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Motivation of School Board Members to Support Equity and Social Justice in Public Education

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MOTIVATION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS TO SUPPORT EQUITY AND SOCIAL

JUSTICE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

by

Matthew B. Joynt

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ABSTRACT

MOTIVATION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS TO SUPPORT EQUITY AND SOCIAL
JUSTICE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

by

Matthew B. Joynt

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019
Under the Supervision of Professor Dr. Elise Frattura

This dissertation was designed to provide better access to current information on school board members' desires to promote equity and social justice. Leaders are motivated to advance initiatives for various reasons including intrinsic, extrinsic, and other influencing factors. In this study, these factors are further researched focusing on school board members representing public school districts in southeastern Wisconsin that are founding members of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium and have served on a Board of Education that adopted school board policy specific to promoting equity in education. Through a qualitative descriptive design and the use of thematic analysis, the results of semi-structured interviews were analyzed to develop findings that contribute materially to the knowledge of what motivates school board members' advocacy and leadership decisions. An analysis of the data revealed that educational equity and social justice in schools can be more readily attained by providing school board members with broad context and external perspectives on critical equity-related issues; a strong and aligned governance structure; activities and structures to engage in team-building exercises with the full board of education and superintendent; and opportunities to grow connections and boost relationships with others.

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Likely, this study will not gain broad readership and scholarly following. As was shared with me at the onset of my effort, the process of completing this dissertation was one of the longest and most arduous educational tasks I have ever completed. That said, it has been highly rewarding. For me, that makes the act of sharing public acknowledgment related to the task of completing this dissertation a very personal affair.

I am lucky to have many talented people in my life that have had a tremendous influence on me, who I have become, and what I aspire to be. The opportunity to recognize those who influenced and helped me along the way in completing this dissertation is in some ways, the most fulfilling outcome related to the task. No one succeeds alone and I would not be where I am today without the collective impact of those around me. Those I mention here indeed provided me with the motivation I needed to plod forward and see the challenge of completing a dissertation through. This dissertation is dedicated to:

My dissertation committee, Dr. Elise Frattura, Dr. Rajeswari Swaminathan, Dr. Leigh Wallace, and Dr. Rod Whiteman, a team with the wisdom, patience, and fortitude to see my dissertation process through thanks to valuable insight, expertise, and support along the way.

Dr. Demond Means, a colleague, a brother, and a friend that never ceases to build my confidence and keep me focused on the urgency of improvement and doing what is right for all students in public schools.

My father, Dr. Thomas Joynt, who not only serves as a model of who I strive to be, but also how I hope to be remembered; as a consummate professional, stalwart father, loving husband, and fearless leader for education.

My boys, Brennan, Calvin, and Declan Joynt, may you each find your passion and use it to fuel your future success with an eye toward leaving every person you meet better off for having known you.

My wife, Heidi Joynt, who inspires me every day to be a better version of who I am today and is unapologetic about ensuring that our family always comes first. There is not a day that goes by in which I am not thankful for what we have.

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Chapter I – Introduction

In the mid-1600s colonists in New England decided that local citizens would govern local schools based on local community interests (Walser, 2009). Since that time, state and federal policymakers' involvement in educational policy has increased a great deal, however, the authority to govern public schools remains in large part the responsibility of local officials (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012). The citizens who govern local public schools do so under the title, Board of Education, or school board, and they serve as the governing body in the majority of more than 15,000 school districts in America (Gurwitt, 2006). Mountford (2004) indicates that these community members are motivated to serve on their local school board for many reasons including but not limited to, "interests related to their own children, ego needs, a need to belong, prestige, a need for formal power, contention with existing leadership, and/or political advancement" (p. 719). Other researchers have communicated similar findings in prior research (Alby, 1979; Cistone, 1975; Garmire, 1962; Goldhammer, 1955; McCarty, 1959; Zazzaro, 1971).

Many school board representatives are community members with little to no formal training in administration, finance, consensus-building, or education (Gurwitt, 2006). In most public school districts in the United States, governance and policy decisions are made by locally elected school board members working in conjunction with a school district administrator or superintendent, who is hired by the school board. According to the National School Boards Association (NSBA), school board members tend to be volunteers in that nationally, 75 percent of small-district school board members receive no salary (https://www.nsba.org/).

Local school boards serve a diverse group of stakeholders with varying needs and expectations. Over the years, school board responsibilities have evolved through a variety of structural shifts and reform initiatives tied to government mandates. The primary role of a

governance board is to set district policy and, although there have been criticisms, boards continue to be seen by their constituents as valuable (Land, 2002). Beyond setting policy, school boards also provide important direction in determining their school districts' strategic focus. This being the case, it is critical to understand what factors drive school board members to support various initiatives. For the purpose of this research, the factors that motivate members of school boards to support equity and social justice policy and related initiatives will be analyzed. The following is an introduction into school boards and their evolving roles and those policies they deem important.

State level agencies such as the Washington State School Directors Association (2008) note that, "School boards have always recognized the improvement of student achievement as central to their role in governing our public schools" (p. 1). However, it is with a new level of commitment to accountability that many school boards, and their superintendents, have made learning an even higher priority. This mounting demand is described by City (2009):

> American schools are under increasing pressure to produce better results than they have ever produced. No Child Left Behind has set a goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2014 – and legislation is not the only source of pressure. A high school diploma is no longer a reliable ticket to a decent living. In an era of computers and instant access to information, problem solving, teamwork, and communication skills are essential for personal and national success. Most schools are falling short of the 100 percent proficiency goal, and international assessments show us that American schools are at best in the middle of the pack among our peers in level of achievement (p. 2).

The authors add, "The challenge is that we are asking schools to do something they have never done before – educate all students to high levels – and we don't know how to do that in every classroom for every child" (p. 2). The challenge of educating every child to achieve predetermined academic benchmarks has been statistically captured in education via achievement gap data. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) the United States measures progress across the nation in mathematics, reading, and science at grades four and eight. The data can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, National School Lunch Program eligibility, and disability status and comparisons can then be made using these student groups. The term "achievement gap" in schools refers to the unequal or inequitable distribution of educational results (Partnership, 2013). It is most often used to refer to the disparity in academic performance on standardized-test scores between groups of students. In more generalized terms, it can also be used to refer to other disparities in performance and attainments throughout the educational system. An achievement gap portrays differences in student outcomes across different demographic groups and is therefore a means of measuring and reporting inequity in school systems.

Given the urgency to increase student achievement for all students, school board governance and a board of education's ability to focus efforts to promote equity is of the utmost importance. According to Henderson, Henry, Saks, and Wright (2001), "the leadership of the board and superintendent, within their respective roles, can bring life, enhance the focus and motivation of the administration and staff, and provide an emphasis on student achievement" (p. 12). Other researchers have made similar findings. Van Clay and Soldwedel (2009) see a "direct link between successful board members, successful educational organizations, and successful

students who will be prepared for the challenges of an increasingly complex, multicultural, and technological world" (p. xi).

Historically, school boards have been cautious about taking on the challenge of student achievement, believing this responsibility would be best left to the educational professionals in the schools (Lashway, 2002). However, in the current educational environment, there is a feeling that school boards should be held more accountable for learning results (Alsbury & Gore, 2015). McAdams (2006) indicates that ensuring school districts are "high-performing is the nation's highest domestic priority and [that is] why the board members who govern them are in a position to be the nation's most important school reformers" (p. 7). This aligns with the fact that school board responsibilities continue to grow and evolve over time (Walser, 2009). School boards today must maintain good relations across stakeholder groups, be effective in policy-making, leadership, and budgeting, evaluate the superintendent, and make decisions to positively affect student achievement (Land, 2002). The progress of public schools is dependent upon the approval, support, and directives of the school board, making it imperative for school leaders to better understand why school board members support initiatives that promote equity and social justice. This highlights the importance of the question, what motivates school board members to support systemic change for proactive services in heterogeneous programming that is proportionally reflective of the overall student population, or equity and social justice work.

The National School Boards Association (2015) has determined five action areas that are critical to school board effectiveness in influencing student achievement. The action areas include developing a clear vision, creating and maintaining policy, ensuring accountability, exhibiting community leadership, and maintaining positive relationships. School boards work as representatives of a segment or all of the community when voting and acting on highly technical

and often legal issues. These include annual budgets, contracts for work, and the evaluation of programs that affect how children receive their education. Besides a focus in critical action areas, the make-up of board membership is another variable that influences the effectiveness of school boards.

Traditionally, school board members were chosen as high-status members of the community (Good, 1998). Many school board elections have grown more obviously political deviating from what was historically the norm, but the idea of local control and local accountability still has wide appeal. As the political landscape changes around education, new models of school board function and approach to governance change too. Communities support school boards as a means of connecting public values with professional expertise (Resnick & Seamon, 1999). The public believes local officials should be in charge of school operations and improving efforts (Jacobsen & Saultz, 2012). It has been stated that, "this is preferable to a one-size-fits-all behemoth of centralization" (Shober & Hartney, 2014, p. 4).

Despite community members' desires to maintain local control, school board members today serve in an era with increased statewide and federal influences and accountability measures for public school systems. Local school leaders are often charged with navigating mandates and shifts in policy introduced via decisions made by state and federal level legislators. Public education is experiencing a time of true transition in decision-making authority. The shifting environment is accentuated by contradictory legislation and societal demands, including:

- Additional expenses to educate children while state level revenues decrease.
- The need to increase student achievement of content standards while customizing instruction and providing comprehensive course options to meet the needs of each student.

- The expectations to manage employees more transparently in environments of increased accountability.

In short, today's demands require that superintendents and school board members collectively work within the expectation of retaining fundamental aspects of schooling while at the same time endlessly adapting to meet new challenges (Davidovich & Koehn, 2013).

The Changing Context of School Board Operations

In the last decade, the nation has become increasingly politically motivated and as a result, so has state level government (Stover, 2012). This has led to major change and local school boards are certainly subject to it. Del Stover (2012) questions whether, "in a political environment in which money, partisanship, ideology, and fiery rhetoric play increasingly prominent roles at the state and national levels, who can say what the future holds for local elections?" (p. 15). A school board member's motivation to work with school leaders to promote equity and institute systems to achieve quality results for all students could be challenged by such external factors.

In 2013, a report on equity in education was released by a congressionally-mandated commission that made the claim that the country has ignored the issue of equity for decades. In noting that education is a key component to supporting a strong government, enhancing citizens' quality of life, and increasing the nation's economic standing, the report states that, "America has lost its place as a global leader in educational attainment in ways that will lead to a decline in living standards for millions of our children and the loss of trillions of dollars of economic growth" (Equity and Excellence Commission, 2013, p. 12). The report further notes that, "equity is a key strategy needed to shore up the entire nation's standing in the global economy" and that

"in some communities the existence of locally elected [school] boards has not ensured that all relevant interests are represented sufficiently (p. 12)." Though it is a school board's role to represent that broader community, it is difficult for members of the board to analyze issues and act on decisions outside of their individual perceptions and experiences. The report warns that, "in practice, single-issue governing structures like school boards may actually hinder political accountability because the decision-makers on those boards may not be fully representative of the parents of schoolchildren—particularly the neediest children—in the district" (Equity and Excellence Commission, 2013, p. 35).

While individual members of a school board have little to no power, each member does have the ability to influence final board decisions as issues and topics are discussed prior to taking action. Members with intense and strong convictions in specific areas may have greater influence than other members who take a more objective approach. Verjeana Jacobs, Chief Equity and Member Services Officer for The National School Boards Association states that "educational equity is not a concept; it requires action." She adds, "Amid fluctuating demographics, socioeconomic challenges and implications for cultural competence, boards of education must be vigilant in their role to ensure that every child has access and opportunity to be champions" (National School Boards Association, 2018, para. 2). Understanding the motivation of school board members to support equity and social justice work is critical when one individual board member may significantly influence the direction the full board takes. Such instability has the potential to create vulnerability in district operations.

The efforts of school leaders to implement equity-based systems and promote social justice can be polarizing to a school system's stakeholders and negatively impact the job security of superintendents and the tenure of school board members. Superintendents and school board

members that support and promote equity and social justice can quickly become unpopular when advocating for minoritized or underserved students, by the parents of students they are working to serve and stakeholders that have experienced success in more traditional approaches to education (Halverson & Plecki, 2015; Noguera & Blankstein, 2015; Zirkel & Pollack, 2016). They must respond to the concerns raised by the parents of underperforming minoritized students, while gaining support for systemwide change by those representing the majority, and often satisfied, sets of parents and stakeholders. Noguera (2003) notes that, "the perception that the pursuit of academic excellence and the pursuit of educational equity are goals that are fundamentally at odds, and exist within a zero-sum scenario, is at the crux of many of the conflicts experienced by [school district leaders making decisions that implement systems for equity]" (p. 135). Interestingly, the research that has been conducted related to public school leadership involving school board members and superintendents indicates that the biggest obstacles to improving student achievement in local districts is the normally underfunded reform mandates from state and federal governments (Alsbury, 2008).

Problem Statement

The State of Wisconsin, and specifically, Metropolitan Milwaukee is one of the most segregated communities in the country (Reeves & Rodrigue, 2016). The Milwaukee Metropolitan area is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau by four counties in southeastern Wisconsin: Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington and Ozaukee (https://www.mmac.org). Gilbert (2014) stated that, "it combines in one political hothouse an unusual constellation of divisive forces: deep racial segregation; an intensely engaged and sometimes enraged electorate; and the Balkanizing effects of serving over the past decade and a half as one of the most fought-over

pieces of political turf in America" (Gilbert, 2014). He went on to note that Milwaukee's polarized environment is more personal than just that of its citizens' politics, but also the places they live. With every passing election season, the dynamics of this deep divide is intensified, resulting in greater political segregation between the City of Milwaukee and the historically republican suburbs that surround it (Gilbert, 2014).

School board members are placed in a position to make important and vital decisions, often immediately upon taking office. A school board member's motivation to support equity and social justice work can have a major effect on a school district's ability to improve educational outcomes for all students.

Issues of educational equity can challenge school boards and quickly become publicly and sometimes politically motivated disputes. Impatient and frustrated parents of minoritized or underserved students, or parents of students that are traditionally well served by the schools, often engage school boards when they believe their interests and what is best for their children is not being considered in decisions that are being made. Parent and special interest groups have the ability to influence school leaders in the development and implementation of policies. When funding for one program is pitted against another, school leaders are often engaged by affected stakeholder groups. When it is interpreted that change will compromise the educational interests of existing student programming, pressure is often put on school leaders, including superintendents and board members, to terminate or reconsider any change. Educational equity related changes often encounter strong opposition from the parents of high achieving students if it is interpreted that the changes may compromise the educational interests of their children (Noguera & Blankstein, 2015). Educational leaders promoting equity ensure that students' personal and social circumstances are not an obstacle to achieving educational potential and that

schools ensure a basic minimum standard of education for all (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008). Some constituents would believe that educational equity will ultimately mean the loss of privilege for some or that equity will come at a cost for their children. Conflicts such as these can influence school board members motivation to support educational equity and social justice-related efforts.

Statement of Purpose

The role of school board members is crucial to the work of school district personnel and the ability of the organization's leaders to manage priorities. Boards are legally responsible for all educational policies and programs undertaken in the public schools. Such policies are impacted by the values and priorities of the individual board members who collectively make decisions that affect the direction of public education. School board members' motivations to support equity and social justice work may determine, to a large extent, the content, spirit and aim of how public education moves forward. This is especially true with regard to the social beliefs and attitudes they hold toward some of the more fundamental social, economic, and educational problems confronting education today. Therefore, the more insight that can be gained on the motivation of school board members to support equity and social justice work, the more informed educational leaders will be in effectively and efficiently working with their school boards to achieve improved student outcomes.

This study was designed to investigate school board members' motivation to support equity and social justice work in Wisconsin school districts that have made closing achievement gaps a priority. Via the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) that was introduced in the United States in 1969, substantial and significant achievement gaps in

academic proficiency became more pronounced and the focus of leaders throughout education. But it was not until 2004 that the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), a nationally recognized leader in educational issues, adopted a position on the achievement gap. A nationally recognized organization and reputable professional association for educational leaders, the position statement raised awareness of achievement gaps and the need to address them. The ASCD (Poliakoff, 2006) stated that:

> For all students to excel academically and thrive as individuals, we must raise the bar and close the achievement gap. Educators, policymakers, and the public must understand the grave consequences of persistent gaps in student achievement and demand that addressing these gaps become a policy and funding priority. ASCD believes that all underserved populations - high-poverty students, students with special learning needs, students of different cultural backgrounds, nonnative speakers, and urban and rural students - must have access to innovative, engaging, and challenging coursework (with academic support) that builds on the strengths of each learner and enables students to develop to their full potential; high-quality teachers supported by ongoing professional development; and additional resources for strengthening schools, families, and communities (Poliakoff, 2006).

The purpose of this research was to identify the motivating factors that influenced school board members to support equity and social justice work in Wisconsin school districts that have made closing achievement gaps a priority. Determining these motivating factors will benefit leaders in the field of education, including school district administrators, prospective school board members, building level leaders and teachers. Better understanding the factors that foster school board members' motivation to support equity and social justice efforts, will help school

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leaders build capacity within a school board team to improve student achievement and increase community engagement.

Research Question

The overarching research question to this qualitative descriptive study was: Why are school board members motivated to support equity and social justice work? The following guiding questions were derived from the purpose of the study and served to focus this research:

1. How do participants describe the influences on their decision to support educational equity and social justice efforts in schools?

2. How do participants describe their experiences in supporting educational equity and social justice in schools?

3. How do participants describe their motivation to support educational equity and social justice efforts in schools?

Overview of Methodology

This research was a qualitative inquiry situated in an interpretive paradigm. In other words, findings from this research were based on the theoretical belief that reality is socially constructed and fluid. Creswell (2016) defines qualitative research viewed through a theoretical lens as an assumption about the actions of individuals or groups to social or human problems. The researcher collected data from within a natural and controlled environment through interviews and maintained the belief that behavior is situational, fluid, viewed, and socially constructed in an effort to capture rich, thick data (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

A descriptive study methodology was employed in this qualitative research. Qualitative description provides the means for a researcher to understand how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The guiding questions of this research led to an understanding for the motivation of board members to support equity and social justice efforts. The research focused on why school board members support initiatives related to this work. For the purpose of this study, educational equity and social justice efforts and work refer to systemic change from a deficits-based system that marginalizes student groups to a proactive system that intentionally develops heterogeneous groups of students that are proportionally representative of the overall student population. Such student groups include but are not limited by race, disability, language, and social class.

As key leaders in public school educational systems, school board members' motivation to support educational equity and social justice is worth understanding. In that a qualitative descriptive study is useful for the purpose of discovering the who, what, where, and why of events or experiences (Neergaard, Oleson, Anderson, & Sondergaard, 2009), it is a worthy approach for better understanding school board member motivation in this study. Further, the rationale of utilizing a descriptive study for this research was based on the characteristics of description (yielding information to reveal much of what is not known), interpretation (the researcher gathers pertinent data with the intent of analyzing a phenomenon), and evaluation (the description is well grounded and clarifies meaning of the research) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009).

School board members who have served in school districts involved since the inception of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium in southeast Wisconsin, were identified and interviewed. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Interviews of the selected participants provided sufficient field data for rich thematic analysis of the influences,

experiences and motivation of individuals on school boards that implemented policy to promote educational equity and social justice in schools.

The researcher engaged with the data through the six phases of thematic analysis. In navigating the six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006) the researcher:

1. Familiarized himself with the data,

2. Generated initial codes,

3. Searched for themes,

4. Reviewed themes,

5. Defined and named themes, and

6. Produced the report.

The purpose of using thematic analysis to inform findings in this research was to create thoughtful, rich, and trustworthy research outcomes.

Rationale and Significance

The need for this study, to better understand the motivation of school board members to support equity and social justice in schools, was particularly important due to a lack of existing research in this area. Knowledge of the underlying motivations of school board members to support equity and social justice policy and initiatives will provide district leaders with a better understanding of how to work with the individuals who govern and influence the direction of public education.

Definition of Key Terminology

Educational Equity and Social Justice "Work" and "Efforts": For the purpose of this study, educational equity and social justice efforts and work refer to systemic change from a deficits-based system that marginalizes student groups to a proactive system that intentionally develops heterogeneous groups of students that are proportionally representative of the overall student population. Such student groups include but are not limited by race, disability, language, and social class.

Equity: The National School Boards Association defines educational equity as "the intentional allocation of resources, instruction, and opportunities according to need, requiring that discriminatory practices, prejudices, and beliefs be identified and eradicated" (https://www.nsba.org). For the purpose of this research, educational equity means that each student has access to the resources and educational programming they need at the right moment in their education.

Extrinsic Motivation: Behavior that is driven by external rewards such as money, fame, grades, and praise. This type of motivation arises from outside the individual.

Intrinsic Motivation: Behavior that is driven by internal rewards. In other words, the motivation to engage in a behavior arises from within the individual because it is self-rewarding.

Motivation: There are several different interpretations of the definition of motivation. For the purpose of this study, the phenomenon of motivation is defined as a reason or reasons which lead

an individual to act in a certain way. The reasons might not always be the same between two individuals acting in a certain way, but almost every action is directed by certain motivation (https://www.psychestudy.com).

School Board: An elected or appointed governance team that serves the community as advocates for education, vested with the authority to make decisions about school programs and hold school leaders accountable for the performance of their schools.

Social Justice: As it relates to educational leadership, social justice means that school and district leaders disrupt the status quo of the organization in order to make historically marginalized student populations central to its institutional vision, advocacy, and practice.

Organization of Dissertation

This study has been organized into five chapters. Chapter I contains the overview of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, conceptual framework, background, intent and focus of the study, significance and limitations of the study, and an overview of the dissertation. Chapter II contains a thorough review of literature in the areas of school board leadership for educational equity as well as motivation. Chapter III contains the research methodology utilized for the study. Topics include an overview of the methods, research design, setting and participant selection process, data collection procedures, data quality and data analysis procedures, and a summary of the methodology. Chapter IV presents the results of the study and Chapter V presents a summary of the findings, implications for practice, recommendations for research, as well as conclusions.

Chapter II – Review of Literature

Disparities persist at all levels of the educational system across student groups and educational leaders can and must do more to advance equity. Student achievement data from school districts across the nation continue to reveal large and persistent achievement gaps most grossly affecting students across personal and social identifiers such as race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability status, sexual orientation, or family income.

Traditionally, education systems have sorted students according to attainment and evidence from studies of secondary and primary schools suggests that such sorting can increase inequalities and inequities (Schleicher, 2009). Students have experienced inequity in education for generations. Due to the persistent prevalence of inequity in education, society has lost confidence that public officials are committed to ensuring that factors like race and socioeconomic status do not determine students' success (The Aspen Education and Society Program and the Council of Chief State School Officers, 2017). Though research on school board influence that directly correlates with educational equity and social justice work is limited, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards has noted that, "Wisconsin school districts are making a further commitment to closing the achievement gap by adopting equity in education policies and/or plans" (Wisconsin Association of School Boards, 2018).

Early History of School Boards

School boards have existed as institutions in the United States of America since 1647 (Callahan, 1975). Early American colonists sought to participate in the development of organizational structures that would shape their future. Historical evidence suggests that as towns and villages formed, an initial organizational arrangement known as a school committee, the

earliest model of school governance, was utilized. Good (1998), wrote on the merits of serving on a school board, stating that "...school boards evolved out of special school committees set up by New England town meetings after school matters became too complex and demanding to be handled by the town meetings themselves" (p. 50). Members on these committees were typically prominent citizens in the community. They were elected or appointed to ensure the values of the community were transmitted to the next generation through the educational activities planned and delivered by teachers. This model has not changed significantly over time.

School boards have historically worked to create and interpret policy intended to reflect the values of the community they serve. Although the tactics of the educational system are primarily in the hands of teachers, principals, and school district administrators, the strategy for meeting desired educational outcomes is influenced by the community. Superintendents play various roles in long-range planning for educational success that can greatly influence how teachers and principals operate (Björk, Kowalski, & Browne-Ferrigno, 2014; Waters & Marzano, 2006). However, school board members make collective decisions that affect a wide expanse of educational areas, such as the allocation of resources, the hiring of staff, and the approval of curriculum standards and course options which influence the superintendent's ability and approach to leading the organization and managing issues.

Today, communities are undergoing transitions and becoming more diverse. The members of locally elected boards are representative of the communities they serve and have responsibility to function effectively in a climate that in many cases, is not always collaborative. Each community hosts various groups of stakeholders each with their own special interests and sometimes positions. In that school boards are made up of local citizens that are tasked with representing their community, a key priority of the superintendent can often be integrating the

interests of board members with those of accepted educational practices. This being the case, the approach to implementing high quality educational practices can be viewed as varying from one community to another (Björk & Gurley, 2005; Kowalski, Young & Petersen, 2013). Thus, an understanding of the motives for school board members to support improved student outcomes is critical information for superintendents, other board members, and other influencers of the educational system. Specifically, the purpose of this literature review is to examine the existing research related to the motivation of school board members that contribute to the development of equity and social justice work in K-12 public education.

Review of Literature

This literature review consists of two sections. The first section is a review of literature specific to a school board's influence on equity and social justice leadership. The second section is drawn from the fields of psychology and sociology and introduces three different categories of motivational theory that clearly describe extrinsic and intrinsic motivation findings on the topic.

School Boards and Equity in Education

There is a fair amount of literature examining motives that influence citizens' decisions to pursue membership on local school boards, but a review of the literature concerning school leadership for supporting equity and social justice revealed a gap in the research exploring the role and motivation of school boards in the work.

Beginning in 1965 with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) equality and equity have been central issues for educational policy makers throughout the United States. The ESEA provided resources and funding to local education agencies to educate children of

lower-income families and for professional development, instructional materials, parental involvement initiatives, and supplemental programming beyond that which had been allotted in the past. Since its inception in 1965, the ESEA has transformed through numerous reauthorizations, most notably as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

When the NCLB Act was signed into law in January 2002 it served as a historic moment for public education in the United States. As a bill, the act received bipartisan support and was the product of collaboration between civil rights groups, business leaders, and policymakers. The act was supported based on a desire to advance the nation's standing in an increasingly globalized economy and close disparities in academic performance between groups of students. The law emphasized standardized testing and consequences for states and schools that performed poorly. The bill promoted equality in that it was implemented to ensure schools adhered to expectations that all students would achieve determined outcomes. The law was an "explicit statement by the federal government that achievement gaps between white… and children of color... are unacceptable and must be eliminated" (Skrla, McKenzie, & Scheurich, 2009, p. 4).

The NCLB Act's focus on accountability and the requirement that states and local school districts report on the achievement of different groups of students by race, English language learner status, socio-economic background, and disability, changed the way educational leaders engaged in their work. As a result of the law, achievement gaps between different groups of students were more prolifically exposed and with that, numerous educational programs dedicated to serving underperforming groups of students were generated.

Responses to the Need to Close Achievement Gaps

In response to the expectation that achievement gaps be closed, the efforts of educational leaders continued in the form of unique academic programming, student support initiatives, and funding allocations to boost the academic achievement of students performing below determined benchmarks. These types of initiatives have been implemented under the auspices of ensuring equity in education (Welner, 2001). Unfortunately, when improvement efforts are grounded in implementing initiatives and unique programming for students performing below benchmarks, this approach can further segregate and limit opportunities for minoritized students (Ferri, 2012; Frattura & Capper, 2007; Kasten, 2013; Welner, 2001). The alternate approach is to promote educational equity and social justice efforts that support systemic change from a deficits-based system that marginalizes student groups to a proactive system that intentionally develops heterogeneous groups of students that are proportionally representative of the overall student population (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Marshall, 2004; Theoharis, 2007).

Educational equity and social justice efforts such as these are not easy to implement and are often scrutinized by those that feel negatively affected by them (Noguera & Blankstein, 2015; Burris, 2014; Halverson & Plecki, 2015; Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Zirkel & Pollack, 2016). Noguera and Blankstein (2015, p. 3) note that "when the term equity is raised, it often evokes a zero-sum scenario" for majority groups that perceive they will be affected by the change. Those that push back are concerned that fostering systems to promote equity will result in less services, resources, and focus on students that are successful in the current system (Burris, 2014; Noguera & Blankstein, 2015; Oakes & Lipton, 2002). In other words, equity is perceived as raising support for some students at the cost of other students.

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In a related argument, Capper and Frattura (2007) state that "in their efforts to eliminate disparities in achievement for traditionally marginalized students, well-intentioned educators in schools and districts end up segregating these students and in so doing, marginalizing them from the school community" (p. xiiii). When intervention programs are provided utilizing a pull-out model or when students are tracked or in other words, categorized by curriculum, they are separated from others. Such programming often leads to levels or groups of students navigating distinctly different paced curriculum. To confront this reality, some educational leaders have focused on social justice-based efforts to close achievement gaps and promote equity (Oakes, Quartz, Ryan, & Lipton, 2000; Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002). They do so by working to improve educational outcomes for each student performing below proficiency and by providing support in inclusive and heterogeneous settings. Scott (2001) refers to this as systemic equity and defines it as "the transformed ways in which systems and individuals habitually operate to ensure that every learner - in whatever learning environment that learner is found - has the greatest opportunity to learn enhanced by the resources and supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence, responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and for life" (p. 6). To measure systemic equity, Scott utilizes a framework that includes focus on (a) student achievement, (b) opportunity to learn, (c) resource distribution, and (d) treatment. With this model Scott notes, if one aspect of the system is inequitable, a school cannot have systemic equity (Scott, 2001). Such equity would require the cooperation of all stakeholders including and perhaps most importantly, that of school board members who have the power to enact policies to support such a wide ranging effort. Teachers, administrators, school board members, community members, and policymakers may be aware of inequities in various aspects of their schools, but

they rarely have systematically examined these areas and then devised ways to eliminate said inequities.

Several scholars (Capper & Young, 2015; Cochran-Smith, Albert, Dimattia, Freedman, Jackson, Mooney, & Zollers, 1999; McKenzie & Skrla, 2011; Shields, 2004) advocate a critique of educational systems in terms of access, power, and privilege based on race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, language, background, ability, and/or socioeconomic position. While in broad terms school leaders may describe social justice as doing what is best for students or helping them be the best they can be (Alsbury & Whitaker, 2007), a social justice-oriented approach is one that "actively address[es] the dynamics of oppression, privilege, and isms, [and recognizes] that society is the product of historically rooted, institutionally sanctioned stratification along socially constructed group lines that include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability" (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009, p. 350). By regularly monitoring access and outcomes through lenses that include demographics such as race, class, gender, and other descriptors, educational leaders can better focus on diminishing and reversing traditional internal norms (Alsbury & Whitaker, 2007). This aligns with Freire's (1996) proposal that the purpose of public education is to end the oppression of historically marginalized and underprivileged students. Scholars (Burris, 2014; Causton & Theoharis, 2013; Miller, 2018; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011) therefore advocate approaches that acknowledge the historical contexts of segregation, resist practices of exclusion taking place in schools through systems of tracking, and suggest ways to actively promote social justice through multiple efforts. These include detracking and inclusion along with culturally relevant and culturally sustaining approaches (Gay, 2018; Delpit, 2006; Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014) to teaching.

Although many have blamed causes external to schooling for persistent achievement gaps (Basch, 2011; Bradbury, Corak, Waldfogel, & Washbrook, 2015; Gardner, 2007; Reeves & Howard, 2013; Welner & Carter, 2013), there are internal causes within public schools too, including inequitable distributions of teacher quality and inequitable distributions of students in programs such as special education or AP courses, that must be addressed if the achievement gaps are to be removed. There is growing evidence that school-based practices can strongly contribute to growing achievement gaps over time (Blankstein, Nogura, & Kelly, 2016; Boykin & Noguera; 2011; Florian, Rouse, & Black-Hawkins, 2016; Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

Educational leaders that promote equity through a social justice framework look critically at how schools and educational programs are unjust for some students. They analyze school policies and practices including curriculum, instructional materials, access to courses, the hiring of staff members, and parent involvement strategies to ensure that the identities of some students are not prioritized over others. Capper and Frattura (2007) contend that leading for social justice requires transforming key aspects of education including beliefs and practices about leadership, teaching and learning, teacher capacity to teach to a range of students, and how to acquire and reallocate resources. Transformations such as these require shifts in educational policies, procedures and funding (Marshall & Oliva, 2017; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Theoharis, 2009) that demand the support of school leaders, primarily superintendents and school board members.

The Role of School Boards in Promoting Equity

School boards are at the intersection of public policy and public school administration. School board members can play a significant role in helping to lead and shape the preferred future a community has for its schools. Importantly, they can play a pivotal role in ensuring that

educational outcomes across all subgroups of students is consistent with this vision. When board members lead in pursuit of high and equitable achievement, entire communities benefit.

Many characteristics can be attributed to serving as an effective school board member. Alsbury and Gore (2015) have determined the following characteristics and beliefs to be most important:

- Understands role boundaries,

- Functions as a trustee with the ability to shift to delegate role as necessary,

- Seeks to satisfy multiple and diverse needs and avoids special interest-based demands,

- Supports a broad focus for all students when accounting for concerns,

- Is contextually minded and supports creative or non-standard solutions,

- Understands supportive visibility and team influence,

- Seeks to listen, resolve, and reconcile,

- Uses the position to ensure all voices are heard with a goal for collaborative solutions,

- Is collaborative, and

- Serves for altruistic reasons.

Though these are the characteristics for an effective board member on stable and more productive boards, motivation for school board membership can ultimately affect the work performed by the Board.

Publicly elected school board members, and the superintendents they hire, are well positioned to provide the leadership necessary for improvement. This leadership hinges on an ongoing conversation focused perpetually on student learning. Alsbury and Gore (2015) note that publicly elected school board members and superintendents are positioned well to influence school improvement when they focus on student learning. They state that this "requires clear

communication, commitment to equity, and unwavering commitment to do whatever it takes to improve outcomes for children" (Alsbury & Gore, 2015, p. 170). While school board members are positioned well to influence school improvement and student outcomes, there is a lack of sufficient research regarding their motivation to do so.

School Boards and Motivation

Research regarding school board motivation is mainly limited to school board members' motives to serve in the role. Mountford and Brunner (1999) categorized the motivations for school board membership in three ways; civic, personal, or those that served on behalf of special interest groups. Such motivation has been found to be personal and complex and affect the work performed by the board (Alby, 1979; Garmire, 1962; McCarty, 1959; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971). Within the research it has been found that community member motivation for serving on a local school board can be both altruistic and personal (Alby, 1979; Garmire; 1962; Goldhammer, 1955; McCarty, 1959; Mountford, 2004; Zazzara, 1971) and even self-righteous (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Mountford, 2004; Sarason, 1995). There are also school board members that were motivated to serve by their desire to correct an existing problem (Ably, 1979) or to represent special interests (McCarty, 1959).

Beyond initial motivation for school board membership, some research has been conducted regarding community power structures and the resulting influence they have on school board members. A study by McCarty and Ramsey (1971) suggests that school boards are products of the communities in which they operate, and superintendents must be cognizant of the mode of functioning if they are to survive in their position. The research provided classifications for community power structures, school boards, and administrative styles. The classifications

assume that the community power structure determines the nature of the school board and the superintendent's administrative style. The types of community power structures are as follows:

1. Dominated

2. Factional

3. Pluralistic

4. Inert

The Dominated power structure holds that the power structure of a community is a pyramid, with a few or even one person at the top. In matters of "big policy," the power structure directs the course of events in the community. In these communities, school board members are selected because they will "take advice." For major issues, board members conform through the mechanisms of control employed by the power elite. In Dominated power structure communities, the superintendent must play the role of public servant. He or she "takes advice," does not "rock the boat," and must carry out the more important desires of the dominating power clique. In Dominated power structure communities there is often no organized opposition for positions on the school board, and the community elite can be represented by a majority or by several powerful individuals (Spring, 2005).

A Factional community power structure is a model that allows for conflict between sides of relatively even strength. In these communities, school boards' members see the voting as more important than the discussion on major topics and the majority faction always wins (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971). In Factional communities the superintendent must be a "political manipulator" and work with the majority. Because these communities often change majorities, the superintendent must be careful that he or she does not become identified with one faction too closely. In Factional communities, elections to the school board are often disputed, with board

members representing the beliefs and values of particular factions. Members of these school boards are not bound to a particular ideological position (Spring, 2005).

Other communities follow a power structure that is pluralistic with many poles of power. Presumably, there is no single power structure that must be reckoned with for any situation. Power and community interest exist and the superintendent is not free to run the schools as he or she sees fit, but the power is not overwhelming. School boards can be considered "status-congruent" in these communities and members often represent "interests," but there is no overall theme of power influence (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971). In this type of community school board members are active but not rigidly bound to one position. Discussion, often before a motion, is of utmost importance. Board meetings emphasize discussion and consensus and board members treat each other as colleagues and are free to act as a group. Superintendents in communities defined by Pluralistic power structures are "professional advisers" and are expected to give professional advice, based on the best educational research and theory.

Communities that follow an Inert power structure exhibit no active power structure at all. In these communities the school board is relatively inactive and has no reinforcement in philosophy from the community. McCarty and Ramsey (1971) refer to school boards in these communities as "sanctioning" because they are dominated by the superintendent who is seen as an expert. In communities defined by an Inert power structure the superintendent is the "decision maker." The school board becomes merely a "rubber stamp" for the important decisions made during school board meetings.

McCarty and Ramsey (1971) also found that motives for board membership emanated almost exclusively from external sources, such as influential members of the community who persuaded the individual to run for office, and they found that many of the boards were self-

perpetuating. The general feeling in the communities was that board membership was an opportunity for all, but the research indicated that those individuals defined as outliers were excluded from membership through overt and covert means of control.

While there is not a void in research regarding school board members' motivation to serve on a local school board or in how some community members may be influenced to run for school board seats, there is a lack of sufficient research on what motivates school board members to promote equity. Although the research on school leadership and board governance affirms that school board members can influence and promote educational equity and social justice practices, it is less clear about what might motivate or move school boards to action that centralizes equity measures. What would make school board members interested in promoting equity? What are the multiple ways in which school board members might explain how they see their roles in such advocacy?

In the next section, the theories relevant to motivation, a key concept in this study will be explored.

Theories of Motivation

This section of the review of relevant literature presents a discussion on major theories of motivation. The discussion begins with a general introduction to the literature of motivation, presents various theories that have claimed to accurately describe human behavior, and concludes with a focus on the most often described types of motivation.

Figure 2.1 – Motivation Theories and Types
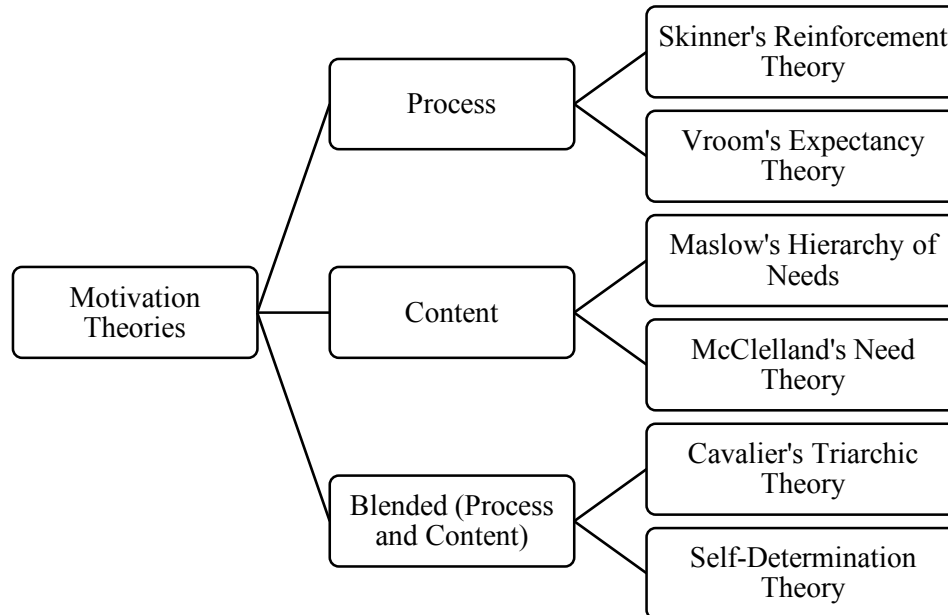
In 1896, Sigmund Freud introduced the first major cognitive theory for motivation through his psychoanalytic theory and asserted that people are motivated by powerful, unconscious drives and conflicts (Freud, 1975). Freud's psychoanalytic theory attempted to explain motivation from the psychological perspective. He perceived motivation to emerge from the psyche, which was constructed from known and unknown past experiences. He suggested that motives could be predicted through a complete understanding of the landscape of the ego, id, and superego (Freud, 1975). According to Freud's theory, everything we do, think, and emotionally feel has one of two goals: to help us survive or to prevent our destruction. While aspects of this theory were originally touted as an accurate explanation to the concept of motivation, it has been discounted through research performed by the scholarly community (Kanfer, 1990; Latham, 2012; Locke, 1991).

In 1938, Burrhus Frederic (B.F.) Skinner introduced the next major cognitive theory related to motivation through his reinforcement theory. He noted that behaviors immediately rewarded tend to be repeated, and behaviors that result in unpleasant outcomes are not (Skinner,

1991). He believed that all behavior could be explained through past reinforcements. Skinner's reinforcement theory advanced the notion that individual motivation could be explained through various behavior schemas (Skinner, 1991). His theory focused totally on what happened to an individual when he or she took some sort of action. The reinforcement theory does not focus on the causes of an individual's behavior, instead it takes for granted that the expectation of reward will influence behavior.

These cognitive theories are currently seen as providing the framework for more plausible theories of human motivation (Hoy, Miskel, & Tarter, 2012; Kanfer, 1990). Human motivation literature is now divided into two groups: process and content theories. Skinner's reinforcement theory is considered process theory. Process theories focus on how different kinds of events or outcomes can motivate behavior. Content theories attempt to identify what a person's needs are and relate motivation to fulfilling those needs.

Process Theories

In 1964, Victor Vroom argued that three distinct factors stated in the form of questions would influence motivation. Vroom labeled the first factor "expectancy," in which someone considers the possibility of doing a task by asking, "If I tried, could I do a defined task?" The second factor "instrumentality" leads to someone asking, "If I do a task, will I attain the needed outcome?" The third factor in this model is labeled "valence" and leads to someone asking, "If I do this task, will the outcome be worth the effort associated with the task?" Valence is a qualitative and subjective decision of the value of the outcome for the individual. Expectancy theory suggests that when an individual is presented with a course of action, the motivation to

proceed will be influenced by the sum of expectancy multiplied by instrumentality and valence (Vroom, 1995).

Figure 2.2 – Expectancy Theory

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                          ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
                          │              │      │ If I tried, could I do the │
                          │  Expectancy  │──────│     defined task?          │
                          │              │      │                  │
                          └──────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│              │          │              │      │ If I do a task, will I │
│  Motivation  │──────────│Instrumentality│─────│  attain the needed     │
│              │          │              │      │     outcome?           │
└──────────────┘          └──────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
                          ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
                          │              │      │ If I do this task, will the │
                          │   Valence    │──────│ outcome be worth the        │
                          │              │      │ effort associated with      │
                          └──────────────┘      │     the task?               │
                                                └──────────────────┘
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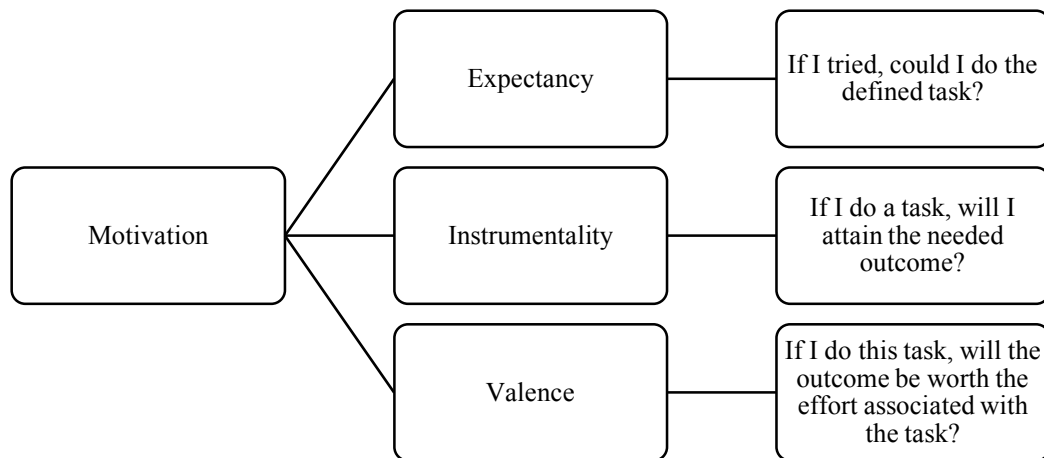
Basically, Vroom stated that the strength of a tendency to act in a specific way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will have a certain consequence and on the attractiveness and value of that specific outcome to the individual. The expectancy theory has two major assumptions: the first assumption is that individual persons have perceptions about the consequences that result from their behavioral actions and the causal relationship among these outcomes (Vroom, 1995). These perceptions, or beliefs, are referred to as either expectancies or instrumentalities. The second assumption is that individual persons have affective reactions to certain outcomes. Affective reactions reflect the positive or negative value individuals place on results of outcomes (Vroom, 1995).

According to expectancy theory, individuals will be motivated to perform by two expectancies (Isaac, Zerbe, & Pitt, 2001). The first expectancy is the probability that the effort

put forth will lead to the desired performance. The second expectancy, also referred to as instrumentality, is the probability that a particular performance will lead to preferred outcomes. When the probability is high that an effort will not be rewarded, the individual will not be highly motivated to perform a certain task.

Expectancy theory primarily relies upon extrinsic motivators to clarify causes for behaviors exhibited at work (Leonard, Beauvais, & Scholl, 1999). This theory is based on the idea that external rewards such as challenging, interesting, or exciting work, fuel human behaviors (Isaac et al, 2001).

Kinicki and Kreitner (2003) show three ways motivation is present in the expectancy theory: an individual's expectation that a specific level of effort produces the intended performance goal influences extrinsic motivation. Moreover, the individual's perceived chances of actually getting certain outcomes by accomplishing the organizational goals affect motivation as well. Lastly, individuals are motivated to the extent that they value the outcomes received. Concerning extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, one can see that this expectancy theory focuses more on extrinsic motivation than on intrinsic motivation. Hennessey, Moran, Altringer, and Amabile (2015) state that intrinsic motivation is the motivation to do something for the pure enjoyment of the work itself, while extrinsic motivation is accessed to achieve some external goal or to meet some constraint. The focus in expectancy theory is extrinsic because it is based on receiving and valuing rewards. Intrinsic motivation is still present here, but to a lesser extent than extrinsic motivation.

In 1977, Albert Bandura introduced another model of motivation that exists in process theory for motivation called self-efficacy theory. Bandura stated, "Motivation, which is primarily concerned with activation and persistence of behavior, is also partly rooted in cognitive

activities" (p. 193). He found that when people overcame a threatening situation, they developed more confidence and were motivated to achieve at a higher level. When people failed or avoided the perceived challenge, they were unable to enhance their coping skills and maintained their original fears (Bandura, 1977).

Content Theories

In 1943, Abraham Maslow introduced the first content theory related to human motivation. His introduction of a hierarchy of needs was used to define an individual's motivation. Maslow suggested that humans have five essential needs: biological and physiological needs, security and safety needs, social needs, ego or esteem needs, and self-actualization or fulfillment needs (Maslow, 2013). He stated that the needs are hierarchical in nature, and before a human can move from one to the other, certain circumstances must be satisfied. Maslow argued that individuals move through the defined stages in a sequential manner and are motivated to move from one level to the other as soon as the conditions of the stage are satisfied (Maslow, 2013). He found that people are forever striving to meet goals related to their needs (Maslow, 2013). Because the initial level needs are more immediate and urgent, they come into play as the source and direction of a person's goal if they are not satisfied (Maslow, 2013).

Figure 2.3 – Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
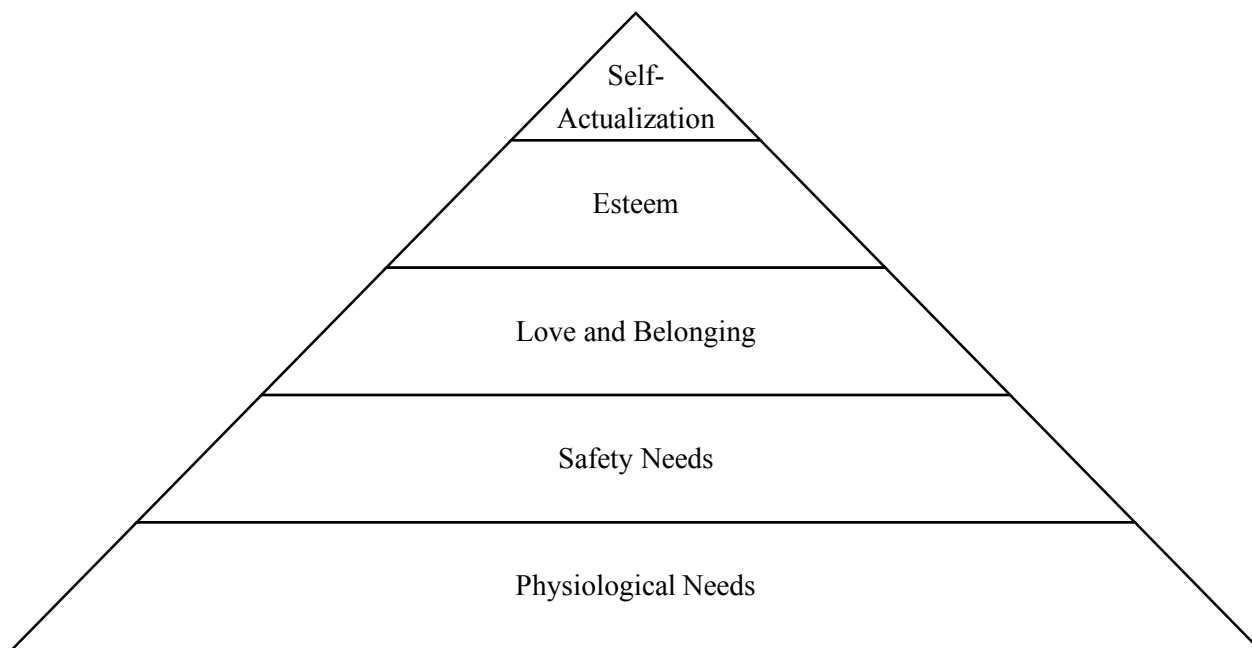
David McClelland, one of the most prominent researchers in content theory for human

motivation, used Maslow's hierarchy of needs to focus more specifically on individual

motivation. McClelland (1971, p. 56) defined motive as a "recurrent concern for a goal state, or

condition, appearing in fantasy, which drives, directs, and selects behavior of the individual." As

a result of the experiences people have in their personal and professional lives, McClelland's

Need Theory they will acquire three key desires (Schermerhorn, 2010). McClelland's theory is

based on a belief that to understand human behavior and ultimately motivation, we must first

understand the individual's needs and inclinations. One of McClelland's described needs is

achievement or the desire to do better, solve problems, and master complex tasks. Another need

is affiliation or the desire for positive and personal relationships with others. Finally, the need for

power is the desire to have control over others and influence their behavior. Based on an

individual's personality, the dominating need or desire of an individual in certain situations could be used as the predictor for individual behavior (Schermerhorn, 2010).

Figure 2.4 – Need Theory

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                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │   Motivation     │
                    └──────────────────┘
                            │
         ┌──────────────────┼──────────────────┐
┌────────────────┐ ┌────────────────┐ ┌────────────────┐
│   Need for     │ │   Need for     │ │   Need for     │
│  Achievement   │ │    Power       │ │  Affiliation   │
└────────────────┘ └────────────────┘ └────────────────┘
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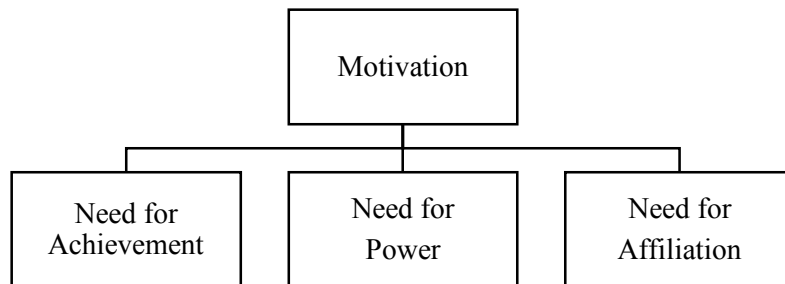
Blended Process and Content Theories

Cavalier's Triarchic Theory of Motivation is the result of a blending of systems theory and personality trait theory and combines three motivational subsystems that are powerfully interrelated. "This Triarchic Theory of human functioning calls for a modified open systems approach in which three motivational subsystems are seen as autonomous, interactive, and highly interdependent" (Cavalier, 2000, p. 40). The system includes three parts: formative motivation, operational motivation, and thematic motivation. Cavalier (2000, p. 41) suggested the formative motivation system, "...consists of all developmental experience bearing upon the present state of the organism," the operational motivation system "...includes all current awareness, evaluation, judgments and decisions," and the thematic motivation system "...includes the directional activity of the person in terms of life's purpose, goals, and ultimate values in living."

Motivation in this model is not a function of psychoanalytical or behavioral controls. It is a function of decision-making and choice. Cavalier rejected psychoanalytical and behavioral

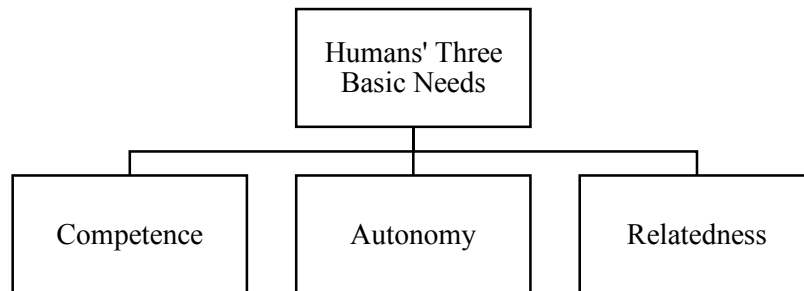theories by arguing that humans have free will and the ability to make decisions. Psychoanalytical theories are characterized as being deterministic in nature, and behavioral motivation is strictly a function of operant conditioning. Cavalier suggested psychoanalytical and behavioral theories of motivation fail to consider the human ability to reason and make choices and should be rejected for these reasons, and the basis of motivation exists in the autonomous, interactive, and interdependent aspects of the model. Thus, intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation merge as the individual reaches a decision and plots a course of action.

Another theory that blends process and content theories, self-determination theory, proposes that people are inherently motivated to incorporate or internalize the management of important activities, even those that might initially be considered uninteresting (Deci, et. al., 1994). In self-determination theory, internalization is the process of transforming external regulations into internal regulations. Successful internalization involves the integration of formerly external regulations into one's sense of self, typically in the form of important personal values (Ryan, 1995). Internalization is self-determined because it represents the adoption of beliefs as committed, personal values. If internalization is not realized, introjection is experienced as non-self-determined because it is characterized by approval-based pressures that result in behavioral regulation (Ryan, Rigsby, & King, 1993). Introjection is associated with ambivalence because "while it is internal to the person, it remains conflicted and external to the self" (Ryan, 1995, p. 406). The two forms of internalization, personal values and introjection, are associated with distinctive patterns of thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Self-determination theory assumes that the internalization process can be examined through people's conscious experience of the reasons behind their actions through autonomy, competence, or relatedness. These reasons are considered antecedents of motivation. The

antecedent referred to as autonomy involves self-initiation and self-regulation of one's own behavior. Competence is an antecedent that affects one's ability to interact proficiently or effectively with the environment while relatedness refers to feelings of closeness and belonging to a social group.

Figure 2.5 – Self-Determination Theory

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              ┌─────────────────┐
              │  Humans' Three  │
              │   Basic Needs   │
              └─────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐
  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐
  │Competence │  │ Autonomy  │  │Relatedness│
  └───────────┘  └───────────┘  └───────────┘
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Within self-determination theory, Deci and Ryan (1985) delineate the different forms of motivation on a continuum that includes amotivation, the state of lacking the intention to act, with extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. When amotivated, people either do not act at all or act without intent. Amotivation results from not valuing an activity (Ryan, 1995), not feeling competent to do it (Bandura, 1986), or not expecting it to yield the desired outcome (Seligman, 1992).

Figure 2.6 – Self-Determination Theory Continuum

Quality of Behavior	Nonself-determined	← →				Self-determined
Type of Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Type of Regulation	Non-regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Perceived Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal

As it relates to extrinsic motivation, self-determination theory includes five classifications of behavior. Each of the categories identified describes theoretically, experientially, and functionally distinct types of motivation. Extrinsically motivated behaviors cover the continuum between amotivation and intrinsic motivation, varying in the extent to which their regulation is autonomous. The most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. Integration occurs when identified regulations are fully assimilated to the self, which means they have been evaluated and brought into congruence with one's other values and needs. Actions characterized by integrated motivation share many qualities with intrinsic motivation, although they are still considered extrinsic because they are done to attain separable outcomes rather than for their inherent enjoyment. Using self-determination theory, the traditional state of intrinsic motivation, is defined as acting solely based on interest, enjoyment, and inherent satisfaction.

In conclusion, motivation is often referred to as either intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation to do or act in one's own interests or simply for the enjoyment of

the activity itself (Hennessey et al, 2015). Robbins (2003) depicts it as the desire to work on something that is interesting, challenging, satisfying, exciting, or involving. Intrinsic motivation is the innate and natural propensity to engage an individual's interests and exercise an individual's skills and capabilities and in so doing, to look for and achieve optimal opportunities and challenges. This motivation comes from internal tendencies and can direct and motivate behavior without the presence of constraints or rewards (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Extrinsic motivation refers to performing an activity with a feeling of pressure, tension, or anxiety just to make sure that one would achieve the result that he or she desires (Lindenberg, 2001). Hennessey et al (2015) depict extrinsic motivation as the motivation to do something to make sure that some external goal is attained or that some external imposed constraint is met. Extrinsically motivated behaviors are actions that cause the attainment of rewards that are externally imposed, including material possessions, salary, additional bonuses, positive feedback and evaluations from others, fringe benefits, and prestige (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

This section of the review of relevant literature presented a brief discussion on some of the existing psychological, behavioral, and cognitive theories of motivation. A few of the prevalent cognitive content and process theories were included to illustrate the range of the discourse in this field. The review of theory includes a few key blended approaches that draw from past research on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Research on Motivation

Research to date proves that motivation for school board membership is personal and complex and affects the work performed by the board (Alby, 1979; Garmire, 1962; McCarty, 1959; McCarty & Ramsey, 1971). This motivation needs further assessment to better understand

the way it affects board engagement to promote equity and social justice efforts in education. There are two descriptors of motivating factors (Covington, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand, 1997): extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation refers to tangible rewards and incentives, beyond that of a feeling of accomplishment. Improved employment opportunities, such as job promotion, salary increase, or a new job title are all examples of extrinsic motivating factors. Intrinsic motivating factors encompass the satisfaction of completing a personal challenge or undertaking and learning something new.

Intrinsic Motivation

Vallerand et. al. (1992) contend that intrinsic motivation occurs when individuals engage in an activity for their own personal satisfaction unrelated to a tangible product or process. A board member who supports educational equity or social justice initiatives because he/she finds the work challenging, involving, and enjoys the satisfaction of policy-making, is influenced by intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic Motivation

Ruby (2008) determined that extrinsic motivation is defined as performance for some type of tangible payoff, such as grades, money, or recognition. If rewards are external to the individual and in the form of a tangible product or process, they are considered to be extrinsic (Covington, 2007). For example, if a board member seeks tangible rewards, such as compliance with federal regulations or approval and recognition of the school district, for supporting educational equity and social justice in schools, then the board members could be said to be influenced by extrinsic factors. Intrinsic and extrinsic categories of motivation cannot be taken to

be absolute and often motivation is a combination of these and other influencing factors. This study looked for the ways in which school board members described their motivations for equity and the challenges and opportunities as interpreted by them.

Influential Factors

The fact that this study examined board members' motivation to engage in educational equity and social justice work as school leaders, afforded the researcher the opportunity to focus the research on factors that might influence a school board member's desire to engage in such work. In addition to investigating motivation factors, this research examined the influential (inhibiting and facilitating) factors school board members encountered when working to develop school board policy for educational equity. Inhibitors or barriers individuals encounter can positively or negatively impact the desire to follow through on their initial decision to take a stance on challenging issues.

Summary

An analysis of the relevant literature suggests that this research is critically important to improving outcomes for students accessing a free and high-quality public education. Given the fact that public schools are governed by school board members, and recognizing the intense focus on accountability to improve student achievement, promoting educational equity is a key factor in closing achievement gaps and improving educational outcomes. Since equity-based and social justice-related leadership requires systems-based change, new approaches and efforts to ensure equity are not always popular throughout the communities that school board members

serve. Therefore, the motivation of school board members to support equity and social justice efforts in their school districts is important to understand.

The nature of motivation is complex, and scholars have devoted a substantial portion of their research agenda to understand the multiple facets of the subject (Bandura, 1977; Cavalier, 2000; Vroom, 1995). Understanding motivation and the myriad of conceptions associated with the existing research is difficult to condense.

In order to tie existing research to the processes that were used to conduct this study, a specific focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as other influential factors were used to ground the methodological basis of the dissertation. While there is a plethora of studies and theories regarding motivation, there is a lack of research focused on the motivation of school board members to support challenging initiatives such as educational equity and social justice in schools. An overview of the qualitative approach, using a qualitative descriptive study approach, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis is provided in Chapter III.

Chapter III – Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology for this qualitative descriptive study regarding what motivates school board members to support equity and social justice work. A qualitative research approach allowed me to gain insights directly from those involved in approving such efforts. The applicability of qualitative descriptive design and a naturalistic approach for this study are discussed in this chapter. The research approach, including the context of the study, data sources, and data collection and analysis methods as well as ethical concerns are primary components of this chapter. Given my unique position in this research, an overview of my positionality in the study is provided first.

Positionality of the Researcher

In qualitative research, no bias can ever be completely abolished. Instead, the researcher must be careful to be part of the research but not in the research (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). To become aware of one's positionality in relation to the research process is one way of mitigating biases in qualitative research. In this research study my professional relationship with some of the research subjects within one of the school districts is important to state. Specifically, I serve as a superintendent of schools and interviewed school board members. Further, it is worth noting that participants in the study shared a professional relationship with me. I currently serve as a superintendent in a member school district of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium, which led to professional relationships with the superintendents in the school districts that were part of the research. As an active member of the Consortium, I have planned professional development events provided by the consortium for teachers and administrators as well as maintained a role planning an annual African American Male Initiative (AAMI) Summer

Institute for the last five years. In addition, I currently serve the Consortium as the President Elect for the 2019-20 school year. Careful documentation and protocols were used to manage this bias in the research process by strictly adhering to thematic analysis of data protocols. As recommended by Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017), the data analysis was conducted in a "precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis" (p. 1).

As noted below, the relationship between participants and I led to navigating a difficult path as 'insider.' A summary of how this relationship was navigated in this study is described later in this chapter in the section: Role of the Researcher.

A researcher generally begins a qualitative study based on a question or curiosity developed from direct observations related to personal or professional experiences including those related to work, family, social or political issues, or from the literature (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). This was true in this study as it was my personal experience as a public school administrator and through additional observations made during different field research assignments as a doctoral student, that led to distinct questions and a belief in the need for more information regarding the motivation of school board members to support improved student outcomes that have inspired this research.

The following guiding questions were derived from the purpose of the study and served to focus this research:

1. How do participants describe the influences on their decision to support educational equity and social justice efforts in schools?

2. How do participants describe their experiences in supporting educational equity and social justice in schools?

3. How do participants describe their motivation to support educational equity and social justice efforts in schools?

My approach to the research was mainly inductive, though with these three guiding questions, there was a hint of deductive research too. By asking participants to describe influences on their decisions, I was in a way testing my own theory that something did influence them. In other words, I do believe that in order to act, participants were motivated in one manner or another and as such, influenced to do so. This perspective influenced my approach to coding and developing categories and themes during my analysis of the data which is described later in this chapter.

The results of this study serve to inform new insights in an area of little research: motivation of school board members to support equity and social justice work. A qualitative descriptive approach was selected to conduct this research. After initially considering case study as a methodology, it was rejected once it was clear that interviews based on participant perspectives would be the primary source of data for the study. In addition, based on the fact that I conducted an in-depth investigation of a unique group of board members to explore the causes of underlying principles associated with their support of educational equity and social justice efforts, the approach using interviews pointed to a descriptive research study.

Rationale for Research Approach

A qualitative methodology was utilized in this study in that I relied on the perception of participant's experiences to identify what they know, think, and feel in a given situation (Patton, 2002; Stake, 2010). Qualitative researchers are concerned with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive

and grounded in the lived experiences of people. In alignment with many of the core characteristics that define qualitative research (Cresswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam & Grenier, 2019) in this study:

- I gathered the information from participants,

- Data were analyzed by the researcher by determining patterns, categories and themes,

- I kept a focus on participants and the meaning they provided in response to interview questions, and

- I utilized an emergent design in conducting semi-structured interview questions to obtain relevant and useful information related to the issue.

Qualitative research is highly inductive in nature and may provide material for further study, either involving quantitative or qualitative perspectives. This study was conducted through a qualitative lens utilizing a descriptive approach. Qualitative description has been identified as an appropriate means for a researcher to understand how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). A qualitative descriptive study is generally employed to discover the who, what, where, and why of events or experiences (Neergaard et al, 2009). This methodology is grounded in various assumptions.

Philosophical, Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions of Qualitative Descriptive Research

Qualitative description is an inductive process that is subjective in nature (Bradshaw, Atkinson, & Doody, 2017). Such research is grounded in philosophical assumptions that recognize the subjectivity of both the participants' experiences as well as those of the researcher. It lies within a naturalistic approach and is designed to develop understanding of a phenomenon

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(Bradshaw et al, 2017). Through qualitative descriptive research, perspectives and words of the participants and the meaning ascribed to them by participants are further interpreted by the researcher and are the foundation to the findings (Bradshaw et al, 2017).

Ontological assumptions also influence the qualitative description method. As with naturalistic research, qualitative description is grounded in relativism meaning that reality is subjective and varies based on the perspectives of the participants (Parahoo, 2014). The in-depth understanding derived through qualitative descriptive research is first founded on participants' literal descriptions in the research (Sandelowski, 2010). The findings are then formulated based on thorough analysis and interpretation of the meaning that is ascribed by both participants and the researcher to described events (Bradshaw et al., 2017).

With regard to epistemological assumptions, qualitative research is grounded in subjectivism which assumes that the world does not exist independently of others' knowledge or awareness of it (Grix, 2004). With subjectivism, participants' awareness of the world and how they live in it is the basis of reality and qualitative research attempts to find their interpretations of their world (Bradshaw et al., 2017). In qualitative descriptive research the findings are constructed not only through quotations and descriptions of study participants, but also by the researcher (Bradshaw et al., 2017).

Merriam and Tisdell (2009) contend that a qualitative descriptive study is an appropriate design to understand and interpret observations of education. A key methodological assumption included in this research was the use of a qualitative description design to generate data, interpret results, and determine findings. With qualitative descriptive research a purposeful sample of participants is selected with knowledge of the phenomena being researched (Bradshaw et al, 2017). In this study, the descriptions obtained from participants were then analyzed and

synthesized using a thematic analysis framework. This afforded me the ability to describe the viewpoint of participants to provide a rich description of their experiences in easily understood language (Sullivan-Bolyai, Bova, & Harper, 2005). A descriptive study methodology afforded me the ability to stay close to the data and use participants' language in developing a comprehensive summary and description of results in forming conclusions to address the study's purpose.

The driving questions of this research afforded a full exploration, comprehension, and understanding of an educational issue - in this case, school board member motivation to support equity and social justice initiatives. The answers to the research question have helped to provide insight, discovery, and interpretation relative to understanding what motivates school board members to support equity and social justice work.

Research Context and Sampling Strategy

The participants selected for this study represented a select set of public school districts that are members of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC). The Consortium was founded in 2012 by leaders of seven public school districts in Metropolitan Milwaukee. The leaders of the Consortium have collaborated together to develop common professional development options for their school communities with a stated mission to eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps for children attending their schools. The school leaders of the CAGC institutions are committed to addressing the persisting inequities typically found in American schools. The member institutions of the CAGC are primarily high achieving suburban and private schools with leaders who believe in the notion that equity is ensuring all children have what they need to achieve success.

The study focused on participation by board members who represented membership in the Consortium. The CAGC is a regional coalition of over 30 diverse suburban public school districts and private organizations set in southeastern Wisconsin. Participants in the research served or serve as school board members representing the founding organizations of the CAGC. Participants were comprised of school board members representing the three school districts that had active school board policy specific to promoting equity in education at the time of the study. School boards are expected to review, revise, develop, and at times delete policies. An active policy is one that has been approved by the Board of Education. Most school board policy is designed to inform the operations and functions of the school district. Though there are school districts in the state that have policies to support educational equity, through membership in the CAGC, these school districts have formally committed to sharing best practices, pooling together what they know, and furthering their work together to improve outcomes for all students. Note that I used pseudonyms for these three school districts in an attempt to better protect the identification of study participants. The sites included in the study were Smith Public School District, Johnson Public School District, and Williams Public School District.

Table 3.1 – Site Considerations

School District	Johnson Public	Smith Public	Williams Public
Type	Suburban	Suburban	Suburban
Number of Board Members	7	7	7
Founding Member of the Consortium (CAGC)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Educational Equity Policy Adopted	2018	2015	1990

Years Educational Equity Policy Has Been in Place	1	4	29

The three school districts that met the research criteria were the only three school districts in the CAGC with formally approved school board policies (see Appendix A) that promote educational equity. Membership in the Consortium and active school board policy related to educational equity are not the only things that the school districts included in the study had in common. As it relates to site demographics based on student enrollment, there were similarities across the three school districts included in the study as depicted in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 – Site Demographics

District	Johnson Public	Smith Public	Williams Public
Grades Served	K4-12	K4-12	K4-12
Race/Ethnicity: Asian	8%	5%	5%
Race/Ethnicity: Black or African American	7%	17%	8%
Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latino	5%	7%	5%
Race/Ethnicity: White	77%	65%	78%
Race/Ethnicity: Two or More Races	4%	7%	4%
Students w/ Disabilities	10%	12%	9%
Economically Disadvantaged	9%	21%	2%
English Learners	3%	2%	2%

This data was obtained using the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Annual District Report Cards and is from the 2017-18 school year. Note that in the state of Wisconsin, kindergarten is provided to students prior to grade 1 for students that are 4 and 5 years old. Four-year-old kindergarten is depicted in the Table 3.2 as K4. With the exception of the percentage of the enrollment considered economically disadvantaged, each of the subcategories reported in the site demographics table comparing the school districts included in the study are within twelve percentage points of one another.

There are other similarities across these three school districts as well. Related to student outcomes as measured on the same State Report Cards, all three school districts scored above the state average in the four priority areas measured: student achievement, district growth, closing gaps, and on-track and postsecondary readiness. The state average in this case is considered the state average for all kindergarten through grade 12 school districts. The closing gaps score from these results is most relevant to this study in that it is designed to "reveal whether teaching and learning are affecting all groups to the same degree, shedding light on the district's educational equity" (https://dpi.wi.gov).

The closing gaps score on the District Report Cards from the 2017-18 school year measures the performance of unique racial/ethnic groups of students as well as students with disabilities, English learners, and students receiving free or reduced lunch in school district across five school years and against the performance of the delineated group's state comparison group of students from majority group descriptor results. The data used to determine a score is derived from three types of gaps that include English/language arts and mathematics achievement results as well as outcomes based on graduation rates. The score is influenced by the outcomes from these indicators by student groups and scores are positively affected when test

scores and graduation rates for unique student groups increase faster than their statewide comparison groups. The state average score for the closing gaps priority area on the 2017-18 state report card was a 67.9 out of 100 possible points. Each of the school districts included in this study exceeded this score by at least 11 points.

Table 3.3 – State Report Results: Closing Gaps

State Report Card 2017-18 Results	State Score	Johnson Public	Smith Public	Williams Public
Priority Area: Closing Gaps	67.9/100	82.4/100	79.1/100	85.1/100

Purposeful sampling (Merriam & Grenier, 2019) as described above was employed in order to select the sites most appropriate for this study.

Data Sources and Participant Recruitment

In an effort to promote consistent representation across the school districts involved in the research, participation was limited to up to three board members from each relevant CAGC organization who served on their board when educational equity-related policy or policies were developed. As a form of recruitment, I communicated first with superintendents of these school districts to gain a signature of approval acknowledging they were aware of research being conducted with board members. Board members were then contacted via email to gauge interest and willingness to participate in the study. If interested, board members were then provided information regarding the research via an Institutional Review Board approved Informed

Consent for Research Participation form (see Appendix B) that they signed prior to participating in semi-structured interviews with the researcher.

Data Sources

The primary data source used in the study was individual, open-ended, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C) with each of the seven participants. The interviews lasted sixty to seventy minutes. A semi-structured interview approach was utilized along with follow-up probing questions. This approach was used to elicit the interviewee's ideas and opinions on the topic as opposed to leading the participant toward preconceived choices (Zorn, 2008). Probing and clarifying questions were utilized for the purpose of allowing participants to share their perspectives and experiences and to afford the researcher the opportunity to gain a deeper level of understanding. Participants were informed that the interview would be recorded unless they preferred otherwise. Based on the preference of the participants, some interviews were recorded while others were not. In cases where interviews were not recorded I took notes during the interview and compiled them in a reflexive journal kept to log reflections at the conclusion of each such interview. In total, four of the seven interviews were recorded. For those interviews that were not recorded, I immediately utilized a reflexive journaling approach and reconstructed the interview based on these notes. The combination of the reflexive journal entries, reconstructed interviews and jottings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) provided rich data for use in the study. I studied the board policies for each district aligned with educational equity and reviewed the school district's past participation in Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC) activities and programs. This preparation combined with the detailed and informative interview results produced rich and thick data.

Participants

Current and former members of public school districts' boards of education in the CAGC were recruited by me to participate in an interview. I recruited board members from only those school districts that were founding members of the CAGC, ensuring at the very least, that their district leadership - school board members and administrators - were conceptually focused on educational equity and owned a shared commitment to closing achievement gaps in their school systems. Each of the seven board members that were recruited by the researcher responded and consented to participate in an interview.

Three of the participants were male and four were female. Each of the participants identify as white, were over the age of 40 and had served in their role as a school board member for at least two years. Of the seven participants, five were still active board members at the time the interviews were conducted. All participants were active board members when the school districts for which they served adopted school board policy specific to promoting equity in education.

Table 3.4 – Participant Demographics

Participant	Community	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Years of Board Service
Bruce Davis	Smith Public School District	M	White	3
Stephanie Hansen	Smith Public School District	F	White	15
Karen Krueger	Johnson Public School District	F	White	6
Mark Larson	Smith Public School District	M	White	15
Kimberly Martin	Johnson Public School District	F	White	2
Walter Meyer	Williams Public School District	M	White	6
Cynthia Thompson	Johnson Public School District	F	White	3

A short description of each participant is included below.

Bruce Davis taught in the school district he served as a school board member for over thirty years. Service to others is of critical importance to him and whether it be in his role in public education or at his local church, he has determined that it his calling. In his role on the board he focused intently on improving communication across stakeholder groups.

Stephanie Hansen, a business executive with interests in quality improvement, is a mother of two and advocate for public education. Her keen eye for efficiencies, transparency, and positive growth have made her a valuable asset to the school district. In addition to her role on the local school board, Stephanie serves as a co-chair on the region's public schools policy advocacy group.

Karen Krueger is a local small business owner that has been involved in her children's education and held leadership positions in numerous school district parent-based ancillary groups. She is a strong advocate for special education and careers programming. In her role as a board member, Karen prioritizes communication and ensuring that everyone has a voice.

Mark Larson is a board member that prides himself in putting students first. His professional experiences range across numerous disciplines from law and finance to systems and logistics. Mark believes the school district must serve the population of its entire community and supports a broad range of programming to support choices, diversity, and equity.

Kimberly Martin is a leader in the business community and active in a number of professional and community organizations. Her work can often take her outside the state of Wisconsin. She is a champion for inclusion and an expert in corporate learning and development. With one child in the school district, she spent time prior to her role on the board as a co-chair on the PTO and volunteering in the schools.

Walter Meyer holds a positive outlook about schools. An advocate for comprehensive programming both during and outside of the instructional day, his daughters were respected athletes during their time in high school. His membership on the board was helpful in turbulent times in that he was considered a credible and reputable member of the community.

Cynthia Thompson was initially a scientist before becoming a teacher in the school district in which she now serves as a board member. Her husband is a local high school alum and her granddaughter attends one of the local elementary schools. Cynthia lobbies regularly for transparent communication and collaboration on the part of the school district.

Data Collection Methods

Qualitative description research provides a formidable means of discovering the worldviews and perspectives of participants (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). A qualitative descriptive approach is an ideal method to use when information is derived directly from participants and where time and resources are limited (Neergaard et al, 2009). For this study, it was first assured that participants represented the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC) as members on a board of education in school districts that are considered founding organizations for the CAGC. I additionally ensured that participants were active school board members when an educational equity-related policy was developed and approved. It was important to me that those that participated in interviews had been members of the board when educational equity was formally considered by the full board. By focusing on policy implementation and action, this assured me that the board members included in the study had been involved in such efforts. Semi-structured interviews with individual participants that lasted on average of about sixty to seventy minutes were then conducted by me. In total, there were seven participants included in the study; three representing the Johnson Public School District, three representing the Smith Public School District, and one representing the Williams Public School District. Though it would have been preferred to have equal representation from each of the three school districts, only one school board member that was active when such policy was adopted in the Williams Public School District responded with interest in participating in the research.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the means of collecting data from school board member participants. The semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks a series of predetermined but open-ended questions. Semi-structured

interviews are preferred over more structured interviews because of the effectiveness of semi-structured interviews in gaining more insight about a particular situation or phenomenon. They are a good means of determining "the why" to a participant's response or actions (Miles & Gilbert, 2005). Semi-structured interviews are a valuable means of learning about participants' motivation behind their behavior (Raworth, Sweetman, Narayan, Rowlands, & Hopkins, 2012).

The semi-structured interviews utilized for this research offered topics and questions to the participants and were carefully designed to elicit their ideas and opinions on the topic of educational equity. The topics and questions were developed so as not to lead the participant toward preconceived choices. I then followed up each established prompt and question with additional probing questions to get in-depth data on topics of interest related to the research. The semi-structured interview procedure employed to collect data for this study was as follows:

1. A date, time, and location to conduct the interview was agreed upon based on the input from participants;

2. I provided contact information and allowed participants to ask any questions about the interview;

3. Prior to asking any research questions, I explained the purpose of the interview; addressed terms of confidentiality; explained the format of the interview; indicated how long the interview would likely take; asked whether the participant approved the interview to be recorded, and informed the participant that participation was and would remain voluntary throughout the study. I also shared with participants the definition of educational equity that I was using for this study.

Data Analysis Methods

I analyzed the data collected using a qualitative research method called thematic analysis. This method of analysis can be used across a wide range of research theories and questions (Nowell et al, 2017). The method ensures the researcher identifies, analyzes, organizes, describes, and reports themes found within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was useful in that this study includes numerous participants with different perspectives and through data analysis, the researcher was able to highlight similarities and differences while also generating unanticipated insights. It is considered a well-structured method to handling data because it produces a clear and organized final report (King, Cassell, & Symon, 2004).

Thematic analysis requires the researcher to engage with the data set through six phases that though presented as linear, are actually navigated by moving backward and forward between phases as part of an iterative and reflective process (Nowell et al, 2017). In navigating the six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) I:

1. Familiarized myself with the data,

2. Generated initial codes,

3. Searched for themes,

4. Reviewed themes,

5. Defined and named themes, and

6. Produced the report.

The description below summarizes my engagement in each of the six phases and provides an overview of the coding process used to generate themes through the analysis of data derived from the semi-structured interviews.

1. Familiarizing Oneself with the Data: I ensured prolonged engagement with the data, documented theoretical and reflective thoughts as well as potential codes/themes, and kept all data field notes, recordings, and other research materials.

2. Generating Initial Codes: I used a coding framework and the support of reflexive notes to simplify and focus on specific characteristics of the data. At this stage in the analysis components of participant responses were coded in categories such as "governance" and "superintendent input". As recommended (Braun & Clark, 2006), I worked "systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data item" and identified interesting aspects of the data items that helped form the basis for themes across the data set. In total, seventeen unique codes were generated in this stage.

3. Searching for Themes: During this phase, I worked to make sense of connections across the data by grouping the most prolific codes and documenting the development of concepts and themes. Developing themes across the data moves beyond the simple description used in generating codes and is a means of identifying relationships across the data (Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2006).

4. Reviewing Themes: Once a set of themes was devised, I then reviewed the coded data extracts for each theme to consider whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern. Inadequacies in the initial coding and themes were revealed, relevant issues in the data not covered by an existing code were considered, and changes were made to reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole. Themes such as "personal experiences" and "external support" were developed through this process.

5. Defining and Naming Themes: After refining the themes and reviewing the data set multiple times, I could clearly define the themes and succinctly describe the scope and

content of each one. Once the themes were formalized, they were categorized and claims were developed.

6. Producing the Report: With the themes and claims fully established, I then conducted the final analysis to finalize conclusions, consider implications, and determine opportunities for future research.

The purpose of using thematic analysis to inform findings in this research was to create thoughtful, rich, and trustworthy research outcomes. Compared to other means of analyzing data, thematic analysis provides a more flexible approach than others in that it can be used across a wide variety of research methodologies (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

Though the phases of thematic analysis can be described in a matter that might make the process appear clean and easy, the reality is that this process was challenging and at times, messy. Moving backward and forward between phases required much persistence and reflection. As depicted in Table 3.5, many of the process tasks performed required me to navigate multiple phases of thematic analysis at the same time.

Table 3.5 – Data Analysis by Thematic Analysis

Data Analysis Process Tasks Performed	Thematic Analysis Phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
Semi-structured interviews performed.	---
Interviews, reflections, and hand-written notes recorded.	1
Recordings and hand-written notes transcribed.	1
Recordings, reflections, and hand-written notes reviewed to ensure all points were recorded accurately.	1 & 2
Final list of transcripts/notes compiled by participant for analysis.	1 & 2
First review of data focused on the identification of codes.	2 & 3
Codes were identified in the data using numbered descriptive code in the right margin.	2 & 3
Second review of data using numbered descriptive codes to further focus and ensure consistency in codes.	3 & 4
Data sorted by codes via copy/pasting text in electronic document.	4 & 5
Third review of data identifying overlapping points and reflecting on depth and breadth within each code to form categories.	4 & 5
Numerous further passes over data, condensing data at each stage to affirm categories and formulate themes.	5
Generation of data overview and summary by theme.	6

Depicted below in Table 3.6 are the codes and categories that developed through the thematic analysis process. The themes that were determined through this process are reported as findings in Chapter IV.

Table 3.6 – Categories and Codes

Category	Code
Student Outcomes	Student Outcomes
	Achievement Gaps
Expert Support	Expert Support Grounded in Research
External Support	External Input from Community Stakeholder/s
	Support from External Organizations or Groups
Superintendent Influence	Superintendent Input
Collaborative Relationships	Collaborative Board Member Relationships
	Stakeholder Relationships
Policy Governance	Non-Negotiables
	Governance
	Policy
Personal Experiences	Personal Experiences
Moral Imperative	Board Member Motivated to Run Based on Equity Platform
	Being part of something big…
	Ensuring People Have What They Need
	Right Thing to Do

Role of the Researcher

I am a doctoral student under the supervision of the researcher's doctoral dissertation chair. In addition, I have completed all doctoral coursework necessary to utilize qualitative research techniques as required by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In this qualitative study I worked on my own as a human instrument to collect and analyze the data. As such, the following describes all relevant aspects of my role including possible biases and relevant experiences that were accounted for in designing the study.

Responsibilities

I was responsible for the creation of the semi-structured interview questions and follow-up probes, along with the collection of the data. I recorded those interviews for which participants granted permission and took notes for all interviews while facilitating the data collection. I was responsible for all the collecting, organizing, and coding of information prior to analysis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

This research, a qualitative descriptive study specific to the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium, was conducted within the state of Wisconsin and more specifically, all participants in the study were from the southeastern part of the state. Conclusions were drawn based on data analysis by the researcher from interviews conducted with school board members. As it relates to trustworthiness, it was imperative that I ensure that the qualitative research was conducted in a rigorous and methodical manner to yield meaningful and useful results.

Challenges of the qualitative method selected for this study include my experience as a school administrator. Given my status as an educator, participation as a member administrator in the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium, and professional assignment as a superintendent in one of the school districts included in the study, this study should be considered insider research. Such research is not unique to the field of education and is defined as research conducted by a member of a social group, organization, or culture (Greene, 2014). There are advantages and disadvantages to insider research.

Insider researchers have advantages over outside researchers in that their connection to the study can lead to a greater depth and breadth of understanding of the population being studied (Kanuha, 2000). That said, insider researchers must account for concerns that they may know too much or be too close to the research project. Within the methodology the researcher must account for objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity in formulating the findings (Kanuha, 2000). I remained conscious of the need to ensure that any details that could reveal the identity of participants easily throughout this process were navigated carefully.

Along with the process I employed that was described earlier in this chapter to ensure trustworthiness in the data analysis, additional measures were taken to build trustworthiness in the research. In the initial communication to possible participants and at the onset of interviews with each participant, I fully disclosed my positionality in the research and insider status. Additionally, I described and adhered to collecting and analyzing data with great care to maintain confidentiality. Beyond the process for data analysis, disclosure, and confidentiality, it is also important to consider power as it relates to positionality in insider research (Greene, 2014).

This research was conducted by a superintendent of schools with the participants in the study being limited to school board members. While critics of insider research hold valid concerns regarding possible power struggles with participants when the researcher holds a powerful position relative to participants, this is not the situation in this study. School board members are positioned within public school districts in the state of Wisconsin as the sole leaders of the organization to which the superintendent reports. A key role of school board members is to supervise and evaluate the superintendent. In other words, as it relates to positionality in this study, I did not hold any position of power over the participants. If anything, I could be considered vulnerable as a researcher in having to report to some participants of the study in my professional capacity. This vulnerability further reinforced the need to stay close to the data and be transparent in describing the data analysis and methods for developing findings. Additionally, since the topic of the research was to determine the motivation of participants to support educational equity, the study did not present situations in which power differentials between the participants and I was the focus. In short, the data attained from this study cannot lead to conflicts between the participants and I. There are no findings regarding the skill or ability of the participants or me in carrying out our roles and responsibilities and therefore no conflicts to manage or navigate.

To ensure credibility in the findings, I provided direct quotes in presenting interview results (Tracy, 2010). Instead of telling the reader what to think in summarizing the data, I collected, analyzed, and shared the data attained in the study in a manner that showed the reader how findings were derived (Tracy, 2010). This approach was used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Limitations and Delimitations

Many studies of this type must be undertaken before there is a complete picture of the current motivation for school board members to support equity and social justice work. The fact that this study was limited to those founding Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium school districts with active educational equity-related board policy, and to school board members that served when it was approved, will make it challenging to make application to school board members on a national level.

Additionally, this study requires school board members to reflect and recall their motivation and anything that may have influenced their approach to educational equity-related initiatives and policy decisions. Therefore, some participants may focus or more readily recall and report the positive results associated with such events.

In spite of its limitations and delimitations, this study will contribute materially to the knowledge of what motivates school board members' advocacy and leadership approaches.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology that was used to conduct this study. The driving questions of this research led to a better and more specific understanding for the motivation of school board members to support equity and social justice efforts. The following components of this qualitative research, as described by Creswell (2016), were implemented with participants representing the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium: (a) explore an issue, (b) understand the complex details of an issue, (c) empower individuals to share their stories and hear their voices, (d) remove intimidation between researcher and participant, and (e) understand context of how participants address challenges.

The significance of utilizing a qualitative descriptive study for this research was based on three key characteristics of this research: (a) the study is less theoretical compared to other qualitative approaches (Neergaard et al., 2009) and therefore allowed for more flexibility related to the research design (Sandelowski, 2000, 2010), (b) the prioritized strategy for data collection was individual interviews utilizing a semi-structured interview guide (Neergaard et al., 2009; Sandelowski, 2000), and (c) the primary strategy for data analysis was thematic analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

The research that was implemented used a qualitative descriptive study approach. In order to ultimately answer the three guiding questions driving this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted which allowed for additional questions to probe deeper for richer responses. Data analysis was grounded in thematic analysis and ultimately used to formulate and inform findings. In total, this approach was used to identify what motivates school board members to support equity and social justice work in schools. Chapter IV will describe the results of semi-structured interviews and present themes that emerged through the analysis of the data collected.

Chapter IV – Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine school board members' motivation to support educational equity and social justice efforts in southeastern Wisconsin school districts that have made closing achievement gaps a priority. The topic was specifically examined through the lens of a qualitative descriptive study. Semi-structured interviews occurred with seven school board members representing public school districts in southeastern Wisconsin that are founding members of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC) and have served on a Board of Education that adopted school board policy specific to promoting equity in education. Board members were asked to describe their efforts to promote equity and social justice, anything that influenced their efforts, and any support they received related to the efforts. The original intent of this study was to interview nine school board members, three from each of the school districts of interest. Only one member was able to be located from one of the school districts and so the total number of school board members invited to participate was seven.

The results in this chapter are presented by themes that emerged through the analysis and coding of the data. Eight themes surfaced from the data which include: (a) student outcomes, (b) expert support, (c) external support, (d) Superintendent influence, (e) collaborative relationships, (f) personal experiences, (g) organizational governance, and (h) moral imperative. These themes were then categorized and used to present findings. The categories and themes provide a framework for what findings were realized from the data collected.

Research Questions

Three broad research questions guided this qualitative study and informed the codes and categories. The research questions were:

1. How do participants describe the influences on their decision to support educational equity and social justice efforts in schools?

2. How do participants describe their experiences in supporting educational equity and social justice in schools?

3. How do participants describe their motivation to support educational equity and social justice efforts in schools?

Table 4.1 – Summary of Categories and Themes

Theme	Category	Code
Desire to Improve Student Outcomes	Student Outcomes	Student Outcomes
		Achievement Gaps
Acquiring and Growing Depth of Knowledge	Expert Support	Expert Support Grounded in Research
	External Support	External Input from Community Stakeholder/s
		Support from External Organizations or Groups
	Superintendent Influence	Superintendent Input
Building Collaboration and Group Consensus	Collaborative Relationships	Collaborative Board Member Relationships
		Stakeholder Relationships
	Policy Governance	Non-Negotiables
		Governance
		Policy
Acting Based on Personal Values	Personal Experiences	Personal Experiences
	Moral Imperative	Board Member Motivated to Run Based on Equity Platform
		Being part of something big…
		Ensuring People Have What They Need
		Right Thing to Do

The primary data source used in the study was individual, open-ended, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C) with each of the seven participants. The interviews lasted on average about sixty to seventy minutes. A semi-structured interview approach was utilized along with follow-up probing questions.

Findings

The data presented in this section was the result of a semi-structured interview approach which included follow-up probing questions and represents key dialogue between the researcher and the participating interviewees. Four relevant themes emerged after analyzing interview data and coding that spoke to efforts to promote equity and social justice on the part of board members. The effort to promote equity was primarily realized in the motivation of the board members' desire to improve student outcomes. Desire to improve student outcomes was, therefore, a major theme in the data. In order to achieve equity in student outcomes, the data codes pointed to board members gaining new perspectives through expert support, engagement with external stakeholders and the influence of the superintendent. The theme that was predominant through these codes were the ways in which they educated and informed themselves. A third theme was process-oriented as they discussed their collaboration and group consensus building. In addition, their personal experiences and a moral imperative spoke to their personal values that supported their motivation for equity.

Board Members' Desire to Improve Student Outcomes

Board members revealed a strong desire to improve student outcomes. For board members, closing the achievement gap was the primary focus of ensuring equity. They shared

that while they had informally determined that some students were probably not keeping up academically, they did not know enough about the issue to make any determination that could lead to action. Data depicting the achievement gaps turned out to be eye-opening and proved to be a catalyst towards action. For example, in the Johnson Public School District achievement gap data served to attract more Board members who were committed to equity. In addition, participants in this district were very appreciative of the superintendent who first brought the achievement gaps to their notice and helped them to see the problem clearly. This was the first step toward creating policy that had equity at the center through the adoption of language that was equity-oriented and adopting goals that promoted greater achievement for all students thereby reducing the achievement gaps for student outcomes.

> For example, Cynthia Thompson, also of the Johnson Public Schools, shared that,
>
>> the previous superintendent first presented to us that this was this idea of an achievement gap by data. Not that we did not know that, this was something we saw and that could be easily identified by anyone paying attention to student achievement. We knew there were kids, groups of kids, black kids especially, but there were other kids too that we were missing. And, we didn't know why, didn't know what to do. [The superintendent] brought the data. And when you see those numbers, it's not just one child anymore, it's this big picture. And we got to see that this was maybe more serious or more significant than any individual person knew. So that work for me identified and started to grow in its importance with a clearer understanding of achievement gaps.

By having data presented in a format where it was made evident that some groups of students were achieving desired benchmarks while other groups were not was cause for change for many

board members. Cynthia here shared that while the school board members had some idea that not everyone was achieving equally, the data pinpointed the need to do something.

This focus on a need to close achievement gaps inspired school board level action. Another Johnson Public School District board member, Karen Krueger, shared that "it is always so important to look at the deficits and work to bring them up." With this, she was referring to deficits as data reflecting achievement gaps. In an effort to improve student outcomes, Bruce Davis of the Smith Public School District shared that his school board approved the hire of equity coaches and a district equity coordinator to lead and assist with equity-related work. These hires were approved by the school board to support the organization's efforts to close achievement gaps.

Besides inspiring school board level action, the desire to eliminate achievement gaps has also inspired members of the Johnson Public School District to pursue a seat on the local school board. Cynthia Thompson acknowledged that since becoming a school board member, the District has

> attracted some amazing Board members that live in that equity world. And that
> with that equity is a part of every single one of their thoughts. That's part of the
> work we have done. We have attracted board members that live with that and it's
> only helped me open my eyes and the board members' minds and eyes too to
> some of the other equity work that is going on" She noted that the addition of
> equity-minded board members has helped highlight "the things that we need to do
> to help address equity in education.

When school board member seats became available, the organization's transparent and intentional focus on closing achievement gaps had an influence on who joined the board of education.

Board members' strong desire to influence student outcomes influenced their support for programming and personnel decisions with the intent to close achievement gaps. And in transparently communicating that such efforts were intentional in their efforts to promote educational equity, community members aligned with the cause have become members of their school boards.

Their narratives also pointed to the fact that they were ready to act, however, they acknowledged their own lack of sufficient knowledge in terms of what such equity or raising the achievement gaps would entail and what they might need to do. The next section explains participants perspectives on how they learned more about different ways to improve all students' achievement by addressing the needs of those who needed it the most.

Acquiring and Growing a Depth of Knowledge to Support Educational Equity

Participants in the study were influenced to support educational equity-based efforts by experts in the fields of educational equity and social justice and the need to improve student outcomes. A majority of the participants shared that their motivation to support such efforts could be attributed in part to professional development they participated in linked to research and presentations by experts on the topic. This was especially evident in the Consortium's efforts and in their own efforts to understand equity issues better.

Consortium's and Board Members' Efforts to Self-educate on Equity

Board members indicated that their support for educational equity has been influenced by experts in the field. These efforts to self- educate on issues of equity were in part initiated by the Consortium and in part by their own personal efforts. Five of the participants representing all three school districts included in the research indicated that their perspectives have grown and their desire to act has been supported when engaged by experts in the field of educational equity and social justice. This type of support came in the form of professional development made available or scheduled for the full board as well as individual board member engagement in related literature. Karen Krueger of the Johnson Public School District shared,

> when our board and the administration came together we spent a Saturday working with two individuals that go around the country and work on this … and that was, I was really excited (a) to have that come about, but then that day, as we sat together and learned together, so many light bulbs went on for me and it was great because it was an event where the administrators and the board were working together and learning together and that happens, but of my six years, I remember that day in particular that we had the chance to do that. And I knew it was exciting going in, but after the day was done, it really was a light bulb moment for me so I really was happy to go through that whole experience.

Professional development opportunities were made available to participants in numerous ways including through workshops designed specifically for the Johnson Public School District and for all three participating school districts by the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium. Participants also shared their own individual efforts to gain insight from experts whether it was by reviewing literature on the topic of equity or by attending presentations at conferences.

For example, Kimberly Martin and Karen Krueger from the Johnson Public School District both shared that their board had engaged in professional development with equity and developed equity non-negotiables in order to be active in its efforts to promote it. The Board has developed non-negotiables for educational equity and been involved with an external resource to guide the organization's systems approach to eliminating inequities. Kimberly shared that the equity non-negotiables, "ultimately motivate the Board to move to action and allow the members of the Board the ability to take a stand in the name of equity against something and feel supported." She attributes the creation of the non-negotiables to the professional development the Board received from [an external resource to guide the organization's systems approach to eliminating inequities].

Participants also shared that they sought out more information on the topic on their own. Mark Larson of the Smith Public School District indicated that there is "a body of knowledge in the world related to educational equity that is brought into the community and then advocated for by District stakeholders." Similarly, Cynthia Thompson of the Johnson Public Schools shared that she was actively, "growing knowledge through the review of literature," and referenced a book she was reading titled, "Despite the Best Intentions" by Lewis and Diamond (2015) numerous times during the interview. Similarly, Karen Krueger shared that when it comes to formulating a position on topics like educational equity, she "leaned on readings, other books, and seeing different speakers to learn more to inform my position as a Board member." Cynthia and Karen exemplified what other board members shared, a desire to self-educate and seek out information to better inform themselves. For some like Karen this was because they saw it as their responsibility to be informed as a school board member and for others like Cynthia, it was a result of the personal desire to grow her own knowledge base.

These board members sought out additional insight from experts in the form of books and lectures to further develop their position and perspective on the topic of educational equity. Whether via professional development or use of research-based literature, board members benefited from what they learned from experts in the field on educational equity.

External Support to Support Equity-based Change

As school board members the participants in the study shared experiences in which they supported change that was not always popular or that shifted away from the status quo in their organizations. Their ability to support the change was often influenced by external support whether it be existing stakeholders, mentors and past colleagues, or fellow members of school board related organizations. The majority of participants in all three school districts shared that their motivation to support educational equity related initiatives could be attributed in some part to community stakeholders or external organizations and groups supporting the cause.

In one board member's case, this motivation came directly from high school students. In this case, students shared experiences that challenged them and implored school board members to do something about it. Stephanie Hansen from the Smith Public School District indicated that the Board had been addressed a number of times in meetings by student leaders of the high schools' Black student groups that indicated that, "you guys aren't doing anything about [our experiences and outcomes]." For Stephanie, these students deserved her support and their advocacy for change motivated her support for action to improve results.

Similarly, Cynthia Thompson of the Johnson Public Schools shared that understanding people's personal experiences has helped her to see things from a different perspective.

This example was a moment for me. Where pull-out doesn't work and why it doesn't work. I saw this but I didn't - it's like this is what the system was and this is what the system is supposed to be and I never really questioned whether there was another way of helping students learn. And hearing experts and others affected by these decisions indicated that pull-out doesn't work, and you know a model where you go off and you get treated here and here and here, as opposed to having the students together in the classroom and focusing on each other's strengths, and helping one another, and having the adults in the room to help make sure that every child is being served, the co-plan to co-serve model. That light bulb moment was like, 'aha' yes! This is going to be a part of the solution, realizing that it is not the whole solution, but an important part of it in flipping the whole system over.

Cynthia additionally shared that when the superintendent in her school district shared his own experiences as a parent in agreeing to the approach in which special education services were delivered to his son, she gained a perspective for related situations that inspired her support. In this example the two parents were at odds on the benefit of pull-out versus push-in support services for a kindergarten-aged student. Cynthia shared one of the parents of the student

wanted pull-out services for my child because as parents that is kind of what we all thought - that that was the best model. And at the time we truly thought it was. But now we are seeing that it is not.

Through understanding the experiences of parents of a student receiving special education services, her understanding of the need to communicate the purpose to the changes she supported was inherently important.

Students and parents were not the only stakeholders described by board members included in the study. Other participants described support from fellow and past board members when initiatives that they chose to support were not received well by members of the public. Karen Krueger of the Johnson Public School District remembered when she and her fellow school board members approved a curriculum proposal that minimized tracking at the middle schools by eliminating a set of math courses designed to slow down the curriculum as a means of providing time for additional student support. She indicated that the decision to eliminate tracking was not popular with all parents and shared that when there was pushback for the board's efforts, she "received support from mentors and past Board members" to push forward. Gaining support from those she respected as past leaders in the organization and who had functioned in her role before helped motivate her to stand her ground and approve the curriculum proposal.

Board members also shared that support came from outside the organization too. Many participants indicated that external organizations were a source of support for their engagement in considering educational equity. The organizations that participants referenced were made up of educational leaders, fellow board members, and others focused on providing policymakers opportunities to collaborate and support one another. Stephanie Hansen of the Smith Public Schools said that some of the external legislative support groups including the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) and the Southeast Wisconsin Schools Alliance (SWSA) supported her position on educational equity initiatives. She shared that through these organizations she and her board had developed a platform on public school funding. Similarly, Cynthia Thompson of the Johnson Public School District shared that, "equity in education has been a theme in things like the annual school board convention and a focus of the speakers

there." She noted that the theme for the most recent annual school board convention she attended was equity in education. The fact that dedicated state- and regional-level school board focused organizations provided support and opportunities for board members to gain knowledge and promote educational equity enhanced the desire these board members had to improve student outcomes.

Many of the board members in the Johnson and Smith Public School Districts also stated the benefit of their school district being a member of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC) in that it provided additional support to them and their respective school boards to promote educational equity. These board members shared that the annual board member symposiums provided by the consortium benefited their efforts because they included keynote presentations, but that they also encouraged discussion and dialogue for board members across member school systems. Cynthia Thompson of the Johnson Public Schools indicated that "attending the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium workshops and symposiums has helped her realize barriers of student success including tracking." For her, it was helpful to know that her school district was not the only organization considering the elimination of courses that slowed down the curriculum under the auspices that it provided additional time for student support. Like Cynthia, Karen Krueger of the Johnson Public School District said that "knowing that other school districts were engaged in the work helped keep us motivated to maintain our focus on it." While CAGC events and training have provided a broader perspective to consider and experts to grow the knowledge of some board members, these board members shared experiences that captured the fact that the consortium also provides a network of support that they value for supporting educational equity-related initiatives.

Board Members' Motivation to Support Educational Equity is Influenced by the Superintendent

   While board members in all participating school districts are collectively in charge of evaluating the superintendent in their school districts, board members in all three participating school districts share that their superintendent was influential in their formulation of a position on educational equity-related topics. The superintendent's ability to grow their depth of knowledge on and connect initiatives to educational equity had a bearing on how they supported related efforts. The participants all shared that the superintendent in their respective districts was influential in their decisions and engagement to promote educational equity.

   Board members indicated that outside of scheduled school board meetings they had access to and engaged in one-to-one meetings with the superintendent. Some of the participants shared that the superintendent motivated them to support educational equity-related initiatives through one-on-one discussions. Karen Krueger of the Johnson Public School District indicated that "any assistance needed to formulate positions related to educational equity and social justice was provided by the district administration." A similar sentiment was shared by Kimberly Martin also of the Johnson Public Schools. She said the school board's support for educational equity "was made clear through conversations I had with the superintendent to help me understand the work the District was engaging in related to equity." In the Johnson Public School District participants described that change initiatives like eliminating tracking in middle school mathematics were clearly connected to the school board-approved equity non-negotiables by the superintendent. By connecting change initiatives to board policy and the equity non-negotiables it made sense to support change even when it resulted in complaints by other district stakeholders.

Board members also indicated that the superintendent was an influence on a broader scale too. For example, Walter Meyer of the Williams Public School District shared that, "the superintendent was influential," in his motivation to support changes in educational programming. In an example Walter shared, the board was considering transitioning out of a kindergarten through eighth grade elementary school program to a middle school model. He shared that the superintendent, "had a powerful personality and was the leader of the initiative." Walter said that the superintendent

> felt very strongly about a middle school education. When I first got on the board we were K-8 and then the high school. And by the time I left we were K-5 but we opened up the middle school for 6, 7, and 8. And as a change for the district, it was pretty controversial… because a lot of people believed in the K-8 education… the board was unanimously for the change by the end. At the start I was one of the ones that thought K-8 worked for me, why wouldn't it work for everybody. But I was turned around on it.

Walter indicated that improving student outcomes was a key talking point for the superintendent and that the school board members were challenged because the idea of changing the status quo was not popular in the community. He stated that "the strength of the superintendent's analysis and reasoning paired with a powerful personality was influential." Despite the community pushback that school board members experienced, the superintendent's ability to engage the school board and keep members focused on what he believed would positively influence student outcomes was influential and spurred Walter's support for the change.

Board members ability to acquire and grow their depth of knowledge of educational equity and related initiatives influenced their desire to support related change initiatives. Their

knowledge grows on their own accord through books and related literature or via the support of others. Board members gained insight and broadened their perspectives through engagement with experts in the field of educational equity. Other board members acquired additional information and through the process were influenced by students, parents, colleagues, and the superintendent to support educational equity and social justice-related work.

Board Members Act to Improve Student Outcomes Through Collaboration and Group Consensus

School board members make decisions and approve initiatives that are recommended to them as a team. A majority vote is necessary for any board action item to be approved. As such, collaboration and group consensus building are important components of a board members motivation to support educational equity and social justice-related initiatives. Experiences that board members had in building collaborative relationships and governing the school district as a collective team of elected community members were critical to their decisions to approve equity-based changes in their organizations.

Quality Relationships with Others Inspired Collaboration for Change

Every participant in the study shared that their relationships with other board members and school district stakeholders inspired their support for educational equity. Broad support for initiatives that promote equity was not always easy to attain. Board members indicated that there were times when some of members of the team are more accepting of such change than others. In cases like these when equity-based change was ultimately supported by the full board, those

members of the team that approved of the initiative first worked to help other board members gain the information and perspective necessary to be motivated to support the recommendation.

Kimberly Martin of the Johnson Public School District noted that as a collective group, "we bring people along on the journey." In this she was referring to fellow board members' belief systems. Kimberly said,

> belief systems are really fundamentally structured and hard to break apart. So it' like how do we bring people along in this journey wherever they're at and understand what's driving their belief systems and their experiences. And understand that in order to get to the outcomes it's all change management. In order to get to the outcomes that we want to do, sometimes we have to disrupt that belief system a little bit and you have to be okay with it. So, come along with us… for the good of our children, for the good of what we want to do here, you've got to disrupt your belief system just for a little bit... You've got to be able to evolve, you cannot come into this role with a fixed mindset of this is the way it works, this is the agenda, this is what I want. You have to be looking at that overarching idea of what is best for our kids and our community.

She shared that the board worked hard to engage in dialogue versus debate on issues. She described the need to listen first to teammates on the other side of an issue in order to understand, find meaning and find agreement. With this, Kimberly added that "as collaboration on the issues increases, the board members become more aligned." By more aligned, Kimberly referenced finding common ground related to issues being discussed. She referenced the school board's recent work to review and approve changes to a long standing annual middle school field

trip and related policy that had been subject to some disagreement and debate amongst her fellow board members.

> When I took a stand about it, I felt really supported in taking that stand, even though it might have been against what others felt was something that should have been something that should have just gone forward. And I think that that also is important in our board and how we operate. That we can have diverse perspectives and that we can be supported in those. That we can take those risks and that there is some emotional safety in all of it.

When the team was able to first establish some common ground, Kimberly and her fellow board members were able to come to consensus on the issues that had generated some disagreement and ultimately approved the field trip with equity-minded changes as a team.

Some of the board members indicated that they were not always the first to agree with a change initiative that might create unrest in the community. Walter Meyer of the Williams Public School District shared that when it came to changing grade level configurations in his school district to increase building capacity and improve student outcomes, "I was originally against the change." As he wrestled with the idea of supporting the superintendent's recommendation to change the status quo his position on the issue was influenced by his fellow board members. "My decision to ultimately support it was due in part to other Board members, the superintendent, and we were given a lot of stuff to read on it." He went on to note that while the superintendent's influence and the literature that was provided to him helped broaden his perspective, the conversations he had with other board members engaged in discussions about their support for the change helped sway his position on the topic and he ultimately voted to approve the change.

Board members that had served in their roles for a longer period of time shared that approving change initiatives is not always easy. Whether it be concerns related to public pushback for an unpopular decision or internal descension amongst team members, such unrest influenced board members' motivation to support change. Mark Larson of the Smith Public School District described challenges related to a recent referendum to improve school facilities and the unrest that the conversations leading up to the superintendent's recommendation to go to referendum generated. But when consensus and support was gained across the team of school board members, even when they knew the decision may not generate overwhelming support across the community, he and his team were more willing to support the change. Mark indicated that his board "is very agreeable with one another which was not always the case." The collaborative approach to gaining group consensus before acting on a difficult decision provided experiences for the Smith Public Schools board members that generated their support for the decision to go to referendum.

While other board members shared how their initial stance was swayed on difficult topics, others attributed their support to having joined a team that was already intent on promoting educational equity and social justice. In the Johnson Public School District to one of the study's participants, it felt as though promoting educational equity was a key responsibility of the board of education. Kimberly Martin shared that her interest in being a member of the board of education could be attributed to the group's position for educational equity. Kimberly shared that promoting equity was her job and in her mind, becoming a school board member in the Johnson Public School District meant collaborating with a team of like-minded individuals as it pertained to supporting educational equity. She said, "being part of a team that was aligned to the direction that I wanted to go played an important role in me wanting to be part of the Board."

In this case, the school board's past efforts and open approach to promoting educational equity and social justice motivated Kimberly as a community member to pursue a seat on the school board.

Board members experiences collaborating together and participating in dialogue and discussion on difficult topics generated the collective support necessary to approve changes that were recommended to promote educational equity and social justice. Collaboration to promote educational equity both motivated some board members to approve a change that they didn't originally support and inspired others as community members to pursue a seat on the board of education.

Board Members' Approach to Governance Leads to Action

Board members shared that their collective approach to governing the school district inspired action for educational equity and social justice. Board members representing both the Johnson and Williams Public School Districts shared that their responsibility as board members to govern the school district through the creation of policies and focus on achieving a shared vision made support for educational equity especially important. Being that approving policy and formalizing a vision required consensus, this approach to governance provided experiences that motivated participants in the study to support action for educational equity.

As board members of suburban school districts outside of metropolitan Milwaukee, many participants in the study described the need to support a school district that was becoming increasingly more diverse. Walter Meyer of the Williams School District represented the school district with the longest standing policy related to educational equity and noted that at the time

his school district's educational equity-related policy was created, "the board was dealing with significant shifts in the diversity of its student population." He noted,

> in that timeframe, the [district's inter-district transfer program implemented to desegregate schools] was completely staffed up in the Williams School District. So there were, there might have been twenty percent of the students attending the schools from Milwaukee. I'm not sure but it got pretty high. So we were dealing with a significantly diverse group both in terms of educational opportunities prior to high school - most of the programs students had been in the district through the grade school program. Very few came in at the high school stage. By high school we had a pretty diverse, and not necessarily socially acclimated - because students were coming in from outside the district.

In an effort to support students and provide guidance the Williams School District Board of Education developed policy to ensure consistent and approved practices were implemented across the organization.

Participants also shared how with a policy for educational equity in place to improve student outcomes, the board was affected in other related efforts. Board members representing the Johnson and Smith Public School Districts noted that they were formally reviewing other board policies with an equity lens. For instance, Cynthia Thompson shared,

> we have equity now in our strategic plan, it is one of our goals. I am on the board's policy committee and we are reviewing several of our policies to make sure that they are reflecting our approach to equity. So we are continuing to make this a focus of all of our decisions.

Board members in the Johnson Public Schools described the influence of equity non-negotiables that had been formalized as a component of their board policy for educational equity. Kimberly Martin noted that "the creation of equity non-negotiables has been a huge step forward for the organization." And added, "I'd like to think that every time we have an issue, initiative, or conversation in that we talk about inclusion or equity, that the non-negotiables for educational equity gets others along and through the acceptance phase of change." By formalizing expectations for how the organization engages in equity initiatives, board members are motivated to follow these expectations when making decisions on issues that may affect student outcomes. Kimberly went on to share that the non-negotiables, "ultimately motivate the Board to move to action and allow the members of the Board the ability to take a stand in the name of equity against something and feel supported." In such cases the equity non-negotiables were utilized to arrive at group consensus and inspire collective action on the part of the full team of school board members.

With board policy in place to promote educational equity, board members shared the influence the policy had on their support for related initiatives. Stephanie Hansen of the Smith Public School District indicated that her school board approved equity-related staff positions recommended by the administration including, "a district administrator responsible for equity-related initiatives." She shared that one of the charges of this position is to "recruit staff that better reflect the District's overall student demographics." As another example, her board also "added student representatives from the high schools to give students more voice." Stephanie shared that her support for new equity-oriented administrative and coaching positions as well as the development of student engagement opportunities at the school board level was influenced

by the expectation that she and her fellow board members implement their educational equity-grounded policy.

In the Johnson Public School District board members described how their school board policy for educational equity influenced the focus intent of the organization's strategic plan. The strategic plan in the Johnson Public Schools being another responsibility of the Board of Education. Karen Krueger shared that with the development of the school district's non-negotiables for educational equity "they were then woven into the strategic plan and the goals developed." She shared,

> I thought it was exciting that, from what I understand, our district was one of the first ones around to develop guiding principles and equity non-negotiables and again, I never really gave it too much thought, but to see it laid out and put in writing as items and then to add that in to our strategic plan and to make it a goal as we worked throughout efforts as a school district - I thought that that was really exciting and really neat that we would be writing this down. Not in a way, from a standpoint that we had to write it down, but just, I guess that we were talking about it. And, kind of in my mind, that's the right thing to do in the first place, so of course we should write it down and it all made sense to me. And then as the policy came, that was really exciting, that we were putting it into policy and practice. Because … a school district can talk about stuff but if you're not doing anything about it, what good does it do? So, I'm really excited that our school district is kind of a front runner in the area for doing this kind of work. I'm proud of that.

From her perspective it was monumental to see the educational equity policy reflected in the overarching goals of the school district. With the charge of monitoring outcomes associated with these overarching goals, board members in the Johnson Public Schools received regular updates to monitor progress associated with the student outcomes they expected to improve.

Whether it be in reviewing, revising, and formulating board policy, approving new initiatives, or formulating a new strategic plan, participants in the study shared that their collective approach to ensuring equity was enhanced through the development of their school district's formalized policy for educational equity. By approving an educational equity-related policy, board members were able to utilize the policy in building group consensus and in turn act on initiatives, policies, and school district goals with an equity lens.

Board Members' Personal Values Shape Their Stance on Educational Equity

School board members are motivated to support educational equity and social justice in schools based on their personal values and past experiences with diversity and inclusion. Participants viewed their charge to govern the organization and improve student outcomes as their moral imperative or "the purpose and fulfillment of human and social life" (Fullan, 2010, p. ix). With this as the backdrop, board members shared beliefs that supporting educational equity is the right thing to do and as such, they felt that they were ethically obligated to do so.

Past Experiences Shape Current Approach to Educational Equity

The majority of board members represented across all three school districts indicated that their own personal experiences had an influence on their approach to equity-related work. Some of these experiences were personal in that the board members were the subject of inequity.

Cynthia Thompson of the Johnson Public School District told a story of having gone to college

to be an engineer. She shared,

> being a woman, when I first went into college … I signed up for engineering and
>
> mathematics for engineering and all this. And I was the only woman and treated
>
> very poorly. To the extent that I left. And went off into the sciences instead. But it
>
> was not anything like every day. It was just in that one setting and in that one
>
> place.

For reasons based on gender, Cynthia "did not feel accepted or welcome and as a result,

ultimately chose the field of education instead." Feeling excluded at this time in her life

engendered Cynthia to advocate for change and support diversity, inclusion, and equity in her

role as a school board member.

Other board members also shared personal experiences and attributed them to their

support for equity-based initiatives. Mark Larson of the Smith Public School District said that

some of the challenges he faced growing up and later in his life while raising his own children

led to his motivation to support educational equity and social justice. As a Board member, Mark

shared that he worked hard "to determine what people need and then act to get it to them." In

Mark's mind, ensuring people had what they needed it, when they needed it, in order to be

successful was at the very heart of promoting equity and improving student outcomes.

Like other school board members, Kimberly Martin of the Johnson Public School District

also connected her motivation to support educational equity to her past experiences. In her case it

was a lack of experiences in what she considered diverse settings. Kimberly stated,

I think for me it was also about my upbringing. There wasn't a lot of diversity around me and so for me, being able to break from my experiences growing up and do something different for my children was important.

Kimberly's motivation to promote equity and inclusion is based in part by her desire to ensure students in today's schools experience diversity as they matriculate through the public school system.

Some participants shared that the experiences they encountered in positions and roles prior to that of a school board member informed their approach to equity-related initiatives now. Karen Krueger of the Johnson Public Schools served as a leader for a district affiliated parent organization prior to pursuing a seat on the school board. Karen described this organization as "a parent group in the District that advocated that all students would get the best supports in their education." She indicated that while this organization advocated strongly in support of students receiving special education services it also focused on support for all students experiencing challenges navigating their school years. Kimberly's experiences with this group grew her desire to become an even more prolific advocate and so inspired her to consider a position on the local school board.

Similarly, Kimberly Martin shared that her professional role inspired her to share her expertise and grow her influence for equity-related change on the school board. Kimberly's job over the last several years has focused on equity in the workplace. This has afforded her the ability to "point to successes where efforts to promote equity have worked in the workplace." She indicated that, "without these experiences, I might not be as vocal about the topic." In this case, Kimberly was motivated to become a member of the school board and bolster the organization's efforts to promote educational equity and social justice across the organization.

Other board members worked previously as teachers in public schools referenced experiences that they encountered in these experiences as motivation to support equity work as board members. Cynthia Thompson of the Johnson Public School District, also a long-time teacher, shared a story about a student enrolled in one of her classes that failed because he rarely turned in homework. She said

> this experience broke my heart. The student was trying but wouldn't bring homework on the bus because he feared other kids would think he cared too much about his grades. If I could go back now in time, I would be much more persistent in trying to reach that child.

It is this story and others like it that motivate her to support deviation from the status quo and underscore her desire to support educational equity and social justice.

Another participant and long-time teacher, Bruce Davis, of the Smith Public School District share that his experiences as an educator shaped his desire to support specific equity initiatives that he believed would positively influence student outcomes. He stated that through his experiences as an educator he knows that "education is a relationship business," and that, "closing gaps require teachers to build quality relationships with students." Bruce recalls the experiences he has encountered as an educator when he weighed his support for organizational change and educational equity-related initiatives.

The Desire to Do What is Right is a Factor

Whether it was being part of something bigger than themselves, ensuring people have what they need, or simply a desire to ensure that the organization does the right thing for students, board members in the three school districts supported educational equity and social

justice. A majority of participants in the Johnson and Smith Public School Districts shared in their responses that their support for equity and social justice-related work was a moral imperative or simply stated "the right thing to do".

The desire that board members shared to improve student outcomes was influenced by their morals and values. When such altruistic measures drive board members to act, they are motivated to support educational equity-related initiatives. Stephanie Hansen of the Smith Public School District shared, "It's our job to create hope and help students believe there are all these opportunities for them" In saying this, she added, "we have to change the narrative." By narrative, Stephanie Hansen was referring to the achievement gap and experiences of underrepresented groups. This influenced her not only to support educational equity-related initiatives in her own school district but to serve as a leadership team member on a local legislative action group for public education as well.

Like Stephanie, Kimberly Martin of the Johnson Public Schools shared that, "injustice is a motivator." She said,

> there is a part of me that is all about having a level playing field for everyone and we need to make that happen in the Johnson Public School District. It is an internal piece about why I do what I do.

With this, she shared examples of initiatives and policies she and her fellow board members had approved in an effort to provide broader access for all. These examples ranged from field trip approval measures to content area tracking in secondary school curriculum in the school district.

Karen Krueger of the Johnson Public School District reflected on her support for educational equity-related initiatives that might have received some public pushback and indicated that her personal morals and values ultimately drove her decisions to act. Karen said, "I

just think it's the right thing to do." When questioned further on the topic, she shared that, "deep down it is a moral imperative." Regardless of whether an equity-based change is popular with the school districts constituents, Karen ultimately drew from her own value system to inform her position on such initiatives.

Board members also shared that a formal and transparent focus on equity can attract community members to join the board of education. Karen Krueger of the Johnson Public Schools never planned to be a school board member growing up. But she shared that she has always "felt that a child should get what he or she needs when they need it without knowing that this was a definition of equity." Like other board members in the school district she noted that promoting equity is so ingrained in the work of the board that it has become a part of its culture. Cynthia Thompson of the Johnson Public Schools said something similar and went to note that "I can't know, but I think this has attracted community members to serve as board members that have equity in their heart." In this case, the board's prolific stance on educational equity has encouraged other members of the community with a desire to promote equity and social justice to consider candidacy for a school board member seat.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the categories that emerged in the data collected from the study. These categories were the product of the researcher's analysis of participant responses to interview questions. The analysis included the formulation of these categories into themes.

Table 4.2 – Summary of Themes and Corresponding Influences

Theme	Motivation Type	Influence
Strong desire to improve student outcomes	Extrinsic	Mandated to: • Focus on achievement gaps • Improve student outcomes
	Intrinsic	Internal desire and drive to improve student outcomes
Ability to acquire and grow their depth of knowledge to support educational equity	Extrinsic	Requirements/expectation to attend professional development
	Intrinsic	Individual's interest in learning more: • Reading books and related literature • Attending keynote presentations
Actions to promote collaboration and build consensus	Extrinsic	Developing policy and approving initiatives requires consensus building
	Intrinsic	Self-interests in promoting collaboration and group-decision making
Personal values and desire to do what is right	Extrinsic	None
	Intrinsic	Personal core values, interests, and sense of morality

The themes resulting from this study note that participants had a strong desire to improve student outcomes. This desire was based on both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic in that school districts are mandated to focus on closing achievement gaps and improving student outcomes and intrinsic based on board members' internal desires and drive to do so. Their motivation to promote educational equity and social justice to improve student outcomes was influenced by their:

- Ability to acquire and grow their depth of knowledge to support educational equity. This theme was a result of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Some board members were required to attend professional development opportunities that focused on educational equity and social justice while other board members went beyond required professional development and furthered their depth of knowledge on their own terms because they were interested in doing so.

- Actions to promote collaboration and build group consensus. This theme was again a result of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Developing policy and approving equity-related initiatives was an experience for board members that required the external act of gaining consensus across the board. Additionally, board members shared that promoting collaboration aligned with their own interests in group-decision making.

- Personal values and desire to do what is right. This finding was entirely founded in intrinsic motivation. Board members shared the educational equity and social justice efforts aligned with their personal core values, interests, and sense of morality.

Based on these findings and as it relates to research specific to motivation, both internal and external motivation are relevant factors in influencing a school board member's efforts to promote equity and social justice in education.

Chapter V will give additional meaning to the findings introduced in this chapter. In addition, a discussion of findings from the data with reference to related literature, implications for practice, recommendations for research, and conclusions will be shared.

Chapter V – Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Since the mid-sixteenth century local community members have been elected to provide leadership and make decisions for their local schools as a Board of Education, or school board. At the turn of the century, with the ratification of the No Child Left Behind Act, improving the achievement levels of subgroups of students has been a priority. Amongst others, these subgroups are formulated based on student ethnicity, special education, primary language, and socioeconomic status. The existence of achievement gaps is documented and to address them there is need for systemic change in our educational system (Berlak, 2001; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Boykin and Noguera, 2011; Singleton and Linton, 2006; Skrla et al, 2009; Skrla and Scheurich, 2001). Systemic changes such as this can be defined as the promotion of educational equity and social justice. For the purposes of this research, educational equity means that each student has access to the resources and educational programming they need at the right moment in their education. As it relates to educational leadership, social justice means that school and district leaders disrupt the status quo of the organization in order to make historically marginalized student populations central to its institutional vision, advocacy, and practice.

Promoting educational equity and social justice benefits from the support of local policy, legislative advocacy, and oversight by a school district's Board of Education (Rice et al, 2000). For this research study, my primary research question was: Why are school board members motivated to support equity and social justice in public education? Participants in the study included served as school board members in the founding school districts of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC) when their respective school districts approved board policy focused on the promotion of educational equity.

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The CAGC is made up of school systems located throughout southeast Wisconsin. The Consortium was founded by public school leaders as a collaborative means of growing and supporting one another's efforts to close achievement gaps. Today, the Consortium includes over 30 public and private school systems and maintains a mission to embrace and change, with all deliberate speed, school practices, instructional methodology and school structures that perpetuate achievement and opportunity gaps in our schools (https://www.cagcwi.org/). In total, seven school board members were interviewed by the researcher from three member school districts of the CAGC. These participants were selected because they could provide the perspectives of school board members that served when educational equity-related policy was adopted in their school districts.

The role of the researcher was unique in this study, as the researcher serves in the role of the superintendent for one of the school districts where board members who participated in the research also serve. Further, the researcher maintains professional relationships with superintendents of other CAGC member organizations, including those that participated in this research. As such, the researcher was very thorough in describing the voluntary nature of the participants' opportunity to participate in the study including that they may withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, careful documentation and protocols were used to manage this bias in the research process.

Semi-structured interviews were used to uncover the influences, experiences, and motivations of these board members to support educational equity and social justice related work in their districts.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into the following sections: discussion of findings with reference to related literature, implications for practice, recommendations for research, and conclusions.

Discussion of Findings

This section will focus on reviewing the research questions for this study given the relevant literature from Chapter II and the results from Chapter IV. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do participants describe the influences on their decision to support educational equity and social justice efforts in schools?

2. How do participants describe their experiences in supporting educational equity and social justice in their schools?

3. How do participants describe their motivation to support educational equity and social justice efforts in schools?

This section will conclude with a reflection on why school board members are motivated to support equity and social justice efforts that promote systemic change from a deficits-based system that marginalizes student groups to a proactive system that intentionally develops heterogeneous groups of students that are proportionally representative of the overall student population.

Influences on Board Members to Support Educational Equity and Social Justice

When the federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2002 it not only formalized accountability measures for improved student achievement but it required

that schools close the disparities in academic performance between student groups. The NCLB Act made clear that school district leaders, including school board members, must act to close achievement gaps (Skrla et al, 2009). Results from this study revealed that school board members had a strong desire to improve student outcomes. And for the participants in this study, closing the achievement gap was the primary outcome they focused on in promoting educational equity. Whether it was support for unique programming and positions, the elimination of tracking students within the curriculum, or approving grade level reconfiguration, school board members in this study were influenced in their support such initiatives with the desire to improve student outcomes and close achievement gaps. Participants in the study referred to internal relevant factors in their interest to improve achievement for all students as a means of improving student outcomes, or closing achievement gaps. This was partially due to the Consortium which continues to be interested in student outcomes even while trying to create equitable conditions for student learning within schools.

The focus on closing achievement gaps as a federal mandate was not the only external influence that moved board members to support educational equity. To ensure educational equity and social justice in education, school district leaders use achievement gaps as a means of measuring equitable outcomes (Viadero, 2006; Lee, 2004; Berlak, 2001). And in this study many board members shared that professional development opportunities were integral in influencing their desires to support systemic efforts to close achievement gaps. Participants shared that efforts such as those provided by the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC) to provide professional development opportunities to its member school systems in the areas of equity, social justice, and inclusive instructional practices influenced their position on related initiatives. Being that many well-intentioned efforts to close achievement gaps such as providing

segregated programming for students performing below benchmarks can further limit

opportunities for underserved and minoritized students (Ferri, 2012; Frattura & Capper, 2007;

Kasten, 2013; Welner, 2001), participants in this study chose to self-educate. Researchers often

state that educational leaders must grow their capacity to support and implement systems-based

change and transition school programming that supports heterogeneous groups of students that

are all challenged with rigorous and relevant curriculum (Frattura & Capper, 2007; Marshall,

2004; Theoharis, 2007). In this study, the participants grew their capacity in several ways. The

most beneficial to them, and one that they discussed several times were the professional

development opportunities, many times facilitated or grounded in the work of experts in the

field. These opportunities provided participants in this study new perspectives and grew their

awareness for the need to promote and support educational equity.

Board members in this study also shared that the superintendents in their school districts

had influence in their support for educational equity. While the research on the power structure

and relationship between superintendents and school board members offers several models,

including dominated, factional or inert, participants in this study across the participating school

districts described a more pluralistic power structure (McCarty & Ramsey, 1971; Spring, 2005),

one in which the superintendent gave professional advice based on the best educational research

and theory, as they formulated their position on educational equity-related initiatives.

Experiences of Board Members Leading for Educational Equity and Social Justice

Researchers have indicated that school leaders must navigate push back and scrutiny

from some stakeholders that feel negatively affected by systems-based change for educational

equity and social justice (Noguera & Blankstein, 2015; Burris, 2014; Halverson & Plecki; 2015;

Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Zirkel & Pollack, 2016), some participants shared that community member concerns and negative reactions to such efforts often enhanced the collaboration and collective support of the full board of education. When it came to experiences that board members recalled that furthered their advocacy for educational equity and social justice, participants leaned on past personal experiences to formulate their position on an initiative. In some ways this aligns with research on community member motivation to serve as a school board member. Some school board members pursue a seat on their local board of education for personal reasons (Alby, 1979; Garmire, 1962; Goldhammer, 1955; McCarty, 1959; Mountford, 2004; Zazzara, 1971). Such reasons can include interests related to their own personal experiences growing up and raising children (Mountford, 2004). For reasons stemming from their own inequitable experiences, challenges growing up, or in raising their own children, board members' experiences both prior to and during their time spent as a school board member affected their motivation to support educational equity-based efforts.

Research has also indicated that school board members are motivated to pursue a seat on the school board due to a desire to belong (Alby, 1979; Mountford, 2004). Alongside, other research defines effective school board behaviors that includes collaborative decision-making (Alsbury, 2008; Weiss, G., Templeton, N., Thompson, R., & Tremont, J. W. (2014.). Like the research that Alsbury (2008) and Weiss et al. (2014) described, participants in the study shared experiences in which they worked collaboratively with their board to gain information, share perspectives, and listen to understand others' views and how these experiences ultimately resulted in support for an educational equity-related initiative. The relationships board members in this study established through collaboration with fellow board members to develop policy,

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approve strategy, or discuss solutions, and the perspectives derived from these experiences influenced the position they took on issues related to educational equity.

Board Members' Motivation to Support Educational Equity and Social Justice Efforts in Schools

Researchers contend that there are two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic (Covington, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand, 1997). Extrinsic motivation refers to tangible rewards, incentives or mandates while intrinsic motivation can be defined by internal satisfaction in doing something that is enjoyable or interesting. In this study, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were relevant factors in influencing school board members' efforts to promote educational equity and social justice in public education. Intrinsic motivation to support such efforts is attributed to school board members' moral imperative, personal lived experiences, and the desire to be an effective board member. At the same time, extrinsic motivation can be attributed to the federal expectations that school board members must account for to close achievement gaps and improve student outcomes. Participants also shared with pride the encouragement they gained from experts in the field during professional development events for their efforts to improve educational outcomes for all students.

Table 5.1 – Summary of Themes and Corresponding Motivation

Theme	Relationships/Relatedness	Extrinsic or Intrinsic Motivation
Board members had a strong desire to improve student outcomes.		Both
Board members' motivation to promote educational equity and social justice was influenced by their:		
• Ability to acquire and grow their depth of knowledge to support educational equity.		Both
• Actions to promote collaboration and build consensus.		Both
• Personal values and desire to do what is right.		Intrinsic

But a common thread and cross-cutting theme that traverses both internal and external factors and motivates school board members to support educational equity and social justice work in school districts is relationships. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation shape who we are and how we behave (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Deci and Ryan (2008) developed self-determination theory and coined the term autonomous motivation as a descriptor of motivation that can be derived from intrinsic as well as extrinsic sources for individuals that identify with an activity's value and how it aligns with their sense of self. The self-determination theory for autonomous motivation revolve around three basic needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Relatedness is defined as the need to have close relationships with others. In this study school board members' connection to others motivated them to act. In order to engage and support policy or initiatives that promote educational equity and social justice, board members generally required or benefited from a call to action. The call to action stemmed from a variety of sources including influential superintendents, a state or federal expectation, or a lived experience. Such antecedents helped board members understand the need to promote and support systemic change for educational equity and social justice.

Significance

This study was designed to determine what motivates school board members to support equity and social justice work. Participants' motivation to support educational equity-related initiatives was ultimately based on their values related to their role as a governing leader of a school system. Whether it was their own moral imperative - supporting a cause or formulating a position because it is the right thing to do - or their desire to be accountable to their constituents for the governance and management of schools, board members as local policymakers supported

their district's educational equity-related philosophy and strategy. This was a critical finding in that a school district's policies heavily influence its operations and present a powerful lever for the exercise of leadership (NSBA, 2015).

Board members' self-determination to act on their values and resulting desire to improve student outcomes and close achievement gaps was enhanced by the relationships they developed in their leadership role. Their relationships sparked the motives that caused them to act. The participants' desire to work toward equity in education stemmed from the relationships they built with other board members, the superintendent, their community, experts in the field, their local legislators, and those connections or experiences they have lived in the past. Board members' ability to create such connections with others, helped determine how empowered and willing they were to act on their desires to implement change in the name of improving educational outcomes for all children. School board members were ultimately motivated to promote educational equity and social justice in schools by the bonds they established with others.

The conclusion that school board members are motivated to support educational equity and social justice-related work in schools by the relationships they have established and grown with others, aligns with past research and numerous theories on motivation. The conclusion is supported by content theories that relate motivation to fulfilling personal needs (Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1971) as well as by aspects of process theories for motivation (Vroom, 1995). In this sense, increased and meaningful connections with others can be considered as a preferred outcome to what moves someone to support an issue, initiative, or policy. As Cavalier (2000) found, intrinsic and extrinsic factors collide when one decides on their action and in this case, when board members determine their support for educational equity and social justice initiatives.

This conclusion aligns directly with the theory that people need to have a sense of belonging and connectedness with others to act (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Implications for Practice

This study provides findings and conclusions regarding the underlying motivations of school board members to support equity and social justice policy and initiatives. Implications for practice derived from this research provide school district leaders with a better understanding of how to work with the individuals who govern and influence the direction of public education. There are four key implications for practice that evolved out of this work.

First, school district leaders should provide broad context and external perspectives on critical issues and pertinent strategies to promote educational equity and social justice-related work. While school board members are local policymakers, they are influenced by external factors including federal regulations and accountability structures, research and relevant best practices, as well as, experts in the field associated with the work.

Second, school district leaders must ensure school board members value, engage in, and work collaboratively to influence organizational outcomes through a strong and aligned governance structure (National School Boards Association, 2015). As local policymakers, school board members are motivated to support educational equity and social justice-related work when it is included in their efforts to review, revise, create, and develop policy, strategy, and/or goals that further the district's educational mission and philosophy.

Third, to enhance the desire of school board members to enlist in educational equity and social justice-related efforts, school district leaders can prioritize opportunities to engage the full board in team building exercises. The school board's collective capacity to support challenging

initiatives grows when board members better understand one another's individual differences and experiences, and agree on a need to function effectively as a team. Research also supports the notion that the Board-Superintendent relationship is critical to the success of a school district, making it essential that the Board's leadership team include the superintendent (National School Boards Association, 2015).

Lastly, to build a board member's motivation to support educational equity and social justice it is inherent that school district leaders help individual board members clearly understand how they matter, how they belong, and build their connections to influence and drive their advocacy and leadership for necessary change. As Bruce Davis from the Smith Public School District stated, "education is a relationship business." Board members are empowered and willing to seek change in educational practices and organizational systems when those around them motivate them to do so.

Recommendations for Research

School board members' motivation has been the subject of existing research. The research has been mainly limited to the motivation of individuals to serve as school board members. Results of such research indicate that these community members are motivated to serve on their local school board for many reasons including but not limited to, their and/or their children's experiences in school, a desire for power, belongingness, prestige, a disagreement with existing leadership, and/or an experience in politics (Alby, 1979; Cistone, 1975; Garmire, 1962; Goldhammer, 1955; McCarty, 1959; Mountford, 2004; Zazzaro, 1971). While this research includes some similar factors regarding the motivation of school board members, there

is a lack of research specific to school board members' motivation to support and lead

organizational change including to promote educational equity and social justice.

This study focused on school board members that served when their school districts

developed educational equity-related school board policy. All of the board members served in

school districts that are members of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium located in

southeast Wisconsin. Disparities in student outcomes persist at all levels of the educational

system across student groups and educational leaders can and must do more to advance equity.

While there is a general need to further research of educational leadership discussions related to

educational equity and social justice beyond rhetoric and to translate theory into action

(Theoharis, 2010), there is a specific need to further research on school board members' efforts,

roles and motivation to support and lead this work. Future research should broaden the

participant pool in this study and should examine motivation of school board members to support

challenging equity-based decisions across a variety of school districts.

Additionally, the conclusion that school board members are motivated by their

relationships to support policy, initiatives, and strategy that require systemic change to improve

student outcomes, should be further researched. Belongingness, relationships, and connectedness

have long been discussed as factors that influence an individual's motivation to act, but school

leaders would benefit from further research on this concept. This research would enhance the

ability of school district leaders to work successfully with the community members who govern

and influence the direction of public education.

Conclusions

Today, communities are undergoing transitions and becoming more diverse. This on its own may simply be construed as a fact. But when paired with evidence that since at least 1965 and the introduction of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) the federal government has been concerned about unequal or inequitable distribution of educational results across subgroups of students, it is imperative that school leaders confront inequities and lead systemic change to rewrite the narrative and improve outcomes for all students.

A key role of local school boards is to create and interpret policy intended to reflect the values of the community. While the general operations of a school district are managed and navigated by the superintendent and the organization's workforce, the strategy for achieving improved educational outcomes is influenced by the school board and therefore, ultimately the community. School board members make collective decisions that affect a wide expanse of educational areas, such as the policies that direct operations, the allocation of resources, and the evaluation of superintendents, which influence their ability and approach to leading the organization and managing issues.

The findings that have been reported in this dissertation reveal the influences, motivations, and additional factors that led school board members to support educational equity and social justice-related efforts in their school district. School leaders will be better served to achieve the promise of public school education, a high-quality learning opportunity for all students, if they take the time to incorporate the findings of this study into their work with school board members. Educational equity and social justice for all students in schools can be more readily attained by providing school board members with:

- a broad context and external perspectives on the critical issues;

- a strong and aligned governance structure;

- activities and structures to engage in team building exercises with the full board of education and superintendent; and

- opportunities to grow connections and boost relationships with others.

A school district cannot serve its community and each of its students well without a school board motivated to support the improvement efforts and change initiatives necessary to realize its vision and ensure a free and high-quality education for each and every student.

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Johnson Public School District
Board Policy Title: Equity in Education

In a barrier-free learning environment grounded in equity, each student gets what they need, at the right moment in their education, in order to find their path to success. All students are best positioned to prevail and thrive in a school culture rooted in equity.

District staff shall persevere in serving students regardless of ability, circumstance or situation. The District's commitment to success for each student is rooted in the ideals of equity, opportunity, and excellence for all.

The District Equity Non-Negotiables are the foundation to the systems, structures, instruction, and programming utilized to support improved student outcomes. The following expectations define the efforts to support and grow equity and social justice in the District; they are not open to interpretation or modification.

Johnson Public School District Equity Non-Negotiables

We commit to:
- Eliminating inequities.
- Preventing student failure and supporting students' social-emotional growth.
- Achieving equitable representation of students in all organizational programming.
- Intentionally designing educational teams to increase and transform one another's instructional capacity.
- Collaborating to analyze data, design proactive instruction, and select strategies for all learners in our charge.
- Providing instruction and curriculum that are culturally relevant and rigorous for all learners.
- Proactively developing and revising curriculum and programming to improve overall student achievement, accommodate individual learning differences, and be deliverable in flexible learning environments.
- Regularly updating and maintaining student performance profiles to assist educational teams in documenting progress and goals, and determining methods to engage all students in learning.
- Serving each student, regardless of home situation, ability or circumstance.
- Aligning all District policies, procedures, and funding with the District's Equity Non-Negotiables to eliminate inequities.

To this end, the Board holds itself and all District and school administrators, faculty, support staff, contracted service providers and volunteers accountable for ensuring an intentional Districtwide culture of equity.

Smith Public School District
Board Policy Title: Culturally Proficient Schools and Administration Offices

The Smith Public School District Board of Education is committed to promoting and sustaining excellent schools, administration offices, and school community support systems in order to foster conditions that reduce disproportionality in student achievement and school discipline. It is the intent of the School Board that the staff and students throughout the Smith Public School District work and interact in schools and classrooms that affirm diverse backgrounds, acknowledge the disparity of opportunities for poor and more affluent students and promote equity in achievement, discipline, and performance. It is the belief of the School Board that closing the achievement gap is not just about instruction; it is the way that we think about, understand, and believe in the potential and capabilities of our students and effectively interact with them. The School Board further affirms the right of ALL students to have "equitable access" to a quality education that promotes college and career readiness. Equity means providing appropriate educational experiences for all students in order to close the gaps in the highest and lowest performing students and raise achievement levels.

Closing the achievement gap, while raising standards for all students, is the top priority of the School Board, the Superintendent, and all District staff. The consistent patterns of disparity among graduation and achievement rates across all student groups and subgroups are contrary to our beliefs. In order to attain the goals of closing the achievement gap, reducing the rate of disproportional suspension of students of color, and increasing the number of students who successfully graduate from our schools, the Board encourages staff to engage in professional development on strategies to close achievement gaps for low performing and underserved groups to meet the needs of students from multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds and their diverse learning styles.

The goals of educational equity are as follows:
1. Equitable opportunities for high academic achievements;
2. Equitable access and inclusion by providing inclusive opportunities in schools, programs and activities;
3. Equitable treatment of students by valuing all students and respecting their differences;
4. Equitable opportunities for students to engage in a rigorous course of study;
5. Equitable distribution of resources to all schools and programs to support teaching and learning; and
6. Shared accountability for all educational stakeholders responsible for every learner having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum and appropriate and sufficient support for learning so that ALL students can achieve.

The Board recognizes that these are long term goals. As a result, to track the progression of achievement of these goals, the Superintendent is responsible for reporting progress towards meeting the goals to the Board on an annual basis.

Furthermore, in order to implement educationally equitable practices for students within culturally relevant response settings, the Board establishes the following strategies for the District:

1. The District shall foster welcoming environments in all of the schools and administration offices that reflect and support the racial and ethnic diversity of the student populations served;
2. The District shall foster learning environments where diverse cultures and experiences will be acknowledged, valued and affirmed;
3. The District shall welcome and empower ALL families to engage in their child's education;
4. The District shall endeavor to recruit, hire, support and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally responsive administrative, instructional and support personnel and shall provide professional development to strengthen their knowledge, proficiency and skills for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in learning;
5. The District shall provide every student with equitable access to high quality, culturally responsive instruction, curriculum, support and other educational resources;
6. The District shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for students from all racial and ethnic groups;
7. The District shall review policies, procedures and practices that may impede equitable access of students to fair discipline, gifted and talented, Advanced Placement and specialty programs; and
8. The District affirms the racial, ethnic, gender, religious, cultural, linguistic, sexual orientation, special needs and economic diversity of students and staff.

The School Board directs the Superintendent to develop administrative procedures to implement the goals and strategies of this policy.

Williams Public School District
Board Policy Title: Equity and Excellence in Instructional Goals

Inherent in the Philosophy of Education is a commitment to equity and excellence that shall be reflected in all aspects of the K-12 program. Equity and excellence will be promoted through the processes for curriculum development, revision, and evaluation; through instructional planning and delivery; through assessment and evaluation of student learning; and through staff development efforts.

Attitudes and Beliefs
1. The school community holds the belief that all students can learn.
2. There will be high expectations for success for all students.
3. The educational climate will promote, recognize, and celebrate diversity.
4. There will be equal opportunity for all students.

Environment
1. The physical environment will reflect ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism.
2. Communication between staff, parents/guardians, community and school will be encouraged.
3. The staff will reflect ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism.
4. The participation of all parents will be encouraged to the extent possible.
5. A variety of grouping strategies will be used for classroom, co-, and extracurricular activities.

Curriculum and Instruction
1. Staff members will participate in a variety of on-going staff development programs.
2. Curriculum rationale will reflect sensitivity to and celebration of factors that make the world diverse.
3. Instructional resources will reflect historical and contemporary diversity of cultures.
4. Instructional strategies will include a variety of methodologies that address varied learning styles and needs.
5. The curriculum will address issues that promote connections between students life experiences and broader social issues.

Evaluation and Assessment
1. Assessment will employ instruments and methodologies that are non-discriminatory.
2. Formative and summative evaluation will be sensitive to issues of diversity.
3. A variety of assessment alternatives will be used in order that students may demonstrate their learning in divergent ways.

APPENDIX B – INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION FORM

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE

Study title	Motivation of School Board Members to Support Equity and Social Justice in Public Education
Researcher	Matthew Joynt, M. Ed. / Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Education / School of Education

I'm inviting you to participate in a research study. Participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate now, you can always change your mind later. There are no negative consequences, whatever you decide.

What is the purpose of this study?
I want to provide better access to current information on school board members' desire to promote equity and social justice in public education.

What will I do?
I will ask you semi-structured interview questions about influencing factors that resulted in your decisions to support equity and social justice in the school district you serve or served as a board member.

Risks

Possible risks	How we're minimizing these risks
Some questions may be personal or upsetting	You can skip any questions you don't want to answer.
Breach of confidentiality (your data being seen by someone who shouldn't have access to it)	During the interview process, participants are encouraged to share their experiences without the use of names, when possible. The results of the research will be aggregated and in the event that identifying information is shared, the researcher will use pseudonyms when documenting such results.

There may be risks we don't know about yet. Throughout the study, we'll tell you if we learn anything that might affect your decision to participate.

Other Study Information

Possible benefits	• During the interview process, subjects will have an opportunity to share experiences relating to their role as a board member for a public school system and their role in implementing policy and initiatives that promote equity in education. The conversation between the researcher and the subjects who elect to participate in the study should provide an opportunity for reflection of the subject's personal, and their school board's journey to providing more equitable learning environments for children of our communities.
	• Increased knowledge of the underlying motivations of school board members to support equity and social justice policy and

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	initiatives in school districts will provide leaders with a better understanding of the individuals who govern and influence the direction of public education.
Estimated number of participants	9
How long will it take?	60 minutes
Costs	None
Compensation	None
Recordings	I will audio record our interview. The recordings will be used as a means of note taking for the researcher. The audio recordings will allow the researcher to return to moments of an interview, if needed, when compiling results of the study and documenting findings. The recording is optional.

Confidentiality and Data Security

We'll collect the following identifying information for the research: your name, role as a current or former member of a public school district board of education and district-issued email address (when applicable). This information is necessary to conduct the study and analyze the data.

Where will data be stored?	On my computer
How long will it be kept?	Through the completion of the researcher's dissertation. May 2019.

Who can see my data?	Why?	Type of data
The researcher	To conduct the study and analyze the data	Your name. Your role as a current or former member of a public school district board of education. Your district-issued email address (when applicable).
The IRB (Institutional Review Board) at UWM The Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) or other federal agencies	To ensure we're following laws and ethical guidelines	Your name. Your role as a current or former member of a public school district board of education. Your district-issued email address (when applicable).

Contact information:

For questions about the research	Matthew Joynt Dr. Elise Frattura	414-350-5221/ mjoynt@uwm.edu 414-229-4459/ frattura@uwm.edu

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For questions about your rights as a research participant	IRB (Institutional Review Board; provides ethics oversight)	414-229-3173 / irbinfo@uwm.edu
For complaints or problems	Matthew Joynt Dr. Elise Frattura	414-350-5221/ mjoynt@uwm.edu 414-229-4459/ frattura@uwm.edu
	IRB	414-229-3173 / irbinfo@uwm.edu

Signatures

If you have had all your questions answered and would like to participate in this study, sign on the lines below. Remember, your participation is completely voluntary, and you're free to withdraw from the study at any time.

_____

Name of Participant (print)

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____

Name of Researcher obtaining consent (print)

_____   _____

Signature of Researcher obtaining consent   Date

APPENDIX C – SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about the Board's efforts to promote equity and social justice.

2. Can you tell me about one effort in particular that you remember well?

    a. What was your role in that effort?

    b. What was your motivation to take the stand you did?

    c. Can you tell me about the constraints/challenges that you and other Board members faced?

    d. Can you tell me about the supports around this effort?

3. Have/Did any fellow community members or organizations influenced or otherwise supported your efforts to support equity and social justice in the school district?

    a. If yes, why did you receive support from them?

4. Did you receive any assistance from the school district in formulating your position related to educational equity and social justice?

    a. If yes, why did you receive this support?

5. Besides fellow community members, outside organizations, and the school district, was there any other outside influence that motivated you to support equity and social justice efforts in your schools?

    a. If answered, why was this an influence for you?

6. What else do you want me to know about your motivation and efforts as a Board member to support equity in education?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Matthew B. Joynt, M. Ed.

Place of birth: Woodstock, Illinois

Education

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999

Master of Science Degree in Educational Administration, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2003

Dissertation Title: Motivation of School Board Members to Support Equity and Social Justice in Public Education

Wisconsin Educational Certification Licenses

Superintendent (#03)

Director of Instruction (#10)

Principal (#51)

Earth and Space Science Teacher (#41-635)

Elementary Teacher (#41-116)

Professional Experience

Superintendent of Schools, Mequon-Thiensville School District, WI (2017 - present)

Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Mequon-Thiensville School District, WI (2013 - 2017)

High School Principal, School District of Shorewood, WI (2008 - 2013)
High School Assistant Principal, Mequon-Thiensville School District, WI (2004 - 2008)

Elementary School Teacher, Mequon-Thiensville School District, WI (1999 - 2004)

Memberships in Higher Education Organizations

Concordia University-Wisconsin Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium President-Elect
(2019 - present)

Cardinal Stritch University College of Education and Leadership Advisory Board
(2015 - present)

Milwaukee School of Engineering School Administration MBA in Educational
Leadership Program Advisory Board
(2015 - present)

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Administrative Leadership Advisory Council
(2005 - present)

Memberships in Other Organizations

Aurora Medical Center- Grafton Community Steering Council
(2017 - present)

Gathering on the Green of Greater Ozaukee and Milwaukee Counties Advisory
Committee
(2018 - present)

Mequon-Thiensville Chamber of Commerce and Industry Board of Directors
(2017 - present)

Rotary Club of Thiensville-Mequon
(2017 - present)

YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee: Rite-Hite Family YMCA Branch Advisory Board
(2018 - present)

Presentations

AVID National Conference 2015
"Get Proactive! How Can Your School District Systematize AVID?"
Demond Means, Superintendent, Mequon-Thiensville School District, Mequon, WI
Matt Joynt, Assistant Superintendent, Mequon-Thiensville School District, Mequon, WI
Trina Hayden, AVID District Director, Mequon-Thiensville School District, Mequon, WI

Wisconsin ACT State Organization Conference 2015
"Closing the Achievement Gap"
Tim Balke, Director of Youth and Pre-College Programs, The United Community Center
Trina Hayden, AVID District Director, Mequon-Thiensville School District
Matt Joynt, District-Assistant Superintendent, Mequon-Thiensville School District
Demond Means, Superintendent, Mequon-Thiensville School District

Learning Forward Annual Conference 2016
"Anything's Possible When All Really Means All"
Anne Conzemius, SMART Learning Systems, Fitchburg, WI
Demond Means, Mequon-Thiensville School District, Mequon, WI
Matthew Joynt, Mequon-Thiensville School District, Mequon, WI

Wisconsin ACT State Organization Conference 2018
"Education for All"
Matt Joynt, Superintendent, Mequon-Thiensville School District
Willie Garrison, Supervisor of Equity and Student Services, Wauwatosa School District

WASDA Annual Educational Conference 2019
"Superintendents Leading District-Wide Equity Systems Change – Lessons from the Trenches"
Moderator: Colleen A. Capper, Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Co-Founder Integrated Comprehensive Systems for Equity
Superintendent Panelists: Matthew Joynt, Supt., Mequon-Thiensville; Dan Olson, Supt., Monona Grove; Terry Whitmore, Nekoosa; and Aaron Engel, Supt., Gale-Ettrick-Trempealeau