are in excess of typical course content standards, and college and career advisors must find creative methods of embedding this awareness within typical school operations (Laturno Hines, Lemon & Crew, 2011). However, they are critical because "college knowledge, and the development of a college-going identity can enhance the

relevance of the high school experience, help youth stay engaged in school, and ensure that they take necessary steps to prepare for and enroll in postsecondary education" particularly for low-income and first-generation college-going students (Hooker & Brand, 2010, p. 77). Activities targeting college awareness help students begin developing a sense of belonging in a college context, and an identity as a college student. Associating student identity with college is an important role all staff members could play; demystifying what it means to go to college and helping students see themselves as having the skills and abilities to be successful makes a powerful difference- especially for students who are the first in their family to pursue postsecondary education.

In the school's culture, this materializes when school staff shares their lived experiences of college with students. It can appear in the form of rituals attached to sporting events, the celebration of college-application week, and perhaps most powerfully integration into the curricula in each content area. For instance, English departments have a unique opportunity to teach students how to write college essays, scholarship essays, resumes, and fill out applications. These processes are difficult to navigate, and student who receive support from multiple sources in these efforts are more likely to matriculate to college (Hooker & Brand, 2010).

Communication

Conley (2007) highlights that college and career readiness efforts must be inclusive and communicated with clarity; "the most important thing a high school can do is create a culture focused on intellectual development of all students" (p. 25). He goes on further to state that:

> All of this information is necessary for students to make good decisions about college preparation and to demystify the process. Many students give up simply because they feel intimidated or overwhelmed by all of the requirements and activities associated with applying to college (p. 26).

Without clear guidance, Conley (2007) asserts that disadvantaged students end up falling through the cracks; "Children from low-income families are particularly vulnerable to a system that does not send clear signals to students on how ready they are for college" (p. 10). The manner in which program supports and offerings are communicated to students and families can make the difference between engaging those who would most benefit and leaving them behind (Mueller & Gozali-Lee, 2013). This is particularly important for parents who are unfamiliar or intimidated by public institutions, such as undocumented immigrants, those who are unaccustomed to English or those who experienced trauma from their own school experience (Mueller & Gozali-Lee, 2013).

Data-driven and Student-Centric Artifacts

In order to be effective, college and career initiatives must be data-informed, and student-centric. Data must come from multiple sources that include various types of insight for both the student and the school. Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, and Pittenger (2014) suggests measures of accountability related to college and career readiness should include a performance-based measure such as a student portfolio; she calls this a "portfolio of evidence" which is reflective of a student's genuine experience. Such a portfolio should contain both qualitative and quantitative artifacts, which point to the student's authentic level of college and career readiness. A college and career advisor is in an ideal position to work with students on such a portfolio, which may include a

student-learning plan, scores for college-entrance exams, interest inventories, college acceptance letters, letters of recommendations, resumes, artifacts from capstone projects, and more. Guiding students through this work is also a great medium through this instructional staff could collaborate with the college and career advisor. Such a portfolio is not only a living document that helps a student identify and plan for his/her pathway after high school, but is also a great resource for students after they've graduated when transitioning to their next endeavor. Aiding students in creating an artifact (such as a portfolio) also contributes to developing a 'college going identity' and fosters the idea that education beyond high school is not only achievable, but an expectation. The monitoring college and career readiness indicators while tracking student-centric assessments can be embedded into every content area in the school.

Financial Planning

Financial planning is a vital component of a dynamic college and career readiness program in a high school. Poynton, Lapan, and Marcotte (2015) state that "Effective [financial] advisement and counseling at both the high school and postsecondary levels would increase the likelihood…students would persist" (p.69). This includes activities like developing a plan, filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), problem-solving supports, etc. Disadvantaged students are more likely to give up on postsecondary aspirations due to financial barriers, and for this reason Poynton, et al (2015) highlight that "counselors and career development practitioners in our high schools and postsecondary institutions need to proactively deliver differentiated support services that are responsive to the diverse range of financing approaches being adopted by students" (p. 69).

The completion of the FAFSA is said to increase a student's likelihood to go on to college, and for this reason practitioners use the FAFSA completion rate as a leading indicator to measure the effectiveness of college and career readiness programs (Mueller & Gozali-Lee, 2013, Poyton, Lapan, & Marcotte, 2015). As previously mentioned, 'first generation' students from lower socio-economic strata are uniquely at risk of failure because they are less likely to have exposure to financial planning for post-secondary options. The normalization of poverty for students who grew up with limited resources is a psychological barrier that financial planning can help overcome.

Certain elements of financial planning can be easily overlapped with mathematics and personal finance curriculum. Establishing a financial plan for transitioning into adulthood is a difficult concept for an 18-year old to grasp, and for this reason, providing supports from multiple levels (school counselor, college and career advisor, and math teachers) can strengthen not only a student's confidence, but also the likelihood of success.

In consideration of these six elements, it becomes evident that the implementation of an effective college and career readiness program in a secondary school is no small task. High schools across the country have taken a variety of approaches to integrate these elements into their school culture. Additional examples of cultural embeddedness in the school's culture can be found in Table 4.1 (in Chapter 4) and Appendix A. Given the complexity of adopting a program focused on advising, many high schools turn to programs that embed these structures through vendor-packaged models, such as Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID), or Naviance. Other high schools have models funded by government grant programs such as Gaining Early Awareness

and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEARUP) or TRiO, which is a combination of three programs (Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Service). GEARUP and TRiO are authorized through the Higher Education Act (US Department of Education, 2018). For high schools that do not use a packaged program, or a grant-based model, the college and career readiness program is often home grown by a school counselor, principal, or a career teacher. In order to be impactful, these homegrown initiatives often require more resources than one individual, or a team of counselors, can provide. Implementation of the elements described in this section is complex, and a single college and career advisor cannot execute some or many of them in an integrated manner because they are school-wide functions beyond their sphere of influence. Such complexity of implementation suggested by these necessary and varied elements leads me to ask: To what degree does effective deployment of a college and career readiness program require comprehensive support and sponsorship of the school's leader?

The Study of Leadership

Dependable leadership is a critical element of organizational progress and inspiring school staff. The investigation of leadership included various aspects of an individual's inner world, and the manner in which it translates into meaningful professional relationships (Bolman & Deal, 2010). In an attempt to understand a career advisor's perception of support from their school principal, I focused on leadership theories that are based on relational frameworks. I delved into an analysis of the educational leader, the character traits that make up this individual, and specific efforts that allow the leader to thrive in service to his/her subordinate staff. From there, I tapped into what the literature says about how leaders effectively establish positive professional

relationships with subordinates, how they empower others to lead, and how their actions might foster a school culture that is student-centered and fosters positive student outcomes.

Leadership is a social construct, which exists only in relation to other positions (Helstad & Moller, 2013). There are many people who are not in positions of power, who are viewed by their colleagues as leaders, and the opposite is also true; there are supervisors who are in a position of power, that fail to exert leadership (Platow, Haslam, Reicher, Steffens, 2015). Being a leader is more than a job title that enables an individual to govern over others. Instead, genuine leadership is a mindset of servitude, or as Bolman and Deal (1995) put it, "…leading is giving. Leadership is an ethic, a gift of oneself" (p. 102). The ability of an educational leader to inspire staff, whether instructional staff or support staff, is greatly dependent on the leader's willingness and ability to serve others by establishing and maintaining positive professional relationships (Fullan, 2008, Northouse, 2007, Lencioni, 2012, DuFour & Eaker, 1998). School principals are in a unique position to build human resource capacity in this manner, which has a direct impact on student outcomes.

In creating a robust college and career readiness program and culture within a school, it is likely that the school principal plays a pivotal role in supporting and inspiring not only instructional staff, but also support staff that are charged with college and career readiness activities at the school. In the subsequent section, I review literature related to the leadership role in organizations, regardless of sector. As I analyzed and synthesized this literature, I realized that the literature generally explored leadership through one of

three lenses: (1) How the leader relates to him or herself, (2) How the leader relates to others, and (3) How the leader relates to his/her mission, in this case, the school's culture.

Leader Relates to Self

The manner in which leaders relate to themselves is critical to their success (Bolman & Deal, 2010, Palmer, 1998). In doing so, they become better and more effective leaders for those around them. Relating to oneself includes the manner in which leaders balance humility and confidence, their approach to decision-making, a willingness to be open-minded, and finally their overall leadership style. All of these elements are worth consideration as the leader strives to understand his or her role as a leader and reflects on how he/she can best serve staff at all levels.

Humility and Confidence Dichotomy

Given the newness of many college and career readiness efforts, leaders find themselves grappling with many unknown elements. Lack of direction can be frustrating for both leaders and subordinates. To confront these unknown elements, effective leaders possess an understanding of the confidence-humility dichotomy. Fullan (2008) describes this dichotomy as follows: "On the one hand, followers expect leaders to know what they are doing, especially in relation to complex, critical issues of the day. On the other hand, leaders should not be too sure of themselves. Paradoxes are to be finessed" (p.117). It is possible that school leaders might find themselves challenged in the light of the current mandate for college and career readiness as an outcome of high school. Without an open-mind, college and career readiness efforts such as career fairs, campus visits, or FAFSA nights, might be perceived as frivolous, burdensome, and unnecessary as they may impede on instructional time. For this reason, this confidence-humility dichotomy is

particularly important to embrace when developing college and career readiness programs. The leader must be willing to be vulnerable, while perceiving this realm as a vast terrain to be explored with confidence.

Leaders must be willing to learn about college and career readiness with an open mind, and not allow personal biases, assumptions about how best to use students' time, or unresolved insecurities to prevent progress. The confluence of literature suggests that by attaining inner-resolve and developing emotional intelligence, educational leaders may be in a better position to be drivers of positive social change, which has the potential to occur through an effective college and career readiness program.

College and Career Readiness initiatives can be scary for many school leaders, because they come with uncertainties. Put bluntly, school principals are not generally known to be experts in college and career advising which could make them feel uncomfortable or uneasy, especially if they feel like they should have answers for the staff. Most principals were teachers prior to going into administration, which implies that their original career passion was either student engagement, instruction, or a particular subject area. In order to grow in the area of college and career readiness, principals can rely on shared leadership and approach the program with a lens of wondering, exploration, and an open mind. Additionally, the dearth of literature that could potentially help guide school leaders in how to best support college and career efforts presents a potential challenge for the principal who may want to learn how to do so.

Another reason college and career readiness programs can cause a leader to feel uneasy is that there is limited quantitative data about such programs; likely because nationally, college and career initiatives on a grand scale are relatively new. The National

Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) reported that in 2018, their conference attendance has gone up by 53% from just over 5,000 attendees in 2011 to nearly 8,000. This type of anecdotal information indicates that this topic is a recent growing trend across the country. Meaningful data that could potentially speak to the efficacy of such programs are made up of lagging indicators (e.g. college persistence rates, and certificate completion rates, standardized test scores, degree attainment rates) which means the high school principals only has control over benchmark practices that may or may not translate to student outcomes immediately (Camara, 2013). Leading indicators of college and career indicators include: the number of students who applied for college or filled out FAFSA, the average school grade point average (GPA), or the number of students participating in dual credit or AP courses and their success rates (Martin & Marsh, 2009). A principal can monitor all of these data; however, these data do not demonstrate long-term results. The fact that most accurate measures of success are not obtainable to make just-in-time decisions about program features puts school leaders in a conundrum.

For these reasons, it is critical for leaders to not only be reflective, but also open to exploration and collaboration with the college and career advisor, and this requires humility and confidence from the principal. Michel de Montaige (2006) encourages leaders to use their authority with humility and seek to understand authentically. A strong partnership between principals and college and career advisors is a space in which principals and college and career advisors could learn from one another in an effort to further embed college and career readiness initiatives into the culture of the school. As school leaders grapple with the unknown elements of implementation it is important for

them to approach the program with a degree of openness; a willingness to try things out, and exert patience when initiatives do not go as planned (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Administrators are best equipped to lead and support these efforts if they are willing to be a learner in the process (Sinek, 2018).

Decision-Making

Stillman (2010) states that "Few concepts are more debated in administration more frequently than decision-making—how decisions are made; whom they are made by; why they are decided on in the first place; and what impact they have once the choice is made" (p. 212). Individuals are placed in positions of leadership not only to make those decisions (because someone has to), but also to live with the decisions that were made (because someone gets to). This is why understanding one's own inner world is critical for leaders. By understanding his or her values and the assumptions guiding his or her decision-making, a leader is able to recognize, defend, and more clearly articulate the motives and authenticity of those decisions; Bolman and Deal describes this leadership attribute as "leading from the soul" (1995). Leaders must possess confidence in one's intuition, particularly when decisions must be made in haste. Fullan (2008) posits that "leaders need to be more confident in the face of complexity than the circumstances warrant, but not so certain that they ignore realities that don't fit their action plan" (p. 119). When leading from the soul, individuals are able to exert confidence in decisions that are made; yet, they are able to be reflective and honest about uncertainties (Bolman & Deal, 1995). These research findings highlight the importance of understanding how leaders grapple with inner conflict and strife; and how these forces influence interactions with subordinate staff.

In my analysis of the literature, leaders who pay attention to professional relationships and seek to be supportive of their subordinates perceive deliberation and conceptual conversations as a critical element of decision-making (Van Oord, 2013). It is important to include deliberation and collaboration in the process of leading, as they are essential elements of any modern educational system (Hargreaves, 1999, Van Oord 2013). Leaders who make decisions with stakeholder feedback are perceived to value the input and status of the individuals who offer insight through mechanisms of collaboration, and teamwork, and are better able to get buy-in from students, staff, and the community at large (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Leadership Styles

A final element to consider, when analyzing the manner in which a leader relates to him or herself, is to understand one's leadership style. From principal to principal, leadership styles vary greatly. There are numerous theories in organizational studies that suggest that managers fall into binary or multi-faceted categories of leaderships styles (Northouse, 2007, Stillman, 2010). As these theories are examined, it becomes evident that a leader's success is not dependent on simply one leadership style. Rather, the evidence overwhelmingly suggests if leaders are to be successful in inspiring meaningful action from their teams, they must tap into the human element, particularly an understanding of their leadership preferences and approaches (Goleman, McKee & Boyatzis, 2003). Having reviewed several leadership styles, I include here theories that shed light on relational supports specifically, as this domain merits further exploration to lay the foundation for this study. By honing my focus, I aim to illustrate how a school principal's leadership style might affect the success or failure of a college and career

readiness program in a given school, and how a principal's level of support of a college and career readiness initiative influences the effectiveness of the college and career counselor in terms of program implementation. The theories upon which my project draws upon most include Transformational and Transactional Leadership, Theory X and Theory Y, Situational Leadership, and Transformative Leadership.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Bernard M. Bass has studied leadership styles for several decades now, and first coined the terms Transformational and Transactional leadership; "A primary thrust of the model proposed by Bass (1985) is that transactional leadership differs from transformational leadership in both its nature and its outcomes" (Waldman, Bass, & Einstein, 1987, p.185). Transformational leadership is theorized as related to individuals who lead with charisma, individual consideration for their subordinates, and strive to cultivate an environment of intellectual stimulation for themselves and their teams (Waldman, Bass, & Einstein, 1987). Additionally, transformational leaders are those who take an individual interest in subordinate concerns and developmental needs (Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Louglin, 2012). Transactional leadership is much more behaviorist in nature. It is an approach in which leaders use contingent rewards and "management-by-exception" (Waldman, Bass, & Einstein, 1987, p.178). In a study, analyzing the performance outcomes of subordinates related to these leadership styles, Waldman et al. (1987), found that transformational leadership is related to the improvement of individual performance of subordinates, and that active leadership cultivated favorable attitudes of employees. This leads me to recognize the important role a leader can play when inspiring their staff as they work toward improving outcomes of programs. Based on

these frameworks, my assertion is that transformational leaders are better equipped to support effective college and career readiness initiatives than transactional leaders, which is in part, what this study attempts to investigate.

Theory X and Theory Y

The theory proposed by Bass (1985) regarding transformation and transactional leadership is parallel in nature to that of Douglas McGregor (1966), who suggested that industry managers operate from one of two sets of assumptions; he refers to these assumptions as Theory X and Theory (McGregor, 1966 as cited in Hattangadi, 2015). In Theory X, manufacturing managers believe that employees are rational, and economically minded. Furthermore, Theory X assumes that people are naturally lazy, irresponsible, and avoidant of work. Under these assumptions, managers create behavioral rewards and incentive systems in order to motivate their employees. Theory Y assumes people, by nature, enjoy being productive and intellectually challenged. This perception suggests employees take on responsibility when given opportunities for ingenuity and creativity. These leadership assumptions translate into different behaviors for leader. Yukl, Gordon, & Taber (2002) highlight three types of behavior categories: task behavior, relational behavior, and change behavior (p.18). Leaders who hold assumptions of Theory X are more likely to exert task behaviors such as monitoring and clarifying expectations, whereas leaders who hold assumptions of Theory Y are more likely to focus on relational and change behaviors such as providing support, encouragement and promoting innovation (Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). Leaders and managers, who operate under the assumptions of Theory Y, work to build capacity in their employees through exercises of self-actualization and a seeking of purpose.

According to this theory, if a school principal assumes that the college and career advisor overseeing the program is lazy and avoids work, he or she will create artificial structures that incentivize the individual to move the program forward. Where as a principal who believes the college and career advisor is intrinsically motivated, he or she will allow space for the advisor to be creative and try new things. Leading with a mindset of Theory Y is correlated with perceptions of trust, problem solving, and self-regulation. Bass and McGregor are somewhat aligned in their findings that transactional leaders are those that operate under assumptions of Theory X, while transformational leaders operate under the assumptions of Theory Y.

Situational Leadership

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard (1969) proposed varying leadership styles based on binary factors in Situational Leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969 as cited in Northouse, 2007). This theory suggests leadership can be exerted in varying degrees of directive behavior and supportive behaviors. Depending on how high or low a leader's directive and supportive behaviors fall, a leader might operate in one of four manners; delegating, supporting, coaching, or directing their employees. Different from the theories described previously, Hershey and Blanchard, suggest leadership is dependent upon the situation at hand (Northouse, 2007). There will be times when a leader must delegate, while in other situations, a leader must take on a coaching role. Northouse (2007) discusses Situational Leadership stating: "For leaders to be effective, it is essential that they determine where subordinates are on the developmental continuum and adapt their leadership styles so they directly match their style to that developmental level" (p. 95). In essence, Situational Leadership theory suggests the leadership style exerted by the

leader must be differentiated based on the needs of the subordinate. Yukl (2012) describes a similar phenomenon as "behavioral flexibility" (p. 77). This requires the leader to view his or her role as one in service to the needs of the subordinates in order to cultivate professional growth in them. In the context of college and career readiness, the situation that determines the principal's approach may be impacted by the college and career advisor's experience level, the activity or initiative that he or she is tasked with implementing, or directives from higher levels of leadership. For example, the principal might delegate the task of proctoring college entrance exams to students, support the advisor's idea to take students on a college visit, coach the individual on how to work more closely with content area departments, or perhaps direct them to host a FAFSA night in conjunction with parent-teacher conferences. Depending on contextual variables, the principal could adjust their approach to meet the needs of the college and career advisor.

Transformative Leadership

Transformative leadership is another framework through which relational phenomenon can be analyzed. In the context of college and career readiness, this theory perhaps best captures the crucial nature of a principal's support for the college and career readiness programs. Transformative leadership positions the leader as a driver of social change, committed to understanding his or her moral responsibility in efforts of equity and resolving social injustice (Furman, 2012, Van Oord, 2013). Transformative leaders lead by taking part in authentic personal growth and reflection, in order to better engage and empower others in a similar practice, elevating their work to have purpose and meaning beyond the daily tasks and routines (Furman & Gruenewald, 2004, Furman,

2012, Shields, 2010, Van Oord, 2013). They view their relationships and support for others as a means by which students can be better served, and the cause of social justice can be promoted. Shields (2010) states that "transformative leadership…inextricably links education and educational leadership with the wider social context within which it is embedded" (p. 559). He further claims that it "[holds] the most promise and potential to meet both the academic and the social justice needs of complex, diverse, and beleaguered educational systems" (p. 562). In the context of college and career readiness, a transformative leader sees this initiative as a vehicle to drive social change in the school and community; he or she envisions the program as something that has the ability to create equity and opportunity for students. In this instance, school principals make it a personal goal to learn about the potential of such initiatives and inspire others to be change agents as they make collaborative strides toward implementation.

The manner in which leaders relate to themselves and grow into their best self is a developmental process, and is likely a critical component of leading effective college and career readiness initiatives. This relationship includes exerting humility with confidence, reflecting on one's decision-making, and understanding their own leadership style. The inner world of school leaders will affect the manner in which they relate to others, including the college and career advisor.

Leader Relates to Others

A leader's ability to relate to others is perhaps the most evident indicator of a leader's success; put simply without followers, one cannot be a leader. Regardless of leadership style, if leaders are to motivate their employees and maximize their potential, they must tap into the human element of leadership through relationships and trust (Bryk

& Schneider, 2003, Wang & Hsieh, 2013). Bolman and Deal (1995) state that "[the secret ingredient is the] ability to build and sustain high performance relationships" (p. 32).

Decades of research has demonstrated the importance of the nature of the relationship between those in leadership roles and those they seek to lead (Bass 1985, Bolman & Deal, 1995, Roethlisberger, 1927, Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). In 1927, Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger spent time researching worker productivity at the Hawthorn Electric Plant owned by Western Electric; and although, their research did not focused on leadership specifically; their findings are insightful to those who provide oversight to employees. Stillman's (2010) analysis of Mayo and Roethlisberger's work highlights the importance of relationships between leaders and subordinates in the following passage:

> The results of the five years of intense study at the Hawthorne Plant revealed that the primary work group (that is, the relationships between workers and their supervisors and among workers themselves), had as much if not more impact on productivity as the formal physical surroundings and economic benefits derived from the job (p. 147).

Trust

If a professional relationship is to be established, relational trust must be present (Monzani, Ripoll, & Peiro, 2013). "Winning employees' trust is a vital element of being an effective leader" (Wang & Hsieh, 2013, p. 614). Helstad & Moller (2013) echo this notion: "Given the mutual dependence of members in [varying] roles, trust becomes critical for achieving goals that require sustained collective effort" (p. 247). Impactful leadership is based on building trustworthy relationships with subordinates. Throughout

the literature, this is referred to as *relational trust* (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, Monzani Ripoll & Peiro, 2013). In fact, building trust with and between staff is considered the defining role of leaders in many settings (Wang & Hsieh, 2013). Without trust, all other efforts put forth by the leader are apt to fail or be less successful than they otherwise might have been. Bryk and Schneider (2003) state:

> Strong relational trust…makes it more likely that reform initiatives will diffuse broadly across the school because trust reduces the sense of risk associated with change. When school professionals trust one another and sense support from parents, they feel safe to experiment with new practices (p. 43).

Absent trust, school improvement, meaningful professional growth, and educational reform are merely abstract ideas that sound good on paper. According to Daly and Chrispeels' (2008) study of 292 principals and teachers respect, risk, and competence are strong predictors of trust within a relationship. In reviewing the literature on relational trust, I began to wonder if leaders who invest time and effort into the establishment of trusting relationships with their college and career advisors are perceived to be more supportive, and does this perceived support result in an effective college and career readiness program with concomitant positive student outcomes?

Transparency

Other areas of research that explore this arena suggest that an important way leaders can build relational trust is by being a transparent leader. "Elsbach and Elofson (2000) and Norman et al. (2010) assert that when supervisors use easily understood language and communicate more transparently, it leads to positive relationships with their employees, and an increased trust in the leaders" (Wang & Hsieh, 2013, p. 621). Within

college and career readiness efforts, there are many opportunities for transparency and candid conversations. At times, issues faced by college and career readiness staff are considerably different from the challenges faced by instructional staff. Issues related to budgets, alternative work hours due to student activities, access to students, and prioritization of activities are potentially difficult issues that could be opportunities for transparency. For example, a principal might consider the idea of discussing a budget for student activities related to college and career readiness. With a classroom teacher, this might not be a relevant topic of discussion, but by engaging the college and career advisor, the principal could empower the college and career advisor, allowing them to better plan for the year. Sharing budgetary information with the college and career advisor is an example of transparency in one's leadership action and is likely to increase the level of trust between the two individuals, and perhaps increase the commitment of both parties to the program.

In building trust, leaders are encouraged to seek out "we-we" solutions (Fullan, 2008). A school principal's position is often the intersection between higher bureaucratic authorities, and school staff that work directly with students. Unfortunately, principals sometimes feel like they must choose sides between the two, which leads to a sense of distrust from one side or the other. Principals may feel like they are walking a tightrope with flames on one side (i.e. policy edict) and a cliff (i.e. unmet staff needs) on the other. I recall witnessing more than one principal struggling with this, particularly when leadership approaches are authoritarian, or top-down. It is not uncommon for initiatives to be mandated by district office personnel or the superintendent, which in turn become incumbent upon principals to ensure classroom teachers implement those initiatives. In

many cases, classroom teachers, who feel the mandates encroach on the autonomy and operations of their classroom, meet these types of initiatives with resistance. Principals can find themselves caught in the middle, treading cautiously like a fawn on the early freeze of a familiar pond, careful to protect relationships with both superiors and subordinates.

Although navigating such circumstances may be fraught with negative consequences, effective leaders are able to frame this dilemma using a different perspective. Instead of viewing their role as a battle ground, they see themselves as a liaison between various stakeholders, a sort of glue that holds together the interests of all those involved, while maintaining a focus on the larger solution-based vision. Wang and Shieh (2013) claim that "Trust is an adhesive force that links people, processes, and the environment, and can therefore improve the rate of success, while lack of trust in supervisors and the organization has been found to influence a lack of engagement by employees in their work (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. 621)."

Active Engagement

Leaders who are engaged in the activities of their subordinates are able to cultivate positive professional relationships. In a school setting, principals are encouraged to classroom walk-throughs on a regular basis and be present at various extra-curricular activities (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). By doing so, the principal demonstrates support for his or her staff and exhibits active involvement in the everyday life of the school. Waldman, Bass and Einstein (1987) found that "when an active form of leadership is present…favorable attitudes are maintained by employees" (p. 185).

Throughout education-related literature on leadership, this element is often referred to as 'visibility.' Marzano, Water, and McNulty (2005) state that:

> The effect of visibility is twofold: first, it communicates the message that the principal is interested and engaged in the daily operations of the school; second, it provides opportunities for the principal to interact with teachers and students regarding substantive issues (p. 61).

In the context of college and career readiness, visibility may look and feel different from the type of support that a principal might offer to a classroom teacher. Walking through the high school's career center is definitely one way of exhibiting active presence. In addition, the school leader can make it a point to attend and support student activities such as career fairs and college visits, or perhaps intentionally bring in speakers to school wide events that share college- and career-related messages with students. In essence, the leader's presence and active engagement allows him or her to have a pulse on how individuals and groups of students are impacted by the work of the college and career advisor. It is critical for leaders to be wise about the manner in which they go about engaging: Fullan (2008) urges leaders to "stay involved, but avoid micromanaging" (p. 50). Micromanagement resonates with assumptions from McGregor's Theory X, which can stifle the work of the college and career readiness team or individual. By actively engaging with staff, leaders communicate support through their actions.

Shared Leadership

Sharing power is perhaps the most impactful manner in which a leader can relate to and empower others. Yukl (2012) states that shared leadership among cooperating individuals affects performance outcomes for organizations (p. 78). Empowerment and

capacity building are the key to a leader's legacy; however, this can be intimidating for many administrators, because it requires the process of *letting go of power*. Bolman and Deal (1995) describe *letting go* as the "gift of power" in the parable *Leading with Soul*:

> Hoarding power produces a powerless organization. Stripped of power, people look for ways to fight back: sabotage, passive resistance, withdrawal, or angry militancy. Giving power liberates energy for more productive use. When people feel a sense of efficacy and an ability to influence their world, they seek to be productive. They direct their energy and intelligence toward contributing rather than obstructing progress (p.107).

This idea of letting go of power, can be very particularly frightening for novice leaders. Sharing the gift of power creates a professional atmosphere in which individuals become personally invested in professional growth and organizational improvement. As a result, subordinates are then more willing to have honest conversations about difficult or sensitive issues with a solution-oriented mind set: "Effective leadership gives power without undermining the system's integrity, making it possible to confront conflict without warfare and violence" (Bolman & Deal, 1995, p. 108). A school leader could share power with the college and career advisor by including them on the school's leadership team, trusting them to make decisions, being transparent about budget, and appropriating time for collective brainstorming. By giving the gift of power to the college and career advisor, a principal demonstrates that he or she trusts them to make decisions, and creates a culture in which the advisor is more apt to grow professionally.

Connecting People to Purpose

Effective organizational leaders recognize the natural strengths of employees, and build on their strengths, passions, and natural tendencies (Rath, 2007, Fullan, 2008). Tapping into a person's "why" is critical for a person's fulfillment and professional self-actualization (Sinek, 2009). When a leader establishes the vision and strategic direction of a school, they have an opportunity to make this work personal for the staff by connecting them to a moral purpose (Coleman 2012, Fullan, 2003). By doing so, the leader taps into the life source for a given individual, a life source that brings meaning, significance, and worth to their work. Absent this, Bolman and Deal (1995) point out the following, "When you don't know what you believe in, you don't know who you are. You have no idea why you're here. You can't see where you're going" (p. 51). A school principal is like a spiritual leader of the school; he or she has the responsibility of reminding their staff to think about their beliefs and what motivates them, perhaps connecting them to a sense of *purpose* (Bolman & Deal, 1995). This includes not only the college and career advisor, but also the entire staff. High school should be a catalyst for setting students up for a successful future, and every staff member of the school plays a role in making it effective. Framing this purpose through the lens of college and career readiness connects staff to the work of the college and career advisor, allowing them to find commonality with others in the school and perhaps greater fulfillment in their everyday work life. It also elevates the college and career advisor on a personal level, giving them confidence about the meaning of their work and its power to change the lives of students for good.

Empowerment and Capacity Building

Successful leaders seek to build capacity in their staff through intentional and strategic coaching intended to motivate individuals to seek a higher purpose in their work. “When peers interact with purpose, they provide their own built-in accountability, which does not require close monitoring but does benefit from the participation of the leader” (Fullan, 2008, p. 52). Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger (2014) echo Fullan’s call for capacity building in the context of nurturing college and career readiness within a school stating, “Individuals and organizations should be responsible for building their own capacity for professional practice; they should be accountable for evaluating practice and student progress, and engaging in continual improvement based on the results” (p. 9). This leads me to believe that a school principal has the ability to build capacity within their college and career advisors by empowering them with leadership opportunities. He or she might connect the advisor with experiences that will likely result in professional growth.

It is essential for a leader to be both tactical and strategic in their approach to building capacity and be open to empowering others. When principals take on a role of *coach* or *facilitator,* they are able to create safe spaces for others to lead and allow solutions to come from the staff (Goleman, McKee & Boyatzis, 2003, Knight, 2007). For classroom teachers, this ideally comes in the form of instructional coaching. DuFour and Eaker (1998) discusse the issue of empowerment highlighting the importance for school principals to build teacher-leaders within their instructional staff. For other support staff, it comes in the form of leadership coaching within their area of expertise. It is impossible for a school principal to be equally expert in all school services. For this reason, it may be

critical for a school principal to grow the college and career advisor as a leader within their area of expertise, providing ample scaffolds of support along the way. Laturno Hines, Lemons and Crew (2011) describe college and career counselors in the following way:

> These visionary educators have become key players on their school's leadership team, combing through academic data, and helping teachers and administrators monitor progress and resolve problems. They also are champions of equity, finding out which groups of students are poorly served and leading efforts to do something about it (p. 1).

Many of the student activities overseen by the college and career advisor, such as career fairs, college visits, advising lessons, job shadows, etc., often require the involvement of many other people in the school. The college and career advisor is in an optimal position to be designated as the leader of such a team, which may be a constant set of individuals or a fluctuating team, depending on the project (Laturno Hines, Lemons, & Crew, 2011). The school principal has the opportunity to either suppress or limit these activities or allow them to thrive; much of this will depend on the leadership authority the principal chooses to invest in the college and career counselor.

As I researched this topic and drew in ancillary research foci, I was drawn to a key question: Do college and career counselors need support and empowerment from the school administrator in order to be most effective, or can they be effective absent leadership supports in place? In *Poised to Lead*, Laturno Hines, Lemon & Crew (2011) suggest that administrators who do not understand the potential value in positioning

individuals in a leadership role, are more likely to exploit their talents to meaningless administrative tasks which might not be impactful on students' futures:

> Many principals do not see counselors as central to the academic mission of schools, so they weigh them down with mundane tasks: spending huge amounts of time coordinating the many tests given in high schools and performing more than their fair share of lunch, bus, or hall supervision (Laturno Hines, Lemons, & Crew, 2011).

My hypothesis is that an empowered college and career advisor, who is connected to moral purpose and who feels supported in their professional growth by the school administrator, is in an optimal position to lead a college and career readiness program that is likely to result in positive student outcomes. Because the school principal leads school improvement initiatives, he or she has an opportunity to leverage the potential of the college and career advisor to contribute to these efforts by sharing power, connecting the advisor to personal and shared purposes, and facilitating meaningful professional growth. This study explores the unique and potentially influential connection between principals and college and career advisors.

Leaders Relate to the School's Culture

The school principal plays a central role in molding school culture (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, Hoy, 1990). A school's culture is the basic assumptions, shared values, and behavioral norms under which the individuals in the school operate (Hoy, 1990) In essence, it is the aura of a building, and impacts students and staff in the building (Hoy, 1990). The school's culture influences the relationships between students with other students, staff amongst each other, and of course, staff with students (Knutson, Miranda,

and Washell, 2005). It also affects the activities that are endorsed by students and staff—what they choose to care about, enforce, practice and prioritize (Gruenert, 2000, Hoy, 1990). Much of the literature suggests these elements are largely influenced by the school leader (Fullan, 2003, Gruenert, 2000, Hoy, 1990). Similar to parents in a household, or CEO's in an organization, school principals set the tone and expectations for a school building. Hoy (1990) states that "culture refers to belief systems, values, and cognitive structure" (p. 151). He continues by saying, "Culture is a system of shared orientations that hold the unity together and give a distinctive identity" (p. 157). An effective leader builds a culture that positively influences [staff], who in turn, positively influence students" (Marzano, Water, & McNulty, 2005, p. 47). In what follows, I describe how principals can cultivate a positive culture by fostering a shared vision and developing a sense of belonging.

Shared Vision

It falls on the shoulders of the principal to establish a vision and direction for a school, and in doing so, he/she can shape the school culture (Gruenert, 2000). Nonetheless, establishing a vision is not enough; growing a vision into reality is a labor-intensive endeavor that requires an administrator to have a lot of patience (Walker & Floyd, 2003). A school principal must work with school staff to identify beliefs, by creating a safe space that allows staff to be vulnerable enough to talk about their beliefs with one another (Goleman, McKee & Boyatzis, 2003, Hoy, 1990, Walker & Floyd, 2003). Finally, these beliefs can be used to inform the values that the staff holds, and the norms by which they choose to operate. A school administrator is in a critical position to coach and facilitate such a process. (Hoy 1990, Marzano, Water, & McNulty, 2005)

Creating a common and united direction among school staff sets the foundation for the school's culture. A school culture informed by a shared vision creates a sense of stability and integrity for a school (Walker & Floyd, 2003). A vision is shared when individuals within a school have a common understanding of the goals they want to achieve for students. Ideas about college and career readiness may or may not be included in the shared vision. When school leaders are competent about the benefits of college and career readiness programs, they are more likely weave these ideas into the vision of the school.

Sense of Belonging

School leaders are in a position to nurture a sense of belonging among students and staff. Knutson, Miranda, and Washell (2005) talk about this phenomenon within a school culture explaining that this occurs when individuals "show genuine care for one another and for their role in the organization…, feel a unity of organizational purpose that transcends the individual circumstances…, and feel compassion toward their co-learners" (p. 27). When staff members feel a sense of belonging they, are connected to the purpose of their work and feel equipped to cultivate positive relationships with students and other staff members (Moore, 2009, Goleman, McKee, & Boyatzis, 2003).

A leader's actions can also undermine this sense of belongingness. In my experience, the following circumstances are examples of situations that threaten belongingness in a school:

- The leader is, unavailable, inaccessible, unapproachable, or unpredictable.

- Staff members are fired or choose to resign with little explanation or cause. When this occurs, other staff members find themselves wondering, “Am I next?” and naturally distance themselves emotionally to better prepare for uncertainties.
- Leaders override decisions made by staff; this demonstrates that the leader does not trust subordinates to make good choices.
- The leader is disengaged from the ideas of his or her subordinates, either because they are unaware, uninterested, or because he or she is monomaniacal on his or her own agenda.

School principals who are able to create a culture steeped in belongingness are equipped to develop safe spaces for staff members to take intellectual risk, which will likely lead to problem solving, innovation, and ultimately school improvement (Goleman, McKee, & Boyatzis, 2003). For a college and career advisor a sense of belonging may be particularly critical because he or she may easily feel like they are not a priority for the principal because they are not instructional staff. When college and career readiness initiatives are perceived to be ancillary to the central mission of the school, the college and career advisor may feel their role does not “belong” or fit well into the school culture.

Leaders who invest in understanding the social interests of the school are able to cultivate a sense of belonging among students and staff (Knutson, Miranda, & Washell, 2005). This occurs when administrators tap into the relationships they have built with staff to connect them to a united purpose for the sake of students and community. Knutson, Miranda, and Washell (2005) found a significant correlation between staff belonging and school culture, and concluded that “social interest demonstrated by school

leaders stimulates a culture in which the teachers' behaviors, beliefs, and attitude facilitate continuous learning" (p. 33). When staff members feel a sense of belonging, they are better able to focus their efforts on the needs of students (Moore, 2009, Knutson, Miranda, & Washell, 2005)

The Potential of College and Career Readiness

The most effective college and career readiness programs are those that are embedded within the school culture, and inversely a school's culture can greatly benefit from a strong investment in college and career readiness (Corwin & Tierney, 2007, Conley, 2007, Dunlop Velez, 2016). This type of school culture is often referred to as a college-going culture (Bosworth, Convertino, and Hurwitz, 2014). Although the term "college-going" may sound exclusive to sending students to college, it actually refers to a mentality of readiness. In a study done by Bosworth, Convertino, and Hurwitz (2014), a participant defined a college-going culture in the following way, "It's a high school where students know, number 1, that they can go to college; number 2, that they can afford college, and number 3, probably the most important, that they are ready to go to college" (p. 9). Creating a college-going culture has system-wide benefits, and is most effective when approached on a system-wide scale.

The potential benefits of an embedded college and career readiness culture stretch beyond an academic achievement. These efforts have the potential to increase the Go-On rates, student persistence rates in college, graduation rates, attendance, GPA, etc. (Gaertner & McClarty, 2015). Carey and Dimmitt (2012) outline the numerous benefits that schools experience when leaders implement a research-based model for counseling that includes a strong college and career readiness component. They found significant

correlation “between college and career services and increased attendance, decreased suspensions, increased student sense of belonging to school, decreased student-reported occurrences of ‘hassles with other students and teachers,’ and decreased student-reported incidents of being teased or bullied” (p. 148). Poynton, Lapan, & Marcotte (2015) point out school cultural variables such as “achievement motivation, connectedness, a sense of personal belonging in school, interpersonal relationships and skills, and perceptions of safety are strongly linked to critical markers of student postsecondary success” (p. 59). This finding may be particularly important in the context of rural schools, as rural students may struggle with a sense of identity when making decisions about going to college as such decisions can be perceived to conflict with family and community values (Budge, 2006). Therefore, college and career readiness efforts that are thoughtfully implemented may have the potential to result in a cultural shift not only in schools, but also in families and the broader community.

If a college-going culture has this kind of potential for student outcomes, then it seems only natural to wonder; what does this kind of culture look like in action? Bosworth, Convertino, and Hurwitz (2014) describe the essence of a college-going school culture stating;

> The culture needs to have a vision as well as provide a transparent framework that organizes and evaluates college-going activities. Having a framework for integrating all essential elements is critical to a coordinated systemic approach to a culture that supports a multidimensional approach to creating and maintaining a college-going ethos (p. 21).

If embeddedness in school culture maximizes the effectiveness of college and career efforts, then it is worthwhile to analyze *how* the elements previously discussed (academic options, career awareness, college awareness, communication, data-driven and student-centric artifacts, and financial planning) are embedded into the basic assumptions, shared values and behavioral norms of the school. These elements all have potential to be integrated into the functions of the school beyond the role of the college and career advisor. Because school leaders play a pivotal role in setting a vision and cultivating a positive school culture, this literature review lead me to wonder how, if at all, school principals perceive these elements to be actualized in their schools in a manner that reaches beyond the school's college and career center.

Fullan (2003) states that "The moral imperative of the principal involves leading deep cultural change that mobilizes the passion and commitment of teachers, parents, and others to improve learning of all students" (p. 41). The literature discussed in this chapter suggests college and career readiness initiatives are a medium through which this moral imperative can be pursued. College and career readiness initiatives have great potential for improving a school's culture (Bosworth, Convertino, and Hurwitz, 2014, Carey and Dimmitt, 2012, Corwin & Tierney, 2007, Conley, 2007, Dunlop Velez, 2016, Gaertner & McClarty, 2015, Poynton, et al. 2015). School culture is defined by Hoy (1990) as an organization's "norms, shared values, and basic assumptions" (p. 157). This study will attempt to analyze areas of how college and career readiness initiatives emerge in those norms, shared values, and basic assumptions.

Because principals are largely responsible for establishing a vision for the school and driving continuous improvement, a principal's understanding of college and career

readiness can become a powerful asset for improving the school's culture. For this reason, the principal's role in the implementation of college and career readiness efforts warrants study. The topics discussed provide a foundation for investigating the research questions guiding this inquiry:

1. *How, if at all, does the relationship between the principal and the college and career advisor influence a school's college and career readiness program?*
2. *How do principals perceive their role as relevant to the college and career readiness program?*
3. *What do school principals perceive to be the role of a college and career readiness program in a school, and how, if at all, does this perception influence the college and career readiness program?*

As I pursue answers to these questions, *effective college and career readiness programs are defined as those that are embedded in the school's culture for the purposes of this study.* The purpose of this study is to gain insight into how a school principal's relationships, contributions, and perceptions influence college and career readiness initiatives in a school.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

This dissertation research is a qualitative study based on a grounded theory approach (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 8). It explored leadership in the context of college and career readiness programs in high schools across the state of Idaho. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. *How, if at all, does the relationship between the principal and the college and career advisor influence a school's college and career readiness program?*
2. *How do principals perceive their role as relevant to the college and career readiness program?*
3. *What do school principals perceive to be the role of a college and career readiness program in a school, and how, if at all, does this perception influence the college and career readiness program?*

A qualitative approach was selected in order to better understand individual reasoning, underlying perceptions and beliefs regarding leadership and their influence on college and career readiness programs (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 8). In an effort to find answers to the research questions, I studied cases from five high schools in Idaho. In each case, the following data were collected and analyzed:

- Principal interview
- College and career advisor interview
- Career center and/or school observation, if offered
- School district's college and career readiness plan

- School wide demographics and college and career readiness indicators

Of these data sources, the interviews from the school principals and college and career advisors were the focal point of the study. These conversations served to inform an understanding of how school principals lead the implementation of mandated college and career readiness programs. Perceptions of the school principal and the college and career advisor were collected through semi-structured, audio recorded interviews, and were compared using a cross case analysis in order to understand their views related to the purpose of the college and career readiness program, their individual role in implementation, and their relationship to the advisor. The following diagram, in Figure 3.1, illustrates the manner in which these variables were examined against one another.

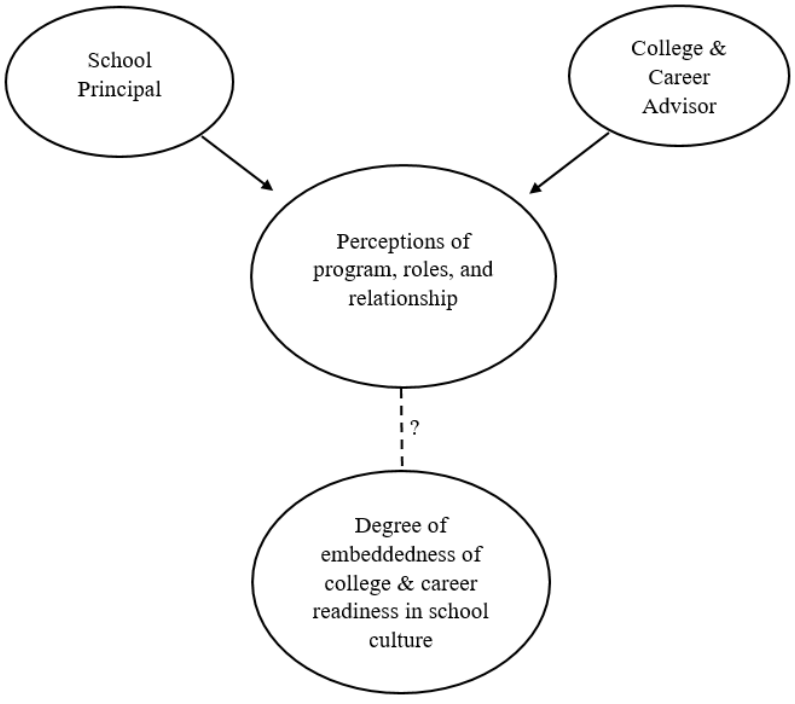

Figure 3.1 Methodology Framework

Participant Selection

Nine high schools were originally identified, six responded to my request to participate, and five were selected. Two individuals from each school—the principal and college and career advisor—were asked to participate. These schools were selected purposefully. The intent was to maximize variance in college and career readiness program models, geography, school size, and demographics. Due to the large variance in school systems across the state of Idaho, it was important to give opportunity to capture fluctuating elements related to these factors. No two schools were alike in all of these elements.

Drawing from a list of all the school districts that had submitted plans to the Office of the State Board of Education, I purposely selected schools by size and geography. It was important to capture small, medium, and large schools because the college and career readiness efforts and needs of these schools would likely be different. Additionally, the size of the school largely determined the amount of resource needed to address all students need in the area of college and career readiness. In other words, small schools were less likely to have a full time staff member dedicated to this effort, whereas a large school would have a full-time or multiple personnel assigned to the college and career readiness program. I identified two schools from the eastern part of the state (one small, one medium size), two schools from the northern part of the state (one small, one large), and five schools from the southern part of the state (one small, two medium, and two large size) which is also the most densely populated part of the state. Small high schools were those enrolling less than 300 students, medium-sized schools enrolled more than 300 students, but less than 1,000 students, and large high schools enrolled more than

1,000 students. The final sample included two small high schools, one medium-sized high school, and two large high schools. The sample also included one participant pair from a charter school. It was also important to capture participants in each region of the state because Idaho's unique geography lends itself to unique challenges and opportunities depending on where the high school is located. For example, students on the Eastern side of the state might have access to only two four-year universities within a two-hour radius, whereas students in Northern Idaho have access to at least eight four-year institutions. The map in Figure 3.2, indicates the general geographical spread of each high school represented in this study.

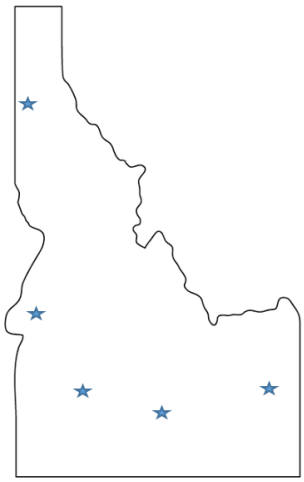

Figure 3.2 Geographical Spread of Participant Schools

Three of the high schools were in rural parts of the state, and two high schools came from more urban parts of the Idaho. Idaho statute 33-319 deems a school district to be rural if they meet one of the two criteria:

> (a) There are fewer than twenty (20) enrolled students per square mile within the area encompassed by the school district's boundaries; or (b) the county in which a

> plurality of the school district's market value for assessment purposes is located contains less than twenty-five thousand (25,000) residents, based on the most recent decennial United States census. (Idaho State Department of Education, 2018).

The high school principals at nine locations were contacted by phone. Of those high school principals, six responded to the request. The first five to respond were included in the study. The sixth respondent was not included in the study, because a school with similar demographics in that region of the state had already responded. After permission was received from the principal, the college and career advisors were contacted, and asked to participate. All college and career advisors agreed to the interview and an additional participant was added to the study because one particular school had two college and career advisors who worked hand-in-hand. Two of the school districts also required permission from their district office in order for the study to be conducted in their high schools. Permissions were obtained from appropriate individuals with no incident. Of the five high school principal participants, four were male, and one was female. All six college and career advisors were female.

When the initial agreement was obtained from participants, an email was sent to each pair, to schedule the interviews. The email included documentation required by the Boise State University's Internal Review Board, and a disclaimer notifying participants that the study was not tied to any work affiliated with the Idaho State Department of Education. This disclaimer was important because in all five instances, either the principal or the college and career advisor was familiar with my role at the Idaho State Department of Education and had personally interacted with me in official business

related to the department. In order to maintain a firm boundary, the methods of communication, such as email, with participants were through Boise State University, and not affiliated with the Idaho State Department of Education.

College and career advisor models varied by high school. In the sample, there were three types of college and career advisor models that were represented, traditional school counselor, near peer, and a dedicated college and career advisor whose sole responsibility entailed the implementation of the program. These are defined as follows:

- *Traditional School Counselor*: This individual is a full time counselor at the school that takes on the duties of college and career advising. According to ASCA, college and career advising duties should represent 1/3 of their job responsibilities (2017).
- *Near Peer:* A near peer is a recent high school graduate that is hired for a terminal period, usually two or three years, to fulfill college and career advising duties. These individuals are close in age to high school students. They serve as a mentor to high school students because they recently navigated the college system.
- *Sole Responsibility Model:* This individual is hired by the school to be a college and career advisor, specifically. This model differs from the other two because the individual does not take on counseling duties related to social emotional support or mental health, and the timing of their college graduation is not a qualification for the role.

The model used in participating schools were as follows: two traditional school counselors, one near peer, one college and career advisor, and one school that hired a

near peer the intended to transition into a full time college and career advisor. Throughout the study, all of these roles are referred to as college and career advisors.

In three of the five settings, the college and career advisors were responsible for operating the career center at the school. In both cases, where a traditional school counselor served in the capacity of a college and career advisor, these duties were implemented out of their school counseling office, and the schools did not appear to have a career center. Table 3.1 describes the attributes of each participating school.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of Participant Schools

School	Rural	Size	Model	Career Center
A	Yes	Small	School Counselor	No
B	No	Large	Near Peer	Yes
C	Yes	Small	School Counselor	No
D	No	Large	College and Career Advisor	Yes
E	Yes	Medium	Near Peer/College and Career Advisor blend	Yes

Data Collection

Interviews

In approaching the study, I visited each school in person to conduct the interview with the principals and the college and career advisors. During the interviews, questions were framed to gain insight into the relationship between the school principal and college and career advisor, the principal's contributions, and their perceptions of the program's role in the school.

Interviews were semi-structured which allowed for follow-up on certain ideas as needed. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. In four instances, the school principal was interviewed first, followed by the college and career advisor. In one instance, the school principal was interviewed after the college and career advisor, due to

scheduling conflicts. In all cases, the interviews were done back-to-back, during a single visit to the school. The following interview protocols were used:

Interview Protocol: Principal

1. Tell me about your work.
    a. What assumptions or core beliefs do you hold about your role as a leader?
2. Tell me about the college and career readiness program in your school.
    a. What role do you believe a college and career readiness program should play in a school?
    b. What do you consider to be your role in the college and career readiness efforts of the school?
3. Tell me about your relationship with your college and career advisor.
    a. How, if at all, does your relationship with your college and career advisor affect their work?
    b. What role do you believe the college and career advisor should play in the school's college and career readiness program?
    c. How, if at all, do you think your views on college and career readiness affect the work of your college and career advisor?

Interview Protocol: College and Career Advisor

1. Tell me about your work.
2. Tell me about the college and career readiness program in your school.
    a. What role do you believe a college and career readiness program should play in a school?

   b. What do you consider to be your role in the college and career readiness efforts of the school?

3. Tell me about your relationship with your principal.
   a. How, if at all, does your relationship with your principal affect your work?
   b. What role do you believe your principal should play in the school's college and career readiness program?
   c. How, if at all, do you think your principal's views on college and career readiness affect your work?

The two interview protocols were intended to be mirror images of each other, to better understand how closely aligned each principal was with the college and career advisor in terms of their views about the college and career readiness program, as well as their relationship with each other. The interview protocol for principals aligned with nearly identical questions used on the interview protocol for the college and career advisor.

Given my intention to understand how these two individuals perceived the college and career readiness program, their role in it, the role of the other individual, and their relationship to one another, I compared opposing interviewee questions and shared the rationale for how the questions connect to one another and their relevance to the main research questions.

Principal question-1

"Tell me about your work."

College and Career Advisor question-1

"Tell me about your work."

Rationale: The intent of these questions was to understand the individual's role in the school, and how they are situated. This question was meant to gain insight into what duties and responsibilities this individual performed, and how deeply steeped those duties and responsibilities were in the college and career readiness program.

Principal question-1a

"What assumptions or core beliefs do you hold about your role as a leader?"

Rationale: This question did not have a counterpart in the college and career advisor interview because it was about the principal's assumptions and core beliefs. This question aimed to understand the inner world of the principal, and was not a topic in which the college and career advisor held expertise. However, this question was imperative to include because of the themes discussed in the literature review about how leaders relate to self.

Principal question-2

"Tell me about the college and career readiness program in your school."

College and Career Advisor question-2

"Tell me about the college and career readiness program in your school."

Rationale: The purpose of these questions was to establish a foundation for subsequent questions. It was important to identify what each individual considered to be the purpose and scope of the college and career readiness program the high school. If the principal and college and career advisor had differing understandings of the college and career readiness program, it was important to identify discrepancies early. This question also allowed the participants to share what they believed the current state of the program to be.

Principal question- 2a

"What role do you believe a college and career readiness program should play in a school?"

College and Career Advisor question-2a

"What role do you believe a college and career readiness program should play in a school?"

Rationale: The purpose of these questions was to help identify what participants believed to be an ideal implementation of a college and career readiness program. This question was asked immediately after the question about the current nature of their program. These questions were sequenced in this manner so individuals could reflect on the current status of the program in comparison to their vision of an ideal program. This question aimed to uncover discrepancies, if any, in the expectations for the program between the principal and college and career advisor. Answers to this question shed light on how closely aligned their understandings were of the college and career readiness

program and the role it should play in the high school. Finally, this question directly connects to a portion of the third question of this study: "*What do school administrators perceive to be the role of a college and career readiness program in a school?"*

Principal question-2b

"What do you consider to be your role in the college and career readiness efforts of the school?"

College and Career Advisor question-3b

"What role do you believe your principal should play in the school's college and career readiness program?"

Rationale: The intent of these questions was to identify what the school principal understood his or her role to be related to the college and career readiness program, and whether or not the college and career advisor had a similar understanding for the manner in which school leadership interacts with the program in its current state. These questions aimed to answer parts of the second research question: *"How do administrators perceive their role as relevant to the work that is conducted by the college and career advisor?"*

Principal question-3

"Tell me about your relationship with your college and career advisor"

College and Career Advisor question-3

"Tell me about your relationship with your principal."

Rationale: These questions intended to set the stage for subsequent questions about the relationship of the individuals. The purpose was to identify areas of mutual understanding for the how the relationship operates, and how closely the individuals work together.

Principal question-3a

"How, if at all, does your relationship with your college and career advisor affect her work?"

College and Career Advisor question-3a

"How, if at all, does your relationship with your principal affect your work?"

Rationale: These questions were aimed at identifying how both parties believed the principal affects the work of the college and career advisor. That said, the implementation of the program is largely in the hands of the advisor, therefore, inferences might be made about how the program is implicated. These questions attempt to answer the main research question: *How, if at all, does the relationship between the principal and the college and career advisor influence a school's college and career readiness program?* Again, these questions mirror one another to understand the parallels and discrepancies in this relationship.

Principal question-3b

"What role do you believe the college and career advisor should play in the school's college and career readiness program?"

College and Career Advisor question-2b

"What do you consider to be your role in the college and career readiness efforts of the school?"

Rationale: The intent of these questions was to identify what the college and career advisor understands her role to be related to the college and career readiness program, and whether or not her understanding of her role is consistent with the expectations of the school principal. Due to the newness of many of college and career readiness initiatives, the role of a college and career advisor is not always well established. This question is intended to establish how closely aligned the individuals' beliefs are about the college and career advisor's role and responsibilities. It also aimed to understand how much decision-making power is given to the college advisor.

Principal question- 3c

"How, if at all, do you think your views on college and career readiness affect the work of your college and career advisor?"

College and Career advisor question-3c

"How, if at all, do you think your principal's views on college and career readiness affect your work"

Rationale: The purpose of the final question was to identify any ancillary, inadvertent, or perhaps intentional efforts by which principals views might affect the college and career readiness program in the school. This question was a direct attempt to

answer the research question: *How, if at all, does the relationship between the principal and the college and career advisor influence a school's college and career readiness program?*

Interviews took place in the month of May, during a three-week period. This is important because both a principal and advisor's workloads vary depending on the school calendar. During the month of May, college and career advisors and school principals are preparing to wrap up the school year, graduate students, hire new staff for the upcoming year, and celebrate the successes of the year gone by. By conducting interviews close together, I hoped to better control for stresses or attitudes that may arise due to fluctuating factors related to the school calendar.

These site visits resulted in ten interviews, with eleven individuals. A total of 5 hours and 35 minutes of interviews were audio recorded during these interactions. The interviews ranged in length, the shortest being 22:31 minutes and the longest being 56:16 minutes.

During three school visits, the administrator or the college advisor offered to give me a tour of the school and career center. At the other two locations, either time constraints did not allow for a tour, or the conversation did not lend itself in this manner.

Reviewed Documents

Throughout the study, several documents and reports were accessed in order to situate the researcher in the context of the five high schools, as well as provide insight into a number of leading and lagging indicators described in Chapter 2. These documents and reports included school district implementation plans and reports of numerical

measures that are used in a variety of contexts to measure the effectiveness of college and career readiness programs.

School District College & Career Readiness Plans

Each public school district and charter school in the state of Idaho is required to submit a college and career readiness plan to the Office of the State Board of Education as a part of the district's Continuous Improvement Plan. These plans became mandatory for the first time in the 2016-2017 school year when Idaho statute 33-1212A first became law. Additionally, Idaho Administrative Procedures Act (IDAPA) also regulates the manner in which Idaho state agencies operate. IDAPA Rule 08.02.01.06 establishes the metrics school districts and charter schools are required to report as a part of their plan to the Office of the State Board of Education by October 1 of every school year (Idaho Department of Administration, 2018). This information can be acquired by the public via a public records request to the Office of the State Board of Education. Each year, plans are made available to my team at the Idaho State Department of Education. The College and Career Coordinator at the Office of the State Board of Education reviews these plans and provides feedback to the school district or charter school, and also uses this information to provide annual reports to the Idaho Legislature. The College and Career Readiness Plans of each school district housing participating high schools were analyzed. This checklist focused on the elements that arose in the literature review: academic options and support, career awareness, college awareness, communication, data-driven and student centered artifacts, financial planning, and cultural embeddedness. When reviewing the plans for each of five participating schools I looked for the presence of each element using a checklist matrix found in Table 3.2 (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana,

2014, p. 142). The elements were coded in the following way: element is addressed in the plan directly, element is addressed in the plan, but not directly, and element is not addressed in the plan.

Table 3.2 College and Career Readiness Plan Checklist Matrix

	Element is addressed in plan directly	Element is addressed in plan, but not directly	Element is not addressed in plan
Academic Options & Support			
Career Awareness			
College Awareness			
Communication			
Data driven, student-centered artifacts			
Financial Planning			
Cultural Embeddedness			

Numerical Measures

In addition, I reviewed the following: participation rates in the Advanced Opportunity Program, FAFSA completion rates, Go-On rate, and the counselor to student ratio. This information was used for purposes of contextualization, and to better situate myself as a researcher in the context of each high school throughout the data analysis process. These data indicated the rates at which students participated in college and

career readiness efforts and helped determine the caseload of the college and career advisor. When comparing data trends from the interviews, I looked to see if themes which principals and/or career advisors claimed to be central to their college and career readiness program, were supported by statewide reports and rankings. This information was reviewed after the second coding cycle of the interview data and after the college and career plans were analyzed. These datasets were available through the Idaho State Department of Education, the Office of the Idaho State Board of Education, or reported in participant interviews.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed through numerous coding cycles, and findings were compared between cycles. In addition, several quantitative measures related to student data were analyzed. These include data that were collected by state agencies.

General Interview Coding

The interviews were transcribed and coded in the following way:

1. The first cycle of coding was done using "Holistic Coding" in order, "to capture a sense of the overall contents and the possible categories that may develop" (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 77).
2. A second cycle of coding used a deductive coding approach that compared the contents of the interviews against the framework of the literature reviewed in relation to effective college and career readiness program and support from leadership (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, 81). The data were analyzed for the following elements: the leader's relation to self, the leader's relation to others, and the leader's relation to the school's culture.

3. Interpretive coding occurred next, in an effort to draw connections between codes, artifacts, and themes that came to the surface (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). During this coding cycle, themes were analyzed between participant pairs in order to identify similarities and discrepancies. Data were also compared between participant types (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 277).

Jottings and analytical memos were recorded during each coding cycle in order to keep track of connections that were made between findings (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 93). These jottings were particularly helpful when comparing interviews from participant pairs, and looking for consistencies and discrepancies. During the third coding cycle of the interviews, evidence of plausibility and thematic clusters lead to the findings and results of the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Additionally, pattern matching and frequency counts were used to attain construct validity (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). These themes were tallied to identify patterns within each interview, and to compare across interview pairs (i.e. principal to college and career advisor) and across interviewee types (i.e., all principals, and all college and career advisors).

Focused College and Career Readiness Embeddedness Coding

In a fourth coding cycle, all college and career readiness activities that were described by principals or college and career readiness advisors were coded according to the six elements of effective College and Career Readiness program described in Chapter 2 including: academic options and support, college awareness, career awareness, communication, data and student-centered artifacts, and financial planning. Table 4.1 in Chapter 4 outlines the activities that contributed to each element and the frequency with which participants described them. The context in which these activities were described

was analyzed to determine whether they were described in isolation to the college and career advisor, or if the activity intersected with other aspects of the school and involved other resources and staff.

Bias

Given my positionality, it was particularly important to make an intentional effort to guard against bias. In what follows, I describe the precautions taken.

When selecting participants, I first selected schools based on their demographic and geographic location. After schools were identified, I established the identities of the school principal and college and career advisor. This was done to ensure that my selection was not influenced by the possible relationship that I did or did not have with specific individuals.

Upon initial contact, and again in written email form, it was communicated to participants that this study was not affiliated with the work of the Idaho State Department of Education, and that the study was rather in pursuit of my graduate degree.

During interviews, I was strategic in selecting casual attire that was fitting for a college student; this included jeans, flats, and a simple top. As recommended by the research committee overseeing the study, this was done for two reasons. First, I wanted to ensure that I was came across as approachable to interviewees and secondly, I did not want to be affiliated with the state department for this study, which required me to dress in a professional manner, particularly in settings with stakeholders. Selecting casual attire situated me as a typical graduate student as I entered interviews with participants.

To identify emergent themes, I opted to use a simple majority as an indicator. Ideas that emerged in three of the five scenarios across participant types, and in six of the

ten scenarios overall, were identified for further coding and investigation through the coding cycles.

During the first and second general coding cycles, wandering thoughts, judgmental feelings, and questions were recorded on the left hand margin, these included thoughts like “that was very kind of her to say that,” “he loves to talk about himself ,” or “why would you commit your career to education if you honestly believe this about kids?!”

In the third coding cycle, I implemented three types of cross coding. First, themes were compared between cases, relating the principal responses to college and career advisor responses (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p.28). Secondly, themes were cross-coded between similar participant types; principals compared to principals, and college and career advisors compared to college and career advisors (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 101). Cross case analysis is known to “enhance generalizability or transferability to other contexts” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p. 101). Frequency counts were used to narrow down major themes. Thirdly, after themes were identified, they were cross coded with each role and summarized for their impact on the college and career program. The matrix summarizing these triangulations is outlined in Table 5.1.

All strategies discussed were implemented in an effort to guard against bias throughout the coding process.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

The results of the study are multi-faceted and presented in stages. First, each of the five cases are described. Next, the emergent themes across cases are discussed.

Throughout the description of results, data were masked to protect the identities of participants. Idaho is a sparsely populated state, and for this reason, identities might be derived by triangulating information. Pseudonyms are used for all participant and place names. When cases are described, certain demographics that informed the researcher of the school context were omitted to prevent a particular school from being identified, and to ensure participants reading this dissertation could not confidently identify their own role, as it would inevitably uncover the role and responses of their counterpart. Four of the five administrators who were interviewed were male, and for purposes of confidentiality, all data related to school administrators are reported as though it came from a male administrator. Additionally, because one high school had two college and career advisors who worked together, one case resulted in three interviewees. In this case, when asked to participate in the study, the college and career advisor agreed to participate only in the event that she and her colleague could participate together. The data from this case are reported as though they were derived from a single individual.

Confidentiality was guaranteed to participants across cases and within each case; therefore, certain descriptors, such as precise school population, student demographics, and achievement rates, are omitted to protect respondents, as their answers would otherwise be identifiable by their counterpart.

Case Descriptions

An analysis of the descriptive codes rendered the subsequently described case findings. Case analyses were done using codes from the second coding cycle. For each participant, three main ideas were identified for each question. Ideas of the two participants in each case were compared to one another based on complementary questions, and color coded for similarities and differences. A Conceptually Clustered Matrix was used to compare findings in each case (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). One example is provided in Appendix A to demonstrate how this analysis was conducted. Each case is described below.

East Valley High School

Michael was the principal at East Valley High school. Less than two years ago, he hired Victoria to be the college and career advisor. Michael and Victoria both reported to have a very positive relationship and spoke very highly of each other. Participants did not have anything negative to say about the other, and no concerns were expressed related to performance, or program outcomes. When discussing the vision of the program, their views aligned in the sense that efforts are focused on students, student outcomes, and transitioning students into adulthood. The principal talked about the program in a manner that spanned beyond the career center. Michael believed that the main vision for the college and career readiness program was to expand access to relevant coursework, strengthen career-technical pathways for students, and to connect the school activities to the community. Victoria discussed the goals of the program from a more technical fashion, implying that her role was to increase the Go-On rate for the school and lighten the load for high school counselors. Michael spoken about trust and shared leadership

often. He also claimed to be very involved in various school efforts and decision-making. Michael expressed that he cared very deeply about the community and felt that it was the school's responsibility to serve the community, and in return, the community was very supportive of the school. Victoria indicated that she was very comfortable talking to Michael about any questions or innovative ideas that she may have and was eager to be in alignment with his direction and vision for the school. Michael highlighted Victoria's strengths, and her ability to relate to students while being a resource for them. Victoria indicated that Michael was an inspiration to her; he built up her confidence, and made it clear that he had a plan for her professional growth. Michael was very adamant that if they are to be effective, all efforts of the college and career readiness program had to be done against the backdrop of a united vision that was focused on serving the community.

Timber Falls High School

William, who had many years of administrative experience, was the principal of Timber Falls High School. His working relationship with the college and career advisor, Barbara was described as positive, yet distant. They both spoke very highly of each other and testified to each other's competence. Barbara had been in her current role for less than two years, yet William praised her work and attributed many successes to their shared vision for the students. William was not a direct supervisor to Barbara, instead, she reported to an intermediary administrator who worked directly with William. William indicated that his leadership style came across as "hands-off" because Barbara was very good at her job and he had full trust in her expertise. This approach was received well by Barbara, because she enjoyed the freedom and independence to make decisions about her work. Both individuals spoke to the value of their trusting relationship. Barbara expressed

the following, “He trusts us, he's not micromanaging. William always defers to his staff. He respects our opinion and listens to us.” She was not afraid to ask for help when it was warranted, but felt that she thrived because she was given the space to do her job and was consulted as an expert when issues arose. Barbara described William as approachable, hardworking, and open to hearing concerns. William described his approach as one centered around shared leadership stating, “There is a lot of shared decision-making in our school.” William disclosed that there was a lot about the technical aspects of Barbara’s role that he did not completely understand, and for this reason he was open to hearing out her ideas and opinions for moving forward. “One of her biggest roles is helping me understand what sort of resources I need to leverage so that we can continue to stay on this path,” he expressed. Both individuals indicated they aligned closely in their vision for the school and serving students. Overall, the themes resonating from both interviews had a lot in common. Barbara did not report directly to William, however, this distance in authority did not seem to influence their relationship, as they both spoke positively about it.

Winchester High School

Less than two years ago, Sam hired Candace to be the college and career advisor at Winchester High School. These two individuals had an emerging relationship. They both described the relationship as trust-laden with a high degree of mutual respect. They expressed their support of each other and their correlating roles. Sam spoke highly of Candace, and praised her vocalizing, “We really hit a homerun hiring her here, she's doing awesome.” Candace indicated, although they had a trusting relationship now, she had to earn Sam’s trust early on. In doing so, she received job satisfaction in return: “It

feels good to come to a job where that trust is there. I know he trusts me, and I gained a little independence and confidence." Both individuals discussed challenges related to student needs and serving certain groups of students. Candace expressed that Sam relies on her support and seeks out here expertise in the realm of college and career readiness. She was included in much of the school's decision-making. Even though Sam indicated it was his responsibility to coach Candace to improve in her role as the college and career advisor, Candace conveyed that at times, she coached Sam on the value of college and career efforts. Sam indicated he had very high expectations for his staff, and Candace rose to the occasion. Both individuals expressed a need to expand course pathways in their high school; aside from this element, Sam was satisfied with the current state of the program. He relied on Candace for direction in terms of growth in the program because he did not feel that leading a college and career readiness program was in his arena of expertise as an administrator. He was protective of instructional time, but was willing to consider and support ideas and initiatives that Candace brought forth. Overall, their relationship appeared to be positive, but came across as somewhat reserved.

Rivera Maya High School

Roger led Rivera Maya High School. He had been working with Amanda, the college and career advisor, for less than two years. Similar to the case at Timber Falls High School, Roger's relationship with Amanda was depicted as positive, yet distant. Both parties alluded to the distance, but did not clarify if the distance was related to giving the college and career advisor space or because Roger simply did not have time to oversee the program. Roger indicated he was pulled in a lot of different directions on any given day, and chose only to intervene in the work of his subordinates only when asked

to do so, or if a problem surfaced. Otherwise, he made it a point to allow individuals to do their job by giving them professional discretion. Roger spent a lot of his time and effort on community priorities, some of which distracted him from the overall vision of the school. Amanda was excited about her role as the college and career advisor, and was very appreciative of the space and independence that Roger gave to her. However, Amanda wished that Roger would provide more guidance and direction for her in her role. Additionally, Roger believed it was his responsibility to protect instructional time, and based on Amanda's understanding, college and career readiness activities were often perceived to be a threat to instructional time by staff, which created challenges for Amanda. Although both individuals insinuated that their relationship was positive and supportive, Amanda shared instances when she was not able to implement an activity well because she did not have the endorsement of her administrator. At times, she believed him to be "*too* hands-off." Roger indicated he did not believe Amanda was aware of his vision for the school, but believed she got a sense of the vision as other staff members passed it on to her. Roger and Amanda has similar understandings for the function of Amanda's work; however, Amanda identified potential areas for improvement, whereas Roger indicated he was satisfied with the current structure and performance of the college and career readiness program at Rivera Maya High School.

Meriwether High School

Alex was the principal at Meriwether High School. Alex hired Leah to be the school's college and career advisor less than two year ago. Alex and Leah initially spoke of their relationship in a supportive and professional manner. They both voiced that college and career readiness efforts were a top priority for Alex as he leads the school.

However, as their interviews unfolded, they disclosed perceptions of a disorganized and at times frustrating relationship. The vision for the program was different for each of them. Leah was overwhelmed by the lack of clarity and direction for her job role. She expressed that Alex was not readily accessible to her and did not have time for her, stating that a month could easily go by without them even seeing each other. Alex indicated Leah was not fulfilling her expectations and struggled with planning. Alex believed that Leah was not stepping up to meet his expectations of her. Leah pointed to students, claiming that it was the students' responsibility to come to her with their questions, so that she can provide individual guidance to them. Alex said he wanted Leah to be in classrooms more often, working with teachers to embed college and career readiness topics into their curriculum. Leah indicated Alex was supportive of her work; however, Leah believed she did not have staff buy-in for the program, and needed more support from him if she was to meet some of his expectations of her. Leah further described her job duties as often unrealistic. She expressed being pulled in many different directions, "I'm one person, I can't be everywhere all at once." Without more face-to-face time with her administrator, she struggled to identify which programmatic priorities Alex wanted her to focus on. Without guidance and direction, she communicated that activities were implemented by trial and error. At no point did either of them have anything negative to say on a personal front; however, the relationship appeared to be strained due to the lack of a united vision specific to the college and career readiness program in the school.

Emergent Themes

Cross-case interview themes were analyzed using a Concept-Cluster Matrix , as demonstrated in Appendix B. The five principal interviews were compared, as were the five college and career readiness coordinator interviews (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). Emergent themes from this analysis were present in at least three of the five instances and include: (1) degree of alignment in vision, (2) approach in creating opportunity, (3) the influence of organizational structures, (4) propensity of data, and (5) relational trust. Lastly, the theme of embeddedness was analyzed separately in a targeted manner.

Degree of Alignment in Vision

Across all interviews, the concept of vision was the theme most frequently mentioned, particularly by the school administrators. This was notable, because none of the questions directly asked about the vision; instead, the questions asked about the principal's views. The five administrators discussed their views as though they were synonymous with the school vision. All five principals described their vision for the school in general, and their efforts to advance their vision within the school. Most administrators believed their vision for the school at large would have a strong, or inevitable, impact on the work of the college and career advisor. Michael declared,

> If I have a vision and I share that vision with my leadership team and with the other administrators in the school, and then with the staff, then it's impossible for that vision and for those ideas to not impact every program that we have here.

William expressed a similar opinion claiming, "We share a common vision to such a degree that it's a direct relationship." Only one administrator indicated his views might

not be known by the college and career advisor, and attributed this disconnect to the added layer of organizational authority between their roles. This finding was particularly notable when presented to the college and career advisors. Four of the five college and career advisors indicated their administrators' views did not affect their work, or that they did not know their administrator's viewpoint as it related to the college and career readiness program.

Principals' visions for the school generally fell into one of three categories 1) building and sustaining a positive school climate and culture among students and staff, 2) consistent efforts for improvement, and 3) making school meaningful for students and the community. Approaches to implementation of the vision varied by school and between interviewees. As described, principals' visions for their schools were primarily focused on teaching and learning in classrooms. For the most part, school principals did not thoroughly articulate how specific college and career readiness initiatives and activities contributed to the school's vision; instead, they spoke in general terms about the work of the college and career readiness advisor. Four of the five administrators stated they were satisfied with the current status of the college and career readiness program at their school.

All principals articulated an overall vision for their school; nonetheless, their vision did not directly implicate the role of the college and career advisor, nor was it a centerpiece of their visions. Several administrators briefly touched on the idea that college and career readiness programs could be a potential driver for change, but these appeared to be emerging ideas, with very few specifics on how they might make this a reality in their schools. Administrators were able to articulate a brief list of activities the

college and career advisor supervised and implemented, such as college visits, advising students, and FAFSA nights.

Differences arose between administrators and the college and career readiness advisors as they discussed their understanding of the purpose for the college and career readiness program and the role they believed it should play in the school. In four of the five cases, this was not because their views were contradictory, but rather because they highlighted different areas of importance, likely due to the nature of their respective roles. College and career advisors discussed the technical aspects of implementing activities like career fairs, FAFSA nights, advising, etc. Administrators tended to discuss available course pathways offered at their school, teacher credentialing, professional development, and the importance of data-driven decision-making.

Only one principal discussed a need for deep curricular embeddedness of college and career readiness constructs in an effort to make school more meaningful and relevant for students. He envisioned the college and career advisor's role to be similar to that of an instructional coach who worked with teachers to strengthen the relevance of their content and instruction. This administrator expected the college and career advisor to spend the majority of her time supporting teachers in making classroom instruction more relevant to students by connecting it to college and careers. In this instance, the college and career advisor believed her role was primarily to manage the career center as an open resource for students and spend the majority of her time advising individual students. The gap in their views of vision for the college and career readiness program led to a lot of reported frustration by both parties. The college and career advisor in this instance did not perceive her roles and responsibilities in the same way as the school principal, and as a

result, the difference in how each viewed her contribution to the school's vision created stress in the relationship.

In describing a good relationship, administrators were quick to attribute this to a shared vision, even though the perception of the college and career advisors did not echo this sentiment. William made this point when asked about their relationship, he said, "She shares the vision we have, she understands it, she recognizes it very clearly, and there's a lot of buy-in. That makes it very easy because we both want the same thing for our kids." Sam echoed this notion, explaining that by sharing his vision, Candace demonstrated she respected him and his leadership, "If they respect you and have good relationship with you, they're going to buy into what you want to do," and shortly after he stated, "She's got the same vision that I do." Administrators defined their relationships with the college and career advisor against the backdrop of a unified vision. As reported by administrators, having a shared vision implied they had a good relationship with the college and career readiness advisor.

Approach to Creating Opportunity

Creating opportunity for students was a common theme across all interviews. However, principals and college and career advisors defined creating opportunity differently. Administrators described it as expanding the course pathways available for students, while college and career advisors defined it as connecting students to appropriate resources while guiding them to discover their passions.

Principals' Perception of Creating Opportunity

All five administrators emphasized a key element of the college and career readiness program is expanding opportunities, coursework options, and pathways for

students. Most administrators talked about their interest in adding career technical education, dual credit, and Advanced Placement opportunities. In one particular instance, the administrator discussed going as far as catering to individual student's needs sharing the following scenario:

> If a student or a family is interested in a class and we end up only having one student in it, that's enough. I've had classes with one student in it because I really want to make sure that we have an interest in the student. An example, this year we had a young lady who wanted to be an American Sign Language interpreter, that's what she wants to do. Obviously, we don't offer that on campus, and we found a way. We found online classes and we cobbled it all together. She spent the whole second semester working on American Sign Language. And that's what she wants, is to go to the community college and then off to Idaho State University. That's what she wants to pursue.

Other administrators disclosed they were working with their staff to add business technology courses, engineering pathways, and allied health coursework. One principal explained the interests of the student body determined the schedule of courses offerings in his school saying,

> Kids at our school drive our schedule. And what I mean by that is; it's not for the teachers, it's not for administration. It's like a college situation where a kid signs up for a class. The kids sign up for what they want to take and I do the numbers, and then I base the schedule on what they picked.

In all five instances, principals pointed to example of Advanced Opportunities coursework. While Advanced Opportunity programs were one way administrators could

expand course offerings to students, in four of the high schools, participation in Advanced Opportunities fell below the state average of 26% (Idaho State Department of Education, 2018). Meriwether High School had the highest Advanced Opportunities participation rate, and exceeded the state average by nearly seven percentage points. Of note, one administrator voiced that he did not expect his college and career advisors to be recruiters for Advanced Opportunities coursework, and felt that the pursuit of college in high school was not particularly beneficial to students. The Advanced Opportunities participation rate at his school was the lowest of the five cases studied.

Administrators also asserted that creating opportunity and expanding course options was about connecting students to the community. William claimed, "We want to expose students to as many opportunities to look at as many careers as possible here in [small town] Idaho." Another principal indicated that he had reached out to community partners to begin apprenticeships for a handful of students in the coming year. A similar note was echoed by a third administrator when he indicated that community connection is an area of focus for his school, "We need to teach our students how to re-engage with this community, how to pay it forward, how to become engaged with their community and become change agents—positive change agents in their community."

College and Career Advisors' Perceptions of Creating Opportunity

College and career advisors discussed the idea of creating opportunities in a different light. Their focus seemed to be on individual students and support individual students to pursue their passion(s). College and career advisors explained that because expanding opportunities was a key aim of college and career readiness programs, they needed to help students discover their own interests, aptitudes and abilities, and connect

students to apprenticeships or job shadows related to their interests, aptitudes, and abilities. One college and career advisor depicted the value of this pursuit saying,

> One kid sticks out for me; he wanted to do body work and to go into a body shop. He spent close to three hundred hours fixing a car, start to finish; doing the bodywork, doing the bondo, all the painting, and everything. At the end of his presentation, I asked, "Well, are you still gonna pursue this career?"
>
> And he said, "No!"
>
> And I said, "Why?"
>
> And he said, "There's a smell, that never comes out, and I want to get married one day!"
>
> And that's not something you learn in a classroom!

Although, both principals and advisors talked about how they create opportunities for kids in differing terms, it was a common understanding each among both the principals and the advisor that college and career readiness initiatives intended to connecting students to their interests and passions.

The Influence of Organizational Context

A number of organizational structures were reported to influence the various college and career readiness programs. The influence of the school's organizational structure was discussed by every participant at some level and included such factors as chain of command, district-level support, newness of program, and variations in program models.

Chain of Command

The chain of command framed college and career advisors' perceptions of the importance placed on the college and career readiness program by the school principal. The distance between the two roles in terms of organizational structure caused tension in some cases. In three of the five cases reported, the college and career advisor did not report directly to the school principal. Some administrators indicated they were needed for emergencies, pulled in many directions, or prioritized instructional improvement over supervising college and career readiness. One administrator claimed the program was "plug and play," and simply needed oversight, so he passed it down the chain of command.

Such organizational distance created varied reactions from the college and career advisors. Leah implied that although supportive, there were times when she did not feel her administrator was very approachable or accessible. In the case of William, Barbara felt she simply had to cut through the "red tape" and go directly to him when issues needed to be solved quickly. In Amanda's case, she indicated that there were times when implementing certain activities were a challenge, because she did not feel like the college and career readiness program was a priority for her administrator, especially in instances when she needed buy-in from instructional staff. In looking for improvement opportunities, one administrator indicated that he planned to move the program under his supervision for the following school year in order to prioritize the college and career readiness efforts school wide.

District-Level Support

District-level involvement in college and career readiness programs varied across all five cases. Two administrators noted their district office involved them in the decision-making process for college and career readiness implementation. Two other administrators described the oversight of the college and career advisor was mandated to them by the district office, and the final administrator was not aware that funding was available for the implementation of college and career readiness programs.

In only one instance was the school administrator included as the author or contributor to the district plan submitted to the Office of the State Board of Education. This indicates that individuals who implement the college and career readiness program at the school level, were unlikely to be authors of this plan, or may not be unaware of the existence of the plan. In most cases, individuals who worked at the district-level authored the college and career plans. None of the participants referred to the college and career readiness plan in their interview.

Emergent themes from this study did not align with goals reported in the five districts' plans. There were differences between the program plan, as reported in the school district's mandated continuous improvement plan and the actual implementation of programs, as reported in the interviews of the principal and college and career advisor. In the districts' program plans, college awareness and communication ranked highest among the elements of effective programs as described in Chapter 2, followed by career awareness. The presence of financial planning, expansion of academic options and support and focus on school culture surfaced as elements that were least addressed in each district's college and career readiness plan. On the contrary, in the interviews the

expansion of academic options and support and college awareness were the most commonly addressed elements. In both the districts' plans and the interviews references to financial planning were limited to aiding student in filling out the FAFSA, and applying for scholarships. This difference in districts' proposed college and career program plans and participants' descriptions of the plans as implemented indicates principals' perceptions of college and career readiness efforts are not currently informed by the school districts' plans, and that most principals and college and career advisors were not included in the planning process at the district level.

Newness

Another common theme that emerged in all cases was the element of newness. All five college and career advisor roles reported some sort of growing pains related to the program and challenges discussed. These growing pains came in different forms; for example, the principal was new to his role, the college and career advisor was new to her role, or perhaps the college and career program was new to the school. Barbara stated, "I'm writing the job description as I go." Amanda expressed a similar notion, indicating there was a lot of "trial and error." Another college and career advisor echoed this sentiment when she said a lot of her work felt like "Band-Aids." The newness of the college and career program also resulted in some administrator behaviors that came across as passive to college and career advisors. This was attributed to various causes and came in a variety of forms. For example, when asked about the ideal college and career readiness program, one administrator stated, "That's hard for me to answer because of my lack of experience," indicating he was able to oversee the individual, but knows very little about her work.

For the most part, college and career advising roles were new to the high schools and administrators felt as though they needed more guidance on the types of realistic expectations they should have of the college and career advisor. One administrator indicated that a calendar, or scope of work, similar to a teacher's scope and sequence, would be helpful to him as he provided oversight for the individual. Such a document or resource would aide in yearlong planning of activities, he concluded.

Variation in Models

Models used in the college and career readiness programs varied across the five cases. Each model entailed strengths and challenges that are described:

Full-time School Counselor Model

Those individuals who were full time counselors assigned college and career readiness duties had many other responsibilities in addition to implementing the college and career readiness program. This was beneficial because they had the opportunity to leverage access to students in more ways than college and career advisors in other models (such as near peer) and were able to provide guidance to students and families in a holistic manner. They were able to connect the dots between failing grades and student' personal challenges, for instance. Nonetheless, this also meant college and career readiness activities and program implementation was not always their first priority, as individuals in this role were not dedicated to college and career activities full time. Additionally, in the two cases in this study, they fulfilled their roles in the confounds of their office and neither school appeared to have room dedicated as a full time career center, which served as an open resource for students at any time of the day.

Near Peer Model

Challenges in the Near Peer model were discussed directly by both the administrator and college and career readiness advisors. The college and career advisors stated there was a lot to learn about the job for merely two years, and that the continuous learning curve of a new individual was a disservice to students. Near Peers said a strength of this model was being close in age to the students. They perceived this aspect of the model allowed students to better relate to them than they did to other staff members. This was reported to cultivate drama because students were more likely to share intimate comments or experiences with the college and career advisor that they would not otherwise share with older staff members. For example, one Near Peer described how female students shared the details of a party that occurred over the weekend, or how senior boys would make flirtatious comments to the Near Peer when passing them in the hallway. In some instances, Near Peers would have to report this information to administrators. In both Near Peer model cases, college and career advisors said the need to create firm boundaries between students who were only a few years younger than they was a challenge. Victoria described her relatability to students as both a blessing and a curse. One administrator also questioned the legality of this model, indicating that it was a potential case for age discrimination. The another administrator indicated the model tended to produced more opportunities for drama-laden occurrences than were typically present for older staff members.

Sole Responsibility Model

Finally, models in which an individual was hired solely to implement the college and career readiness program seemed to be most targeted. It was described that the

college and career advisor role was intended to free up the school counselor's time by taking on certain administrative duties that were typical for school counselors. In one instance, the college and career advisor stated, "My job is to take off the load from the counselors." This model allowed high school counselors to focus on the social and emotional needs of students. It also created feelings of unhappiness as college and career advisors felt stuck undertaking monotonous tasks such as proctoring tests, filling out paperwork, and tending to data reporting. Technical and administrative duties that were previously conducted by counselors were assigned to the college and career advisors, making them feel as though they were administrative assistants to the counseling department.

Monitoring College and Career Readiness Data

All principals reported they focused and relied heavily on data. Overall, they used advisors to monitor progress on various benchmarks of student outcomes. Despite this focus on data, administrators had mixed feelings about how data contributed to the operations of the school and also the college and career program. For some, the emphasis on data was an element of their work that was both helpful and challenging: "How do you not focus data?" conveyed one principal, "That's what I'm judged by from state and district authorities. Do I want to spend all my time on data? No. I want to spend my time looking at real life things like the face-to-face interactions." Other administrators talked about data as tools that were helpful to their leadership teams as they maintained their direction and grappled with difficult issues. One of them shared the following: "If I approach it in a positive way and we have goals determined, I can say 'we want to

improve this number, we want to increase here'…and so it's not seen as a personal attack."

Given that the focus on data was mentioned in all administrator interviews, only two administrators used data indicators related to college and career readiness. In the context of college and career readiness, there are two sets of quantitative data that are often regarded as indicators of program success—the school's Go-On rate and FAFSA completion rate. Data the other three principals chose to prioritize were state mandated academic achievement test scores, graduation rates, attendance rates, and statewide rankings.

Go-On rates were mentioned in only four of the ten interviews, across two cases. Go-On rates of participating schools ranges from 20%-55% (Idaho State Board of Education, 2018). Three of the five high schools had Go-On rates that were below the state average at 46%, one high school was near the state average, and the last high school greatly exceeded the state average.

Four of the five schools were reported to have higher than average FAFSA rates (Idaho State Board of Education, 2018). These same four schools indicated they hosted FAFSA nights at least once per annum, and in some instances more often. In the 2017-2018 school year, the state average FAFSA completion rate was 43.5%. The four schools that exceeded the state average ranged from 47%-70% completion. The single school that fell below the state average had a FAFSA completion rate in the low teens; this was also the only instance in which neither interviewee mentioned the importance of FAFSA completion. East Valley High School had the highest FAFSA completion rate; in this case, both individuals indicated assisting students and families with the completion of

FAFSA was a priority for the college and career readiness program, as well as the principal and college and career advisor regularly monitored the FAFSA completion rate.

College and career advisors did not appear to have the same infatuation with data as school principals. In instances where college and career readiness specific data were referenced by the principal, the college and career advisor also referenced them; this occurred in two cases. Other than these instances, college and career advisors did not indicate monitoring student data was a regular part of their work.

Prevalence of Trust

The final theme that arose in the interviews was the concept of trust. It was addressed in seven interviews, but surfaced across all cases, either by one party or both. The construct of trust in the context of college and career readiness programs surfaced in the following ways: management approach, shared leadership, oversight of budget, and protection of instructional time.

Management Approach

In three of these instances, trust was often discussed against the backdrop of management. Administrators said they were careful not to micromanage the college and career advisor. Principals asserted, by being "hand-off" they demonstrated trust toward their college and career advisors. Roger made this point when he said, "I don't want to micromanage. But [I've] got to let them do their job." One college and career advisor also echoed the importance of not being micromanaged when she made this claim about her principal, "He's very hands-off and he trusts me to run. He's here, but he's not micromanaging, and I appreciate that."

Shared Leadership

Structures of shared leadership were used as a vehicle for moving initiatives forward while cultivating feelings of trust amongst staff. Four of the five administrators discussed the importance of shared leadership in terms of collaboration, teamwork, cooperation, and unity with the staff. One of those administrators stated improvement in this area was a professional goal for him personally. A second administrator perceived shared leadership as the true guiding force of the school and viewed himself simply as a facilitator; "I do not have all the answers, but I know where we need to go. I know what the end looks like, and how to guide people in making decisions along the way." In a third case, although the administrator did not discuss ideas of shared leadership, the college and career advisor indicated he sought input from her and from other staff members on a regular basis, which implied the principal's decisions were not made in isolation.

College and career advisors felt shared power was an indicator of a good relationship. Candace put it like this, "I really feel like part of the administrative team. I am included in so much around here, and am depended on. I think we have a really good working relationship. I feel really positive about that." By sharing power and leadership responsibilities, school principals provided opportunities for relationships to thrive.

Budget

The trust factor appeared to be questioned when issues related to the budget were described. The appropriation from the Idaho legislature for each of these schools' college and career readiness program ranged from $14,000 to $90,000 (Idaho State Department of Education, 2018). In three of the five cases, college and career advisors reported that

the operating budget for the college and career readiness program was unclear, and not presented with complete transparency by the administration. In one case, the operating budget was set clearly at the beginning of the year, allowing the college and career advisor to plan and make activity projections for the year, and in another case, an operating budget for this individual was non-existent, meaning the principal had not provided any information about an operating budget to the advisor.

Protecting Instructional Time

A final trust issue relates to the administrators' willingness to use instructional time for implementing college and career readiness activities. Access to instructional time and to students in group settings was a common challenge for all college and career advisors. Several advisors indicated they viewed it was the principal's responsibility to remove this obstacle by getting staff buy-in and giving them access to students in the classrooms. In all five cases, either the advisor or the principal suggested it was the administrator's responsibility to protect instructional time. It was implied in these instances that college and career readiness activities were viewed as a threat to instructional time by school staff, and college and career advisors were forced to negotiate for it, even in instances where the principal encouraged the college and career advisor to connect with teachers in this manner. "At the high school level it's so difficult to get into the classrooms," claimed one advisor. She later continued saying she needed two things from her administrator—"for him to budget time and get the staff on board." Principals reported they struggled to advocate for instructional time because in doing so, they were allowing the college and career advisor to encroach on a teacher's main role. This challenge was present even in the one case where the school administrator pushed

for curricular embeddedness of college and career readiness initiatives. One advisor negotiated with her administrator by suggesting a new schedule, allowing her to have a 40-minute advisory period with students every other week, in which she planned content and teachers executed lessons on college and career readiness topics. When agreeing to implement this schedule change, the college and career advisor said the principal's actions demonstrated his trust in her expertise.

In three instances, college and career advisors said college visits were limited by their administrators to include only high-performing students because they could afford to be out of class. This is notable as studies suggests college visits are most valuable to students who are considered "in the middle" academically and are most likely to be undecided about college (Hooker & Brand, 2010). In another case, a college and career advisor explained; "He's like: 'Let's just keep the exposure for the upperclassmen, unless they are that super high percentage of the class.'" In a third example, a college and career advisor shared she received pushback from a teacher who stated, "Why are you taking sophomores to a college? That's pointless!" Protecting instructional time required a difficult balance for school principals because felt that they had to please instructional staff while giving college and career advisors access to students so that they could do their job. College and career advisors insinuated a lack of access to students undermined their work because the administrator did not see the value of the college and career readiness activities, and perceive them to be less important than classroom instruction.

Embeddedness

In a final coding cycle, I conducted a targeted analysis of the degree to which the elements of college and career programs discussed in Chapter 2 were embedded into

school culture. All activities discussed by the principal and/or the college and career advisor were labeled in conjunction with an element of college and career readiness programs. This was done to determine if the implementation of a given activity was discussed as the sole responsibility of the college and career advisor, or limited to the confines of the career center in the school. Such analysis was used to determine the level to which the college and career readiness program was embedded into the school culture. In 68 activity descriptions, the activities extended beyond the role of the college and career advisor, while 102 activity descriptions limited the activity to the single role of the college and career advisor. Within each of the six elements, there were more examples of isolated activities than those that could be considered embedded into the school culture. Two administrators discussed targeted activities that extended beyond the role of the college and career advisor, and one administrator discussed plans for expanding these types of activities. All five college and career advisors discussed activities they implemented that had potential to integrate other staff members in the school. Table 4.1 outlines the types of activities that were coded under each element and the frequency with which they were discussed in an embedded or isolated manner.

Table 4.1 Program Activities and Embeddedness Level

College and Career Readiness Program Element	Activities and Duties that Defined Element	Embeddedness	Frequency of Codes
Academic Options & Support	Tutoring Academic department Course pathways Remediation SAT/ACT prep	Element extended beyond college and career advisor	13
		Element limited to college and career advisor	22
		Total:	35
College awareness	College visits College rep College essays College applications College day Testing	Element extended beyond college and career advisor	18
		Element limited to college and career advisor	21
		Total:	39
Career Awareness	Job shadow Internships Apprenticeships CTE courses Curricular embeddedness Guest speakers Project-based learning	Element extended beyond college and career advisor	19
		Element limited to college and career advisor	29
		Total:	48
Communication	Parent involvement Parent education Staff buy-in Using technology for communication Announcements Principal articulates CCR value to all stakeholders	Element extended beyond college and career advisor	14
		Element limited to college and career advisor	4
		Total:	18
Data & Student Centered Artifacts	Monitoring CCR data FAFSA completion rate Go-On rates Advanced Opportunities Rate Portfolios Senior Project	Element extended beyond college and career advisor	2
		Element limited to college and career advisor	3
		Total:	5
Financial Planning	FAFSA nights Curricular embeddedness Math department Scholarship Applications	Element extended beyond college and career advisor	2
		Element limited to college and career advisor	23
		Total:	25

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Findings from this study provide insight into how five school principals related to the college and career readiness program in their schools. In discussing the findings, I return to the research questions:

1. *How, if at all, does the relationship between the principal and the college and career advisor influence a school's college and career readiness program?*
2. *How do principals perceive their role as relevant to the college and career readiness program?*
3. *What do school principals perceive to be the role of a college and career readiness program in a school, and how, if at all, does this perception influence the college and career readiness program?*

As discussed in Chapter 2, college and career readiness programs are most effective when they are embedded in the culture of the school (Bosworth, Convertino, and Hurwitz, 2014, Conley, 2007, Laturno Hines, Lemon & Crew, 2011), and school principals are responsible for establishing a vision for the school, which influences school culture (Donaldson, 2006, Bolman & Deal, 1995, Fullan, 2003). I investigated the intersectionality of principal leadership and college and career readiness programs by looking at three factors: (1) the perceived relationship between the college and career advisor and the principal, (2) the principal's perceived contribution to the program, and (3) the principal's beliefs about the role a college and career readiness program should play in the school. Themes that emerged from my examination of these three factors

provided insight into the effectiveness of college and career readiness program. Program effectiveness, for purposes of this study, was defined as the degree to which college and career readiness activities were embedded into school culture. Table 5.1 summarizes each theme from the perspectives of the school principal and the college and career advisor and highlights the influence of the theme on their relationship with each other and on the program. In the subsequent section, I elaborate on these findings.

Table 5.1 Impact of Emergent Themes

Theme	Principal	College and Career Advisor
Degree of Alignment in Vision	Principals believed it to be their role and responsibility to establish the school vision. They believed their leadership views to have a high degree of influence on all programs in the school.	College and career advisors respected the principal's direction, however did not feel his views affected their work on a daily basis.
Impact on Relationship and Program: College and career advisors were eager to buy-into the principal's vision of the school. They perceive the relationship to be positive when they were included in decision-making and felt valued for the contribution their program made to the school vision. Principals believed they had a positive relationship with the college and career advisor when that individual demonstrated respect and a shared interest in a common and united direction for staff and students.		
Approach to Creating Opportunity	Principals believed the role of college and career readiness is about expanding pathways, getting certified teachers, and connecting students to the community. Principals believe this to be their responsibility.	College and career advisors' perception of opportunity creation are generally focused on individual students (i.e., guiding them in interest exploration, assisting them with applications, and connecting students to internships, college visits, and guest speakers).
Impact on Relationship and Program: Although perceived differently by each respective roles, creating opportunities for students was viewed as a common ground by both individuals, and considered to be the overall purpose of the program. In instances where they did not work closely together misunderstanding of their contribution to the program occurred. College and career advisor were limited in organizational authority; which limited the types of opportunities they were able to create for students without the administrator's sponsorship.		
The Influence of	Principals' views on organizational structures varied; some administrators choose to	College and career advisors needed the administrator to cultivate buy-in from the staff.

Organizational Structures	prioritize college and career efforts, while others did not. District reported plans did not closely align with the reported implementation of the programs.	Where the principal did not directly supervise the advisor, such distance in lines of organizational authority made the implementation of activities challenging.
Impact on Relationship and Program: When college and career readiness programs were not prioritized by leadership it is visible to the college and career advisors. Distance between principals and advisors in terms of the chain of command, was challenging to navigate and contribute to miscommunication. In these instances advisors reported feelings of not being valued.		
Data Utilization	Data were very important to the principals. Administrators believed stakeholders and community members judged their school based on specific quantitative measures of school performance, which did not include data related to the college and career readiness program. Most administrators did not track college and career readiness benchmarks.	Monitoring data was not critical to the college and career advisor's mission. The college and career advisor focused on the data that the principal prioritized.
Impact on Relationship and Program: College and career advisors perceived data tracking to be important only if they believed it to be important to the principal. Data was not a common point of discussion between the two roles.		
Prevalence of Trust	Principals shared leadership with staff to cultivate buy-in for their vision for the school. They believed by not micromanaging the college and career advisor, they were exerting trust in the advisor. Principals were protective of fiscal resources and instructional time.	College and career advisors believed they were trusted and supported by their administrator. They were frustrated by the inability to have more class time with students and wanted administrators to demonstrate their value of their work and the program by advocating for use of instructional time.
Impact on Relationship and Program: College and career advisors rated their relationship with the principal based on the level of trust they placed in him and they perceived he placed in them. Levels of trust ascertained based on the degree of micromanagement, the manner in which they were included in decision-making (including budgetary decisions), and the degree of advocacy the administrator was willing to exert to cultivate buy-in from instructional staff for providing the college and career advisor with access and time with students in class.		

The Influence of Relationships

To understand the relationships influencing the college and career readiness program in the school, this study first explored the following question: *How, if at all, does the relationship between the principal and the college and career advisor influence a school's college and career readiness program?* Findings indicated principals' and college and career advisors' perceptions of a positive relationship resulted in college and career advisors feeling valued and supported; however, a perceived positive relationship did not result in cultural embeddedness of the college and career program.

First, principals and college and career advisors differed in their definition and understanding of what defined a good relationship. As a result, principals and college and career advisors had differing views on how their relationship influenced the program. These divergent opinions on what contributed to their relationship did not necessarily cause tension in the relationship.

Principals equated a healthy relationship with a shared vision for the school in general. In instances where principals perceived their college and career advisor did not share their vision, the relationship was perceived by the principal to be disorganized and unproductive, and was reported to have contributed to failures in the program.

In contrast to a shared vision, college and career advisors identified shared leadership and inclusion in decision-making as contributing to a positive relationship with the principal. Inclusion in decision-making demonstrated "shared-leadership" and the "gift of power" to college and career readiness advisors, which resulted in feelings of affirmation. This perspective aligns with the findings of Bolman & Deal (1995) discussed in Chapter 2, who found that sharing decision making power with subordinates cultivated positive relationships and a positive organizational culture. Additionally, college and

career advisors described a positive relationship as one that included access to the principal's time (i.e., visibility), and the manner in which the principal demonstrated outward support of the program to other school staff. Access and inclusion created feelings of being valued and a sense of belonging for the college and career advisor; however, these feelings alone did not serve as a catalyst for a program to be embedded in the school's culture.

Even though most administrators expressed they trusted their subordinates, college and career advisors were not given liberty and discretion to make budgetary decisions. Planning for the budget did not appear to be something the principals easily empowered college and career advisors to do, nor where they consulted on the use of funds, even though those funds were specifically earmarked for college and career activities. This made planning difficult for college and career advisors, and was a missed opportunity for transparency and trust-building. Although college and career advisors did not explicitly say this affected their relationship with their administrator, lack of authority over or input into budgetary decisions was frustrating for some college and career advisors. This finding is consistent with studies that demonstrated open communication leads to trustworthy relationships, and lack of transparency has the potential to create tension in a relationship (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, Wang & Hsieh, 2013). It appears to be important for a principal to be aware of how a lack of transparency in some decisions is perceived by college and career advisors, as greater transparency may provide an opportunity for further strengthening their relationship with the college and career advisor.

Although four of the five relationships were described as positive and supportive, these relationships did not automatically result in the college and career readiness program becoming embedded in the culture of the school. College and career readiness programs are potential catalysts of educational reform and have many benefits beyond simply getting more students to college (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012). Moreover, they fully thrive only when steeped in the school's culture (Conley 2017, Poynton & Lapan, 2017). Most college and career advisors had a vision for improving the college and career readiness program and indicated that they could be more effective if only they could get other staff members to understand the program's value. They described ideas related to cultural embeddedness, without using the specific term. They also recognized their principal as an authority figure who could either support or prevent the implementation of initiatives that could embed the college and career program into the school culture. When the relationship was perceived to embody negativity, by at least one individual, the ineffectiveness of the program was attributed to the relationship.

Bolman and Deal (1995) suggest positive relationships are critical to organizational improvement, this study indicates *the relationship between a principal and college and career advisor perceived as positive is likely necessary, but not sufficient for the college and career readiness program to become embedded in the school culture.* A relationship perceived as positive by both principal and advisor may be only a necessary first step.

As participants discussed examples of how they created opportunities for students, the relationships between principals and college and career advisors came across as more positive. Perhaps this is because they were both focused on the students

and their needs. Interviews which revealed tension in the relationship between administrator and college and career advisor were less students-centered. In what appeared to be a very positive relationship between Michael and Victoria, they used the word student or kid 98 time collectively. On the contrary, in the relationship between Alex and Leah, which was not described with the same level of positivity, the term student or kid was used only 59 times. Although this finding is limited to the five cases in this study, it leads to other questions. When educators are focused on student, are their relationships with each other more likely to be positive; or do positive relationship allow them to be more focused on students? These questions would be very interesting to explore in another study.

The Principal's Role and Contribution

The second aspect of this study examined the role of the school principal in the context of the college and career readiness program by asking the following question: *How do principals perceive their role as relevant to the college and career readiness program?* The findings suggest principals are not fully aware of how critical their role is to the success of a college and career readiness program.

Principals indicated they were largely responsible for building and maintaining good relationships and overseeing a positive school climate and culture in general. Additionally, they believed it was their responsibility to keep staff focused on the school's vision; and they did this by monitoring the data, and protecting the school from distractions that could derail or stall progress in student achievement.

With respect to the college and career readiness program, school principals believed their role was to be supportive and open-minded to college and career readiness

efforts, exerting a willingness to facilitate discussions, and coaching the college and career advisor. When asked about the role principals played in the college and career readiness program, the advisors had different expectations than principals had of themselves. College and career advisors looked to administrators to be an engaged advocates of the program. Most college and career advisors said it was the principal's responsibility to support the college and career advisors with resources such as time with students, and money for implementing activities. Additionally, they suggested it was the principal's responsibility to articulate the value proposition of college and career readiness efforts to the students and staff.

College and career readiness advisors desired the same level of leadership from their principal as he exerted on other priorities. For example, all administrators described the importance they place on the use of data; however, only two administrators referred specifically to college and career readiness indicators. Moreover, only in these two instances, in which the principals discussed college and career readiness benchmarks, did the college and career advisors pay attention to these data. This leads me to believe the college and career advisors choose to care about the data that were prioritized by the school principal.

A few college and career advisors also indicated their desire for their principal to be more accessible and visibly involved in the program, while others attributed the principal's distance as a sign of trust, believing the principal chose not to get involved because he had confidence in their abilities. These findings suggest that college and career advisors and principals would benefit from *more clarity for how principals can be more actively engaged in college and career readiness efforts.* District and state leader

have not clearly defined expectations or articulated guidance for how a principal best supports a college and career readiness program. For this reason, many principals maybe unclear about how they could contribute to the success of college and career readiness programs success. Strategic collaboration meetings that include district level personnel, school principals, and the college and career advisors can be a space where these individuals create a common vision for embedding the program into the school's culture and a space where these individuals clearly define their roles, responsibilities, and implementation needs. Given the newness of most college and career readiness programs in Idaho, these needs and responsibilities can be easily overlooked if they are not clearly established. School districts and state agencies have opportunity to strengthen communication with the field by providing research, practical strategies, and guidance on successful implementation models.

Organizational structures, including the program model and the distance between the principal and the advisor in terms of the chain of command, influenced a principals' contribution to the program. Principals' perceptions of their responsibilities varied depending on the program model used. In instances of near peer models and full-time college and career advisors, principals tended to use managerial language about the roles and responsibilities of the college and career advisor, and were more likely to regurgitate a list of activities the college and career advisor implemented. In contrast, when the college and career advisor was a full-time counselor, the individual was applauded for their ability to serve the needs of the whole-child. This indicates that certain models lend themselves to power differentials that influence program outcomes. As school district

grapple with the types of models they should implement, they should consider how such a differential could impact the program.

The chain of command impacted how college and career advisor perceived the principals' prioritized their work. This structure tended to determine how often the two individuals worked together, which ultimately translated into opportunities for developing a positive working relationship. This finding indicates that *organizational proximity between the principal and the advisor in the chain of command contribute to the extent a principal will actively engage in a college and career program.*

Findings also indicated principals viewed the college and career program as adding value to the school and potentially bringing relevance and meaning for students as they explored post-high school options. They characterized the program as a general description of activities and a list of course offerings. Connecting students to relevant coursework and meaningful experiences was a driver in a lot of decision-making for both roles. However, examples described by participants indicate that meaningful decision-making cannot take place without the involvement of the school principal. Thoroughly providing students with academic options and supports is not something that can be done solely by a college and career advisor; it requires support and advocacy at the administrative level.

Most college and career advisors shared the principal's vision for the school, however, some felt college and career readiness was not a central aspect of the principal's vision for the school, and the program was perceived be supplemental. School principals wished to avoid efforts that distracted from their vision for the school, which was usually focused on effective instruction and student engagement. Perhaps surprising, both

principals and college and career advisors indicated the college and career readiness program posed a perceived threat to instructional staff. Most college and career advisors expressed frustration that instructional time was not available to them and relied on the administrator to advocate for instructional time before the rest of the staff. If college and career readiness efforts are to be embedded in a school's culture, a shared understanding among staff for how college and career efforts enrich the classroom learning experience would likely be necessary. For instance, a principal has opportunity to encourage teachers to be college- and career-minded by embedding career connections into the curriculum. Additionally, a principal could brainstorm with teachers all the ways in which a college and career advisor could be a resource in their classrooms. As principals engage in this work, it is important that the principal addresses any notions held by staff that the program detracts from instructional value. *Without strong advocacy and support from principals, college and career readiness program are unlikely to thrive in the form of cultural embeddedness.*

Principal's Perceptions of College and Career Readiness

This dissertation also examines a third question: *What do school principals perceive to be the role of a college and career readiness program in a school, and how, if at all, does this perception influence the college and career program?* Findings demonstrated that principals' perceptions of college and career readiness had a strong influence on the college and career readiness program.

Two principals understood the college and career readiness program to be a potential vehicle for school improvement and three were uncertain how it could be expanded beyond the operation of the college and career readiness center. Most

principals were satisfied with the current status of the college and career readiness program at their school, while college and career advisors had ideas for how they could make the program more dynamic and effective for students.

Most principals struggled to leverage the college and career readiness efforts as means for creating a college and career readiness culture in the school. In four of the five cases, findings suggest that many principals did not necessarily know how to integrate college and career readiness efforts more deeply into the school's vision, even though they might be amenable to the idea. Three of the five principals claimed that they did not have expertise in the area of college and career readiness, and for this reason, they felt limited in what they could contribute to the program and how they might lead the college and career advisor. *School principals are eager to be supportive and open-minded about the college and career readiness program, but they are not confident in their knowledge of the program, and do not necessarily know* how *expand the program beyond the confines of the career center.* By leveraging each other's strengths and vantage points within the organization, working collaboratively principals and college and career advisors may have an opportunity to ensure deeper program embeddedness of college and career readiness efforts into the school culture. As policy makers set statewide goals targeting college and career readiness that were discussed in Chapter 1, it is critical that they consider the training and information that is provided to school principals. These individuals need to be equipped with the rationale of these goals, and trained in practical strategies on how best to support and expand such efforts in their school.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the benefits of college and career readiness programs are far reaching, when implemented effectively. Principals who knew these potential

benefits were more likely to express an interest for embedding the program into the school's culture, whereas principals who did not articulate knowledge of these benefits were more hesitant to expand the program and felt college and career readiness efforts encroached on school priorities, such as instructional time. This finding indicates that *principals who were knowledgeable about the potential benefits of college and career readiness program were more likely to support efforts that allowed the program to penetrate the school's culture*. Principals who did not appear to have knowledge of such benefits of college and career readiness programs were more likely to stall its progress.

Limitations

This study has at least two limitations. First, only five cases were identified and analyzed. The goal of this research is not to paint a broad brush and generalize findings across similar context. Instead, it is meant to provide insight into the way in which five high school principals interacted with college and career readiness programs and the coordinators of those programs in their schools. Nonetheless, practicing principals who find themselves providing leadership support and guidance to college and career advisors may learn from the experiences of other principals and college and career advisors.

Second, presentation of data was greatly burdened by the need to maintain confidentiality for participants. Participants were given a guarantee that their responses would not become identifiable to other participants including their counterpart interviewee. Maintaining confidentiality was critical because it allowed participants to speak openly about their relationship with their counterpart, however positive or negative it may have been. As a result, I was unable to discuss situational demographics in conjunction with each case that could have resulted in a more thorough presentation.

Doing so would have allowed participants to triangulate data enabling them to identify the pseudonym attached to their responses, and inevitably their counterpart's responses.

Conclusion

In concert with the findings of this study, there are recommendations and implications for school principals, college and career advisors, and policymaker if they are to maximize the effectiveness of the college and career readiness programs.

Recommendations for Principals

As principals lead schools, reflect on their leadership capacity, and how they relate to themselves, others, and the school culture, it is important for them to recognize the pivotal role they play in the effectiveness of a college and career readiness program. In relation to self, principals should reflect on their competency in the area of college and career readiness programs. In relation to others, principals should consider how they communicate the value proposition of college and career readiness initiatives with their staff and how they maximize the capacity of the college and career advisor. Finally, in relation to school culture, principals should evaluate and reconsider how college and career readiness efforts are embedded in the school's vision and culture.

The first step to embedding college and career readiness into the culture of the school is for principals to become well versed in the benefits that a college and career readiness program can offer. In gaining knowledge principals can learn about how to implement the college and career readiness program in a manner that reaches beyond the college and career center, as well as the data that can be used to monitor program progress.

Furthermore, by educating themselves principals create opportunity to communicate a value proposition for cultural embeddedness in an effort to engage all staff. The ability to articulate the value of such a program for all staff is a critical way in which the school administrator leverages support for the program. Communicating this value proposition also positions the college and career advisor to gain access to instructional time, and opens doors for this individual to build relationships with other staff members. These relationships are not enough to drive the program forward, but they are a critical element that can serve as a strong foundation for embedding college and career readiness efforts into the school's culture.

To embed the college and career readiness program into the culture of the school the program's vision should be integrated into, or at least consistent with, the school's vision. School principals could engage their staff in revisiting the school's vision and discuss how they embed college and career readiness efforts more thoroughly into the school culture if they hope to maximize its benefit for students. This conversation may include a dialogue about how each staff member contributes to an integrated vision.

A final recommendation for principals is to engage the college and career advisor and other school leaders in creating and implementing a strategy for deeper cultural embeddedness that includes curriculum and instruction design, extracurricular activities, and community engagement. By this, I mean participate in an explicit exercise of what they want the program to look like at the school, provide clarity around expectations and responsibilities, and discuss how progress will be measured along the way. This should include a discussion of how the administrator will contribute to efforts, and how all staff will be encouraged and expected to engage with the college and career readiness efforts.

It is possible that this approach could cause tension in relationships between principal and college and career advisor, principal with instructional staff, and instructional staff with college and career advisors. Embedding a college and career readiness program into the school's culture may not easy, but it has great potential for student outcomes (Bosworth, Convertino, and Hurwitz, 2014). Embarking on such a journey can happen only with the support of the school principal if it is to be effective, and throughout this process, the college and career advisor can serve as a valuable resource.

Recommendations for College and Career Advisors

A college and career advisor can strengthen the profile of a college and career readiness program in the culture of their school by aligning the program with the current vision of the school, educating others about the data and potential benefits for student outcomes, and by strengthening relationships with all staff. College and career advisors can contribute to program effectiveness by first understanding the principal's vision for the school and looking for opportunities to leverage commonalities. In demonstrating alignment, the college and career readiness advisor can articulate to administrators the manner in which their visions are aligned, which may not only strengthen the principal's positive perception of their relationship, but also open doors for further advocating for program initiatives.

It is also important that college and career advisors be competent in the use of the leading and lagging indicators to measure the effectiveness of college and career readiness programs, and share these data with their principals. This includes school, district, state, and national data about what the program can do for the school. Principals care about data, but too often principals are focused on data that is reflective of the

mainstream instructional practices of the school, such as academic achievement test scores. College and career advisors have an opportunity to empower their administrator with the data that he or she needs in order to make the value proposition to all school staff about deeper cultural embeddedness.

Lastly, building positive relationships with all staff can establish the foundation for integration in the future. It is important for college and career advisors to be mindful in establishing and maintaining positive trustworthy relationships with their administrators and other school staff so that they are positioned to maximize opportunities for students when the time is right.

Policy Implications

School principals and college and career advisors could greatly benefit from thorough research-based training on the potential benefits of a college and career readiness culture in schools. This training should include concrete strategies for embedding such a program into the school culture beyond the career center and best practices on maximizing the role of the college and career advisor. The school principal's role in the effectiveness of college and career readiness efforts determines the extent to which the program will thrive in a school, but this study concludes that many principals did not have the knowledge necessary to lead efforts that expand this program, which limits the potential of the college and career advisor. Policymakers must be aware of the critical role principals play in the implementation of college and career programs if they hope to maximize program outcomes. Since the Idaho State Board of Education articulated that 60% of Idahoan's between the ages of 25-34 would have a postsecondary degree or certificate, Idaho's legislature is investing resources such as money, time, and

people to this cause (Idaho State Board of Education, 2012). To maximize these efforts, it is critical to consider the type of training and knowledge that is available to the field as they work to meet this goal.

Implications for Future Research

Many tangential questions arose during the course of this study that could be the subject of future studies. They include the following:

What sort of challenges are principal's and college and career advisors likely to face when they move to embed college and career readiness programs into the culture of a school, and how can these challenges be overcome? What do school principals believe they lack in terms of expertise in the area of college and career readiness? What are instructional staff perceptions of college and career readiness efforts?

The intent of this research was to understand the nexus of principal leadership and the implementation of mandated college and career readiness programs. A thriving college and career readiness program is capable of creating opportunities for students. Growing a college and career readiness program beyond a set list of activities that occur in the college and career center is hard work, and is likely to be done with integrity only if the school principal is intimately involved in the process.

APPENDIX A

Examples of Cultural Embeddedness in the School Culture

Elements of Embeddedness	Examples
Integration of college and career readiness constructs into curricula	English courses include curriculum related to college essays, resumes, scholarship essays All subject areas contribute to a cumulative student portfolio, such as senior project which include a student's transition plan beyond high school Math courses include curriculum related to financial planning, personal finance, and FAFSA nights Science courses emphasizes STEM-related careers that are connected to various projects and labs Teachers regularly bring in guest speakers from career field related to their content area
College and career readiness is emphasized and supported by all staff	Staff understands value and benefits of a college and career readiness culture All staff regularly has conversations with students about what they plan on doing after high school College and career advisor is invited into classrooms regularly to do presentations in their class related to their subject
College and career advisor is used a resource by staff	College and career advisor is invited to substitute teach when teacher is out to maximize learning in the classroom College and career advisor is part of regular collaboration meetings in all subject areas and works with staff to find curricular opportunities for program integration
School leadership emphasizes college and career readiness	College and career readiness priorities are part of the school's vision Lead administrators articulates value proposition to all staff regularly

	College and career advisor and principal monitor college and career readiness indicators and benchmarks College and career advisor is part of the school's leadership team

APPENDIX B

Concept-Cluster Matrix

Similar themes were coded in blue and dotted lines indicate similar ideas and concepts. Ideas that conflicted or were present on one side, but not the other were coded in red. This comparison was used as a basis to summarize each of the cases. The identifiable codes were blocked out to preserve participant identities.

	Question Number	Main Ideas: Prinicpal	Question Number	Main Ideas: CCR Advisor
General overview of work	P1		C1	
	P1		C1	Loves kids
	P1	Discusses administrative duties	C1	Knows students personally and looks out for their needs
Leadership assumptions and core beliefs	P1a	Assume the best about teachers and staff	x	
	P1a	High expectations for staff	x	
	P1a	Empower teachers and staff	x	
General overview of CCR program	P2	Minimize wasted time and maximize learning	C2	Parent education is important
	P2	Expose students to opportunity	C2	Provide social support for students
	P2	Career exposure	C2	College awareness is strong, career awareness is weak
What role do you believe the CCR program should play?	P2a	Expand opportunity for students	C2a	Does not consider CCR activities to be her main focus
	P2a	Focus on career exposure	C2a	Teach students self advocacy
	P2a	4-year degree is not the only pathway for students	C2a	Support students and be a familiar face to them
What should the principal's role be in the program?	P2b	Vision	C3b	Leverage class time
	P2b	Shared decision making	C3b	Get staff on board
	P2b	Connect students to opportunity	C3b	Create partnerships with the colleges
General overview of the relationship	P3	Shared vision	C3	Trust
	P3	Relies on expertise of college and career advisor	C3	Approachable and open to listening
	P3	Collaboration	C3	Hard working
How does the relationship affect the work of the CCR advisor?	P3a	Support	C3a	He addresses staff needs
	P3a	Recognizes value of advisor	C3a	She works well when trusted
	P3a	Believes CCR advisor feels important and valued	C3a	Principal provides direction and guidance
What should the CCR advisor's role be in the program?	P3b	Satisfied with current status of program	C2b	Educate parents
	P3b	Considers CCR advisor to be an expert	C2b	Connect with students
	P3b	Expand course offerings	C2b	Provide supports
How do principal's views affect the work of the program?	P3c	Direct relationship b/w his vision and her work	C3c	His views don't affect her work
	P3c	Navigating organization structure can be challenging	C3c	He trusts her and she makes her own decisions
	P3c	Program is new and growing pains	C3c	She forms her own opinions

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