# A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURE IN NEWLY ESTABLISHED IDAHO CHARTER SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

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by

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# AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT

# DISSERTATION

This dissertation of Andrea Zambukos, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Educational Leadership and titled "A Mixed Methods Study of the Development of Culture in Newly Established Idaho Charter Schools," has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates given below, is now granted to submit final copies.

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# DEDICATION

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# ABSTRACT

When engaging in the process of opening a new school, leaders have endless planning and details to consider. One of the most important considerations lies in assembling a strong team of professionals and working to develop positive school culture. School leadership has a critical impact on the development of culture, and studies have shown that the significance of positive school culture can be measured through increased teacher commitment and job satisfaction, which leads to improved student outcomes. However, information necessary for developing a useful blueprint for achieving positive culture in new schools is sparse and additional research is needed. The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to explore teachers' perceptions of culture in newly established schools and identify commonalities and leadership practices, across levels of culture, contributing to the development of positive culture. Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis were used to analyze quantitative data collected from the School Culture Triage Survey. Semi-structured interviews provided qualitative data examined through coding and the development of themes.

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## Introduction

Organizational culture was presented as a vague concept beginning in the 1930s but remained widely under-studied until almost half a century later (Ostroff et al., 2013; Schein, 1988; Schneider et al., 2017). Some suggest researchers resisted the study of culture because the concept was too challenging to define and measure (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Schein, 1988). The 1970s paved a path for research in organizational culture, evolving from the fields of anthropology, sociology, and industrial psychology (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Fleury, 2009; Ostroff et al., 2013; Schein, 1988; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983). Although psychologists and anthropologists had been studying the differences between cultures for a long time, examining culture within a group or organization was a relatively new concept (Eller, 2015; Schein, 1993). The newly designated study of culture grew from a need to develop explanations for diverse experiences, behavior, and interactions experienced within a group or organization (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000; Schein, 1988).

A universally accepted definition of organizational culture has not yet been developed, as various academic disciplines influence the meanings of the complex construct (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Ismail et al., 2022; Monaghan & Just, 2000; Ostroff et al., 2013; Schein & Schein, 2017; Schneider et al., 2017; van der Post et al., 1997). A common element knitting a majority of definitions together is shared meaning (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017; Schneider et al., 2013; van der Post et al., 1997). Edgar Schein, an influential researcher in the field, describes organizational culture as representing

shared assumptions evolved within a group in response to challenges. The theory describes assumptions turning into common perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, which are reinforced and passed to new group members (Schein, 1981, 1983, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). Others in the field identify culture as being related to shared values, beliefs, norms, and ways of interacting (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; van der Post et al., 1997; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011).

The term climate must be considered in attempting to comprehensively define culture (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). Over the years, the complicated concepts of school climate and school culture have caused disagreement in the literature related to the respective definitions and use, but some conclusions are clear (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). Literature states general agreement that culture represents shared norms, beliefs, and values, while climate addresses perceptions of behavior by members of the group (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). Climate, inclusive of physical, social, and academic facets, is considered the broader concept encompassing culture (Jain et al., 2015; Rapti, 2013; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). Although climate and culture may be frequently used interchangeably in research, the terms represent distinct ideas (Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Rapti, 2013; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). School culture is the focus of the present study.

Though the definition may vary by context, culture directly or indirectly impacts an organization’s outcomes and effectiveness (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Ficarra et al., 2020; Isac et al., 2021; Purwadi et al., 2020; Schein & Schein, 2017; Virgana &

Kasyadi, 2020). In businesses, culture is significantly and positively related to financial performance, customer satisfaction, employee job satisfaction, innovation, and overall effectiveness (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Ficarra et al., 2020; Gillespie et al., 2008; Gregory et al., 2009; Isac et al., 2021; Purwadi et al., 2020; Rizanuddin, 2020; Rizki et al., 2019). Although much of the early research related to organizational culture focused on the corporate world, schools are also identified as having unique and complex cultures (Cavanaugh & Dellar, 1997; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Tonich, 2021). Schools are established as learning communities, sharing a common focus of improving student learning and engaging in a continuous process of evaluating practices to ensure goal-oriented progress (Anderson & Olivier, 2022; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2016).

Like organizational culture in the corporate world, school culture has a significant impact on the effectiveness and success of the organization, including student development and achievement, and teacher job satisfaction, commitment, self-efficacy, and performance (Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Purwadi et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Positive and collaborative school culture is impactful on an organizational level and vital to positive outcomes school wide, including increased trust and morale. (Fisher et al., 2012; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013). Influential school leaders, deliberate in making relational connections and promoting a culture with a strong sense of purpose, are needed to achieve the goal of a positive, collaborative school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Ismail et al., 2022; Kalkan et al., 2020; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Ozgenel et al.,

2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Tonich, 2021). Research highlights school leaders, most often principals, as being among the most significant influences on the development of positive school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Lee & Li, 2015; Rapti, 2013; Smith et al., 2020; Tonich, 2021). In order to foster a positive culture, trusting and collaborative staff relationships, a goal-oriented and student-centered community, and meaningful learning for staff should all be promoted (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012; Ismail et al., 2022; Lee & Li, 2015; Muhammad, 2018; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Verma, 2021).

**Statement of the Problem**

A significant and favorable relationship exists between organizational culture and overall organizational effectiveness (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Denison & Mishra, 1995; Ficarra et al., 2020; Isac et al., 2021; Purwadi et al., 2020; Schein & Schein, 2017; Virgana & Kasyadi, 2020). Although schools are unique types of organizations, research demonstrates a similarly strong relationship between positive school culture and overall effectiveness (Amtu et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2012; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Tonich, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). One of the most instrumental factors in developing positive culture is leadership (Abdulahi, 2020; Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). Schools are called to pay particular attention to leadership due to the leaders' impact on the development of positive school culture and the resulting impact on student learning and behavior (Jain et al.,

2015; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Tonich, 2021; Verma, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Positive school culture affects additional areas, such as teacher commitment, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction, which are also helpful to student performance (Abdulahi, 2020; Amtu et al., 2020; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Khan, 2019; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Rapti, 2013).

Resources for leaders in the process of starting new schools are limited (Garraux, 2019; Lane, 2008). Despite sparse research, some sources exploring the process of starting new schools highlight the necessity of strong leadership to ensure school success but do not provide detailed steps for developing positive culture (Dunford et al., 2013; Marino & Ranney, 2021; Nichols, 2008; Sexton, 2010; Sullins & Miron, 2005). The involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in creating strong mission and vision statements is identified as necessary in beginning to form culture (Garraux, 2019; Marino & Ranney, 2021; Sims, 2005). Artifacts, such as school colors and mascots, are also avenues to building culture (Garraux, 2019; Sims, 2005). Although not specific to new schools, a wealth of research can be found identifying characteristics and factors needed to promote and develop positive culture in existing schools (Abdulahi, 2020; Aguilar, 2016; Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012; Gawlik, 2012; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Ismail et al., 2022; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Ross & Gray, 2006; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Sortino, 2018; Spillane et al., 2004; Verma, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). However, new schools face unique and complex challenges affecting culture development, requiring additional research (Garraux, 2019; Lane, 2008; Sims, 2005).

The creation of culture in an organization has been examined through the lens of the leader or founder's role (Schein, 1983; Schein & Schein, 2017). Schein (1983) describes the

formation of culture as dependent upon the emerging relationships among group members in working towards common goals. Feeling strongly about the mission, the group's founder and leader is observed establishing the group and intentionally shaping culture. The founder intentionally pursues and recruits like-minded team members, and this supports the leader's significant influence over all aspects of organizational development (Schein, 1983; Schein & Schein, 2017).

However, schools are identified as more complex than many other organizations from social, political, emotional, environmental, population, relational, and adaptive perspectives (Brown, 2004; Fidan & Balci, 2017; Tonich, 2021). Unlike corporations and other organizations, schools involve children with diverse backgrounds, experiences, developmental levels, personalities, and feelings about participating in educational endeavors (Brown, 2004; Lin & Bates, 2014). In addition, new charter schools (the particular emphasis of this study) face specific challenges related to facilities, funding, planning, recruitment, and management (Lane, 2008; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020, 2021; Thomas & Lacey, 2016). Research is lacking in exploring the process of forming positive school culture, and such research could provide a helpful blueprint for those involved in the demanding task of starting a new school. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine teachers' perceptions of culture in newly opened Idaho charter schools and gain insight into school positive culture development by identifying commonalities and leadership practices, across levels of culture.

**Background**

Anthropology is considered a relatively new discipline, materializing in the early 1800s when colonialism and scientific exploration were prevalent (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000; Pina-Cabral, 2018). The study of culture began with anthropologists attempting to

understand how social and cultural evolution occurred (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000). In 1871, Edward B. Tylor developed a definition of culture focused on the notion that groups of people gain knowledge and beliefs by learning from others in the same group (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000). Franz Boas promoted the emergence of cultural anthropology as a separate discipline in the United States (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000; Pina-Cabral, 2018). Boas believed an individual's cultural and physical environments played the most significant parts in impacting the individual's behavior and worldview (Boas, 1904; Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000). In the last two decades, cultural anthropology has focused on humans' individual, collective, and diverse experiences while interacting within and between groups (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000).

In the late 1970s, Pettigrew (1979) was the first to bring the concepts of cultural anthropology into the organizational arena. The tides related to culture and climate research have shifted back and forth through the decades, beginning with a focus on organizational climate during the 1970s. Throughout the 1980s, research on organizational culture was more prevalent before a shift back to climate research within organizational and industrial psychology in the 1990s and early 2000s (Schneider et al., 2013, 2017). The initiation of studies explicitly related to school climate and culture appeared shortly after, with climate studies beginning in the late 1970s and school culture becoming more heavily studied in the 1990s and the first decade of 2000 (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Jerald, 2006). After the initial period of study, prominent school culture researchers turned to writing books about the topic rather than publishing research (Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Fisher et al., 2012; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Recent research published within the last five years has materialized almost exclusively from international studies conducted in countries with significantly diverse educational cultures

(Abdulahi, 2020; Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Atasoy, 2020; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Ismail et al., 2022; Korumaz et al., 2020; Ozdemir, 2021; Tabak & Sahin, 2020; Tonich, 2021; Ucar, 2021; Verma, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Although the studies have valuable implications for the present study, a reference to older studies conducted in the United States is also important to demonstrate the validity of new studies' findings across national cultures (Crede et al., 2019).

**Research Questions**

Research identifies positive school culture as having a consequential impact on school effectiveness (Abdulahi, 2020; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; MacNeil et al., 2009; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ni, 2017; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Verma, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). A need exists for further research in identifying methods for fostering positive culture in newly established schools. In particular, because of the unique needs of charter schools, the need exists for such research focused on this type of new school. Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers who work in newly established Idaho charter schools concerning school culture?
2. What commonalities shared by newly opened Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture?
3. What common leadership practices used in new Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, lead to the development of positive culture?

## Description of Terms

The clarification of terms related to this study is essential due to the confusion and interchangeable use of terms, such as school culture and school climate, in literature (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; Schein, 1993; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). Providing definitions of related terms ensures a common understanding of use within the study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

**Affiliative collegiality.** As a category defined in and measured by the School Culture Triage Survey, the perception of school staff of being supported, valued, and part of an inclusive community (Wagner, 2006).

**Artifacts.** As defined within Schein's Levels of Culture conceptual framework, the seen, heard, and felt organizational systems, processes, and behaviors of group members (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017).

**Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture.** A conceptual framework addressing the effect of leadership and communication on organizational outcomes through organizational culture (Aryani & Widodo, 2020).

**Charter school.** A public school of choice requiring application for a charter and needing to meet specific conditions but given more autonomy in return (Gawlik, 2012; Renzulli, 2005; Wohlstetter et al., 1995).

**Espoused beliefs/values.** As defined within Schein's Levels of Culture conceptual framework, the organizational philosophies serving as a model for dealing with challenges and issues (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017).

**Job satisfaction.** The degree to which employees, in this case teachers, enjoy their jobs and have positive emotional reactions to them (Tas, 2017).

**Newly opened/established schools.** Schools opened with a newly formed staff that became operational between 2017-2021.

**Professional collaboration.** As a category defined in and measured by the School Culture Triage Survey, the perception of school staff that the school community comes together to solve problems related to procedures, instruction, curriculum, and the organization as a whole (Wagner, 2006).

**Schein's Levels of Culture.** A conceptual framework used to analyze different levels of culture, including artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions (Schein & Schein, 2017).

**School climate.** Representative of perceptions of behavior, inclusive of physical, social, and academic facets, and seen as the broader concept encompassing culture (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; Rapti, 2013; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011).

**School culture.** Represents the shared norms, beliefs, values, rituals/traditions, and assumptions/expectations bringing a school community together (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; Schein, 1993; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011).

**School Culture Triage Survey.** Research-based instrument used to assist principals in measuring the state of an individual school's culture (Wagner, 2006).

**Self-determination/Efficacy.** As a category defined in and measured by the School Culture Triage Survey, the perception of school staff indicating improving professional skills is essential, professionalism leads to trust in decision-making, and actively solving problems is the norm for the community (Wagner, 2006).

**Teacher commitment.** Includes commitment/dedication to the school, student learning, and the profession's labor, as well as maintaining professionalism (Khan, 2019; Rapti, 2013; Razak et al., 2010).

**Underlying assumptions.** As defined within Schein's Levels of Culture conceptual framework, the influential unconscious beliefs and values of an organization (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017).

## Significance of the Study

Culture, generally in organizations and specifically in schools, is identified in the literature as impactful to collective effectiveness (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Fisher et al., 2012; Ismail et al., 2022; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Purwadi et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013). Therefore, businesses and schools should actively focus on creating and maintaining positive culture to improve outcomes (Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Isac et al., 2021; Ismail et al., 2022; Mangin, 2021). In new organizations, leaders must be aware of and spend time on culture development to ensure group cohesion and success (Jones, 2019; Schein, 1983; Schein & Schein, 2017; Tuckman, 1965). Sources exploring the process of starting new schools have not explicitly identified how to form positive culture in the uniquely challenging setting of a new school (Dunford et al., 2013; Garraux, 2019; Nichols, 2008; Sexton, 2010; Sullins & Miron, 2005). Positive school culture is related to improved outcomes and is therefore seen as essential to foster and purposefully advance in a school's beginning stages (Abdulahi, 2020; Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ni, 2017; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Verma, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017).

In Idaho, many schools are or soon will be in those beginning stages. According to the most recently published census information, Idaho is one of the top two fastest-growing states in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). In 2020, Idaho's population increased by 17.3% (270,000 residents), while the overall national growth was only 7.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The growth included the addition of almost 21,000 students state-wide over the last five years (Idaho State Department of Education, 2019a). The increase in the student population has necessitated the opening of new schools, and the number of charter schools has increased dramatically, with 14 opening in the last five years (Idaho State Department of Education, 2019b). In the fall of 2019 alone, almost 2,300 new students enrolled in charter schools across the Gem State (Bodkin, 2019). In the 2021-22 school year, 68 charter schools out of 705 schools in Idaho served 9.3% (29,600) of publicly enrolled students (Public Impact, 2022).

In terms of growth over the next 10 years, Idaho's population is expected to increase in 29 of 44 counties (Public Impact, 2022). Idaho's student population in grades K-8 is also expected to increase dramatically in the same period (Public Impact, 2022). This growth rate will mean an additional 39,480 K-8 students in need of education in Idaho, necessitating the addition of 98 new schools (Public Impact, 2022). Although growth will occur at a slower pace, Idaho's high school student population is also projected to increase over the next 10 years (Public Impact, 2022). The high school population will increase by 2,998 students, requiring six new schools (Public Impact, 2022). In total, Idaho will need a staggering 104 new schools by 2030 to accommodate the overwhelming increase in the student population (Public Impact, 2022). Based on the current percentage, 10 new charter schools will need to be opened by 2030, serving

approximately 4,078 students. Besides the student seats needed to address significant population growth, 60,500 additional seats are needed to address identified deficiencies in 119 existing underperforming Idaho schools (Public Impact, 2022).

This study focuses specifically on schools of choice in Idaho due to the incredibly rapid growth of the state's student population and the subsequent substantial need for an increase in new school openings. A specific kind of school of choice, the charter school, faces unique challenges such as facilities, management, accountability, and student achievement (Gawlik, 2012; Lane, 2008; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020, 2021; Sahin et al., 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016). School culture directly and indirectly affects schools, with positive culture improving teacher commitment, job satisfaction, motivation, and self-efficacy (Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). A favorable culture directly and positively impacts student outcomes as well, including student development, behavior, and achievement (Amtu et al., 2020; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Jain et al., 2015; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Therefore, understanding how to foster positive culture from a charter school's inception is vital to school success. This study aims to provide helpful information related to the formation of positive culture for school leaders embarking on the daunting task of opening a new charter school.

Since forming and maintaining positive culture is influenced significantly by the school leader, providing comprehensive training to principals is vital (Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Ismail et al., 2022; Ozgenel, 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Tonich, 2021). Idaho's need for more than 100 new schools in the next decade and an immediate need to address

underperforming schools will necessitate hiring principals adept at building positive culture to ensure overall school success (Public Impact, 2022). This study will assist higher education institutions in adequately preparing school administrators to meet the challenges of a rapidly growing student and community population.

From a broader perspective, school choice is increasingly prevalent, and parents seek schools meeting specific personal needs or preferences (Cantu et al., 2021; Golden et al., 2022; Rollefson, 2015). In order to recruit and retain new students, schools need to develop an understanding of the factors impacting parent and student enrollment decisions (Cantu et al., 2021; Rollefson, 2015; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020). Research identifies positive school culture as a significant and influential factor in the decision to enroll students in a school (Cantu et al., 2021; Golden et al., 2022; Rollefson, 2015; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020). Therefore, this study provides valuable information to new charter schools looking to establish a positive culture, enhancing the capability of building and retaining enrollment.

Finally, a majority of the published school culture research conducted in the last decade that is relevant to the present study has originated from countries outside of the United States (Abdulahi, 2020; Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Atasoy, 2020; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Gun & Caglayan, 2013; Hongboontri, 2014; Ismail et al., 2022; Kalkan et al., 2020; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Korumaz et al., 2020; Lee & Li, 2015; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ning et al., 2015; Othman & Kasuma, 2017; Ozdemir, 2021; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020; Tabak & Sahin, 2020; Tas, 2017; Tonich, 2021; Ucar, 2021; Verma, 2021; Virgana & Kasyadi, 2020; Werang & Agung, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Current studies have been conducted in countries culturally different from the United

States, with much of the work originating in Turkey (Atasoy, 2020; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Gun & Caglayan, 2013; Kalkan et al., 2020; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Korumaz et al., 2020; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Tabak & Sahin, 2020; Tas, 2017; Ucar, 2021). The remaining studies cited have come from a variety of countries across the globe, including Malaysia, India, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Australia, Pakistan, Taiwan, Singapore, Philippines, Greece, and Albania (Abdulahi, 2020; Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Hongboontri, 2014; Ismail et al., 2022; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ning et al., 2015; Ozdemir, 2021; Rapti, 2013; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020; Tonich, 2021; Verma, 2021; Virgana & Kasyadi, 2020; Werang & Agung, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Although valuable information is gained from the international studies, several cited a need for further research in more expansive geographical locations to address limitations and increase generalizability (Abdulahi, 2020; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Tabak & Sahin, 2020; Verma, 2021; Virgana & Kasyadi, 2020). This study addresses the need for current, localized information related to school culture formation. In addition, because school leaders play a significant role in school culture formation, higher education institutions may use the study to inform instruction in educational leadership programs (Abdulahi, 2020; Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013; Sortino, 2018).

## Theoretical Framework

The present study combines two existing conceptual frameworks: Aryani and Widodo's (2020) Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture and Edgar Schein's Levels of Culture (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). The Conceptual Framework of Organization Culture is used to provide a basis for understanding the effect of organizational culture on an

organization. In this framework, transformational leadership and organizational communication media are identified as variables determining organizational culture (Aryani & Widodo, 2020). Transformational leadership and organizational communication significantly impact a host of organizational outcomes, including employee motivation, commitment, behavior, engagement, involvement, innovation, productivity, performance, and job satisfaction (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Purwadi et al., 2020; Rizki et al., 2019). The modified version of Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework used in the present study focuses on leadership as the culture-determining variable (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Carpenter, 2015; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). The factor of focus, impacted by culture, is teacher commitment/job satisfaction (Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; MacNeil et al., 2009; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ni, 2017; Ozgenel, 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Ross & Gray, 2006; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021).

School culture research shows school leadership is a determining factor in developing positive school culture (Carpenter, 2015; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). Strong school leaders who form trusting relationships with staff, foster professional growth, and provide professional feedback are more successful in building positive culture (Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; Fisher et al., 2012; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Rapti, 2013; Ross & Gray, 2006; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). School leaders engaging in supportive practices, shared leadership, collaboration, and effective communication increase staff engagement and promote favorable culture development (Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; Gawlik, 2012; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Rapti, 2013; Ross & Gray, 2006; Spillane et al., 2004; Waldron &

McLeskey, 2010). Leaders who prioritize community, are mission-driven, and acknowledge subcultures are more likely to form positive culture (Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011).

Just as positive organizational culture fosters successful organizational outcomes, positive school culture yields successful school outcomes (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Fisher et al., 2012; Gillespie et al., 2008; Gregory et al., 2009; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; van der Post & de Coning, 1998; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Positive school culture enhances teacher commitment and job satisfaction, which impacts learning outcomes for students and increases overall school success (Amtu et al., 2020; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Ni, 2017; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013). School culture affects student outcomes, including learning, achievement, behavior, and attendance (Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Rapti, 2013; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). In charter schools, culture is especially important because charters depend on student retention for healthy operations, and school culture is an important factor in parental decisions about school choice (Cantu et al., 2021; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020).

School culture's significance to the success of schools makes it an essential element for school leaders to monitor (Ismail et al., 2022; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013). School culture assessment is used to identify cultural strengths and areas for growth (Maslowski, 2006; Wagner & O'Phelan, 1998). Culture is seen as a complex concept that is difficult to measure, but some valuable tools have originated from studies (Berkemeyer et al., 2015; Maslowski, 2006; Wagner, 2006). Wagner (2006) developed a brief survey identifying

three categories of behaviors contributing to positive school culture: professional collaboration, affiliative collegiality, and self-determination/efficacy. Professional collaboration occurs when educators work together towards common goals, ultimately improving student outcomes (DuFour et al., 2006, 2016; Jarzabkowski, 2002; Mangin, 2021; Ning et al., 2015). Affiliative collegiality, which contributes to teacher job satisfaction and improved emotional health, refers to the cohesive relationships among educators (Gun & Caglayan, 2013; Jarzabkowski, 2002). Self-determination and efficacy are factors indicating teachers feel empowered to solve problems and make a difference in their school roles (DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hoy, 2000; Wagner, 2006).

In addition to being examined by assessment, school culture may also be analyzed through the lens of Edgar Schein's Levels of Culture. The Levels of Culture framework identifies three levels separated by the cultural phenomenon's visibility to participants in or observers of the culture. Artifacts are the organizational systems, processes, and behaviors of group members visible to those inside and outside the organization. Another level of culture is related to espoused beliefs and values, which reflect the foundational ideologies of the group. Espoused beliefs and values may or may not be consistent with the visible artifacts. The last level of culture encompasses the organization's basic underlying assumptions. Underlying assumptions represent the unconscious beliefs and values of the organization, which undeniably influence the group's behavior, perceptions, thoughts, and emotions (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017).

The directional interaction of the concepts in Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture is used in this study to highlight the influence of school leadership on school culture and, subsequently, outcomes such as teacher commitment and job

satisfaction (Ardliana et al., 2021; Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Purwadi et al., 2020; Rizki et al., 2019; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Aryani and Widodo (2020) encourage the modification of the framework by researchers exploring a variety of organizations to increase effectiveness. Literature supports the relationships articulated in the modified framework between school leadership, school culture, and teacher commitment and job satisfaction (Carpenter, 2015; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ni, 2017; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Sortino, 2018; Ucar, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). As an important part of the combination of the two frameworks, Edgar Schein's Levels of Culture framework allows for identifying specific artifacts, espoused beliefs, and underlying assumptions contributing to culture development (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017).

**Overview of Research Methods**

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design addressed the research questions of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). Mixed methods research allows for using positive aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods to deeply investigate a complex construct (Almeida, 2018; Bryman, 2006; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; McKim, 2017). The study was conducted in two phases, beginning with the quantitative phase. Quantitative data informed the direction of the qualitative phase, which provided further explanation for the quantitative data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017).

The first research question regarding teachers' perceptions of new school culture was addressed through the School Culture Triage Survey. Participants completed the 17 Likert-scale item School Culture Triage Survey addressing three areas of school culture: professional

collaboration, affiliative collegiality, and self-determination/efficacy (Wagner, 2006). Survey data were collected and analyzed, providing direction for the qualitative phase of the study (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006; McKim, 2017). The survey results demonstrated which schools obtained mean survey scores indicating teachers' collective perception of positive school culture. Schools meeting the scoring criteria were chosen to participate in the second qualitative phase of the study.

In the second phase, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with twelve teachers from the three schools. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to explore more deeply and seek understanding of the analyzed quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). Interviews were conducted via Google Meet to enhance the researcher's ability to build rapport (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and the data were systematically coded (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Saldana, 2016). The researcher developed themes from the codes and ensured the validity of data interpretation through member checking following the interviews (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Saldana, 2016).

# Chapter II

## Review of Literature

### Introduction

School culture developed conceptually from organizational culture, studied within anthropology, sociology, and organizational psychology (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Fleury, 2009; Ostroff et al., 2013; Ouchi & Wilkins, 2003; Schein, 1988). Organizational culture is generally focused on how people interact, behave, and think in the workplace (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Schein, 1988). In the initial focus of organizational culture study, beginning in the 1980s, researchers centered on consulting with businesses interested in understanding the connection between culture and organizational effectiveness (Schein, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). Although mentioned by researchers as early as the 1930s, the formal study of culture in the school setting did not occur until around the 1970s (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Ostroff et al., 2013; Schein, 1988; Schneider et al., 2017).

Positive school culture is identified as having a substantial effect on successful outcomes for schools, such as student development and learning and teacher job satisfaction, commitment, self-efficacy, and performance (Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Purwadi et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). As a result, building positive culture is seen as an essential focus of school leaders (Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). The terms school culture and school climate have often been used interchangeably in literature (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015;

Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Schein, 1988; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). However, sources indicate the term *culture* represents shared assumptions, norms, beliefs, feelings, values, and interactions, while *climate* encompasses culture, as well as perceptions of behavior, social, and environmental factors (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; Schein, 1993; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011).

Positive and collaborative school culture is organizationally impactful and critical to a school's effectiveness and success (Fisher et al., 2012; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Specifically, positive school culture favorably impacts the commitment and job satisfaction of teachers and student outcomes (Abdulahi, 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ni, 2017; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Although the process of developing positive culture in newly opened schools is not well researched, sources identify strong leadership, purpose statements, and stakeholder involvement as critical elements in positive culture development (Garraux, 2019; Marino & Ranney, 2021; Sims, 2005). To better understand the factors related to developing positive school culture and its impact in new schools, the literature review investigated the following areas: (a) theoretical framework, (b) historical context and definition, (c) culture formation, (d) school leadership, (e) development of positive culture, (f) impact of school culture, (g) measurement of school culture, and (h) new charter school development.

## Theoretical Framework

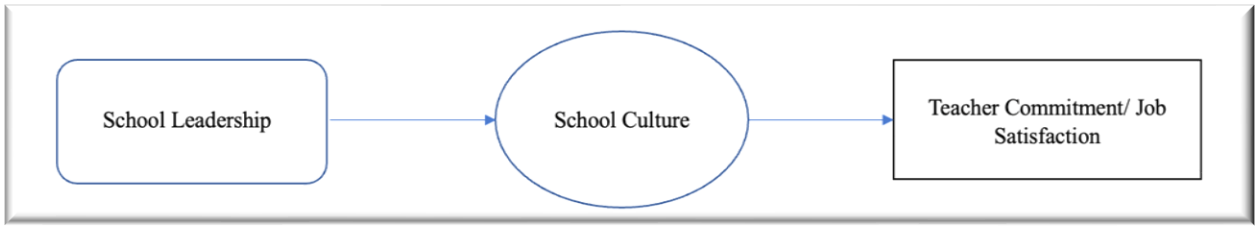
The theoretical framework illuminates all aspects of a study, including the research questions, methods for collecting and analyzing data, and interpretations of findings (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Maxwell, 2013; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). The theoretical framework of the present study begins with a pragmatist/pluralist view of research which includes an openness to combining research methods with a practical, problem-solving focus (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). A flexible view of research that includes a willingness to use multiple methods to investigate phenomena lends itself to mixed methods research (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). In addition, Kelly and Cordeiro (2020) point to the ability to connect the research process to organizations' ever-changing practices and challenges through the pragmatic lens focused on gaining actionable information. In this study, the complex nature of school culture lends itself to the methodological principles described, allowing the researcher to observe and engage with the phenomena through multiple encounters, each having a solutions-focused intent.

The reviewed literature supports further basing the theoretical framework for this study upon two conceptual frameworks, both related to organizational culture. First, Aryani and Widodo's (2020) Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture explains the impact of transformational leadership and communication media on organizational culture, which in turn impacts several organizational outcomes. The organizational outcomes identified in the framework as being affected by culture include employee motivation, commitment, behavior, engagement, innovation, productivity, performance, and job satisfaction. The framework generally illustrates the function of organizational culture in mediating the impact of leadership and communication on the identified organizational outcomes (Aryani & Widodo, 2020).

Aryani and Widodo (2020) indicate the framework may be dissected in several ways to focus on different aspects and encourage the framework's use for further research in diverse fields. The significant study findings point to the extensive impact of organizational culture on specific outcomes and the ability of transformational leadership to mold culture. For the present study, Aryani and Widodo's (2020) framework is further modified to align with the literature related to school culture. Figure 1 demonstrates the dissection of the framework related to the present study.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework of the Role of Organizational School Leadership in Developing Culture and Impacting Teacher Job Satisfaction/Commitment*




*Note.* Adapted from "The Determinant of Organizational Culture and its Impact on Organization: A Conceptual Framework," by R. Aryani and W. Widodo, 2020, *International Journal of Higher Education, 9*(3), p. 67.

Based upon the literature and established connection between leadership and the development of positive school culture, this study modifies the organizational culture framework of Aryani and Widodo (2020) to focus solely on leadership as the variable influencing school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013; Smith et al., 2020; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). The outcome of focus is teacher

job satisfaction/commitment, directly impacting student success (Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Ross & Gray, 2006; Ucar, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Studies have shown that teacher job satisfaction/commitment affects student behavior, learning, and academic performance (Amtu et al., 2020; Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Ross & Gray, 2006; Weiner & Higgins, 2017).

In addition to exploring the relationship between leadership, school culture, and teacher job satisfaction/commitment, this study seeks to identify specific characteristics and practices contributing to positive culture development in new schools. Therefore, Edgar Schein's Levels of Culture framework is used as a lens through which to analyze collected data (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). Schein's (1981, 1988) framework describes three levels of culture, visible or conscious to participants or observers of the culture, at varying degrees.

The first and most visible level of culture within an organization is *artifacts*, which refers to the organization's structures, systems, processes, and member behaviors (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). Artifacts are seen, heard, and felt. Organizational artifacts include physical environment, language, creative works, organizational narratives, manners of dressing, ways of addressing group members, and visible routines, traditions, and celebrations. Although this level of culture is easily observed, the meaning of artifacts cannot be inferred by outsiders without directly interviewing group members (Schein & Schein, 2017).

The next level of culture is based on fundamental principles and demonstrates an organization's *espoused beliefs and values* (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). Organizational beliefs and values originate from those of an individual, often the leader, and are only accepted after a process of questioning, discussing, challenging, and testing to determine

success. Some beliefs and values cannot be tested but are accepted through group consensus and shared group experiences. The beliefs and values of a group are often represented in organizational philosophies and serve as a model for coping with organizational challenges (Schein & Schein, 2017).

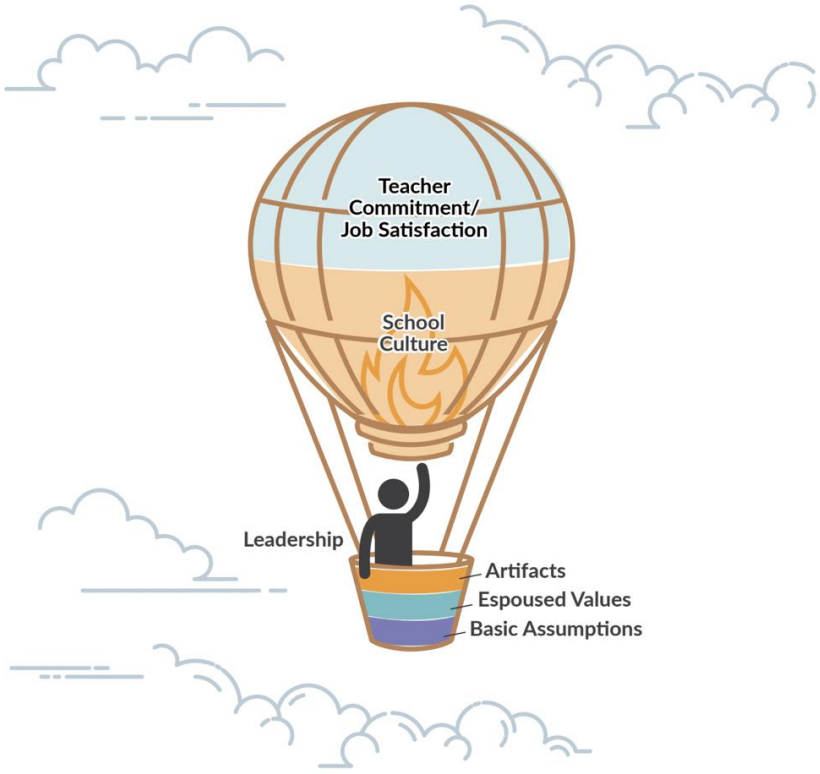
Organizational beliefs and values applied with success over time eventually become the most challenging level of culture to identify: *underlying assumptions* (Schein & Schein, 2017). Underlying assumptions represent the organization's influential unconscious beliefs and values. The underlying, basic assumptions of the organization, of which the group is often unaware, impact the members' behavior, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). Basic assumptions are ingrained in the fabric of an organization, making deviation rare and even unimaginable. Group members do not challenge or debate basic assumptions. Underlying assumptions, as a level of culture, impart a sense of group identity (Schein & Schein, 2017).

The theoretical framework conceptualized for this study through the combination of the two described frameworks identifies leadership as a significant factor impacting school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ozgenel, 2020; Rapti, 2013; Smith et al., 2020; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). In turn, school culture influences teacher commitment and job satisfaction (Abdulahi, 2020; Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Isac et al., 2021; Verma, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). School culture and teacher commitment/job satisfaction affect student outcomes such as learning and behavior (Amtu et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Ross & Gray, 2006; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). School culture is the mediator between leadership and teacher commitment/job

satisfaction in this framework. Study data are analyzed through Schein's Levels of Culture, including artifacts, espoused (beliefs and) values, and basic (underlying) assumptions (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). Figure 2 visually represents the theoretical framework of the present study.

**Figure 2**

*Theoretical Framework*




*Note.* Original artwork by researcher and Cody Human. Adapted from "The Determinant of Organizational Culture and its Impact on Organization: A Conceptual Framework," by R. Aryani and W. Widodo, 2020, *International Journal of Higher Education, 9*(3), pp. 64-70, and from *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (5th ed.) by E. H. Schein and P.S. Schein, 2017, Wiley.

**Historical Context and Definition**

Anthropologists first developed the concept of culture to describe the unique characteristics, development, and social interactions of different groups of people (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000). Anthropologists initiated the study of culture to seek understanding of social and cultural evolution (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000). In the late 1800s, cultural anthropology emerged as a separate discipline focused on sharing knowledge and beliefs among people in the same group (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000; Pina-Cabral, 2018). Within the study of cultural anthropology, individual behavior and perspectives are considered to be significantly impacted by cultural and physical environments. As cultural anthropology evolved, the focus widened to include all human experiences related to group interactions (Eller, 2015; Monaghan & Just, 2000). Cultural anthropologists influenced early sociologists in the incorporation of the study of culture (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). From a sociological perspective, culture is a fundamental concept. Culture is commonly used in sociology to explore the influence of language, ceremonies, symbols, beliefs, and behaviors on members of a group or society (Itulua-Abumere, 2013; University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2016). Sociologists view culture as playing a vital role in sustaining the norms and values of a society (Itulua-Abumere, 2013).

The influence of sociology and cultural anthropology intersected with organizational studies in the mid-1900s (Powers, 2019). Organizational psychologists began exploring job-related emotions and workplace relationships, behavior, and group dynamics (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Powers, 2019). The impact of emotions, behavior, and group dynamics in the workplace evolved into studying organizational culture. In the early years of organizational culture research, factory settings were common sites for research, and the relationship between organizational

culture and productivity became more widely studied (Powers, 2019). As the study of organizational culture progressed, researchers initiated consultative relationships with businesses interested in better understanding the behavior, interactions, and relationships connected to organizational effectiveness (Schein, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017).

School culture as a distinct concept originated from organizational culture, which is studied in anthropology, sociology, and organizational psychology (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Schein, 1988). Despite school culture's not being formally studied until the late 1980s (Deal & Peterson, 2016), the concept was discussed half a century earlier when Waller (1932) insightfully wrote:

> Schools have a culture that is definitely their own. There are, in the school, complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways, mores, and irrational sanctions, a moral code based upon them. There are games, which are sublimated wars, teams, and an elaborate set of ceremonies concerning them. There are traditions and traditionalists waging their world-old battle against innovators (p. 96).

Climate is considered to be a concept closely related to culture. However, confusion and variation between school culture and climate definitions are common (Cavanaugh & Dellar, 1997; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Ismail et al., 2022; Rapti, 2013; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). A level of agreement in the literature exists related to the terms, distinctly identifying culture as representing common group assumptions, norms, beliefs, values, feelings, and ways of doing things (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; Schein, 1993; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). Climate is viewed as dealing with perceptions of behavior (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker,

2015; Hoy & Feldman, 1999; Jain et al., 2015; Schein, 1993; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). Climate, which includes physical, social, and academic facets, is commonly identified as the broader concept encompassing culture (Jain et al., 2015; Rapti, 2013; Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011). Climate is described as more transient, directly affecting staff's and students' feelings and willingness to engage in work (Rapti, 2013). On the other hand, the shaping of culture is complicated and time consuming, and the effects are far reaching in an organization (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012).

**Culture Formation**

The study of the group formation process became prominent after World War II and led to the development of an influential model in the 1960s, still prevalent today in organizational theory (Bonebright, 2010; Schein & Schein, 2017). Tuckman's (1965) model of group development identified four stages of group evolution referred to as 1) testing and dependence (forming), 2) intergroup conflict (storming), 3) development of group cohesion (norming), and 4) functional role relatedness (performing). In a review of the model, Tuckman and Jensen (1977) discovered wide theoretical use despite a lack of empirical support. The review also led to the addition of the fifth stage of development to address group termination (adjourning) (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Despite empirical limitations, Tuckman's (1965) model is extensively sought, referenced, and utilized within the field of organizational studies (Jones, 2019; Miller, 2003).

During the forming stage, group members identify rules for behavior, which is vital in setting the tone for group development (Bonebright, 2010; Jones, 2019; Tuckman, 1965). In addition, members become aware of the group's purpose or main tasks (Bonebright, 2010; Schein & Schein, 2017; Tuckman, 1965). On an organizational level, the forming stage creates questions for individuals regarding personal roles within the group and group leader influence.

Individuals must learn how to navigate relationships with other group members, the group leader, and the larger organization (Bonebright, 2010; Schein & Schein, 2017). In new organizations, the style and attitude of the leader in this stage establishes the direction the group members follow (Schein & Schein, 2017).

The storming stage centers around conflict within the group (Schein & Schein, 2017; Tuckman, 1965). Group members potentially express hostility and actively obstruct the organization of the group structure (Tuckman, 1965). Divisiveness, disagreements, and a lack of unity are prevalent in this stage (Jones, 2019; Tuckman, 1965). In organizations, the storming stage often originates from emotions related to the task and to issues around power and control (Schein & Schein, 2017; Tuckman, 1965). New group members have to agree on how the group will be led and make decisions. Reaching consensus can be difficult, with members having different personalities and needs for power. Competition, dislike, and distrust among group members creates varying levels of involvement in the group processes at this stage (Schein & Schein, 2017).

The third stage, norming, is centered around acceptance, peace, and the development of group cohesion (Bonebright, 2010; Jones, 2019; Tuckman, 1965). Group members in this stage express personal opinions with acknowledgment from others while avoiding conflict (Jones, 2019; Tuckman, 1965). Receptiveness to group members' differing personalities and ideas becomes more common (Tuckman, 1965). Within organizations, leaders must take advantage of this stage to draw attention to the differing strengths and needs of the group. Identifying the organizational assets derived from group diversity is critical (Schein & Schein, 2017).

The performing stage of group development finally leads the group to problem-solving and effective functioning. At this stage, with relationships developed, group members are able to

assume appropriate roles related to the group's task or purpose (Schein & Schein, 2017; Tuckman, 1965). Interactions are generally constructive and positive, with group members working toward common goals (Jones, 2019; Tuckman, 1965). From an organizational perspective, leaders in this stage work to build consensus around problem-solving practices, decision-making procedures, and evaluation systems (Schein & Schein, 2017).

The final group development stage, added more than a decade after the model's inception, is related to the group's dissolution (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Although the amount of time it takes for groups to reach the adjourning stage is variable, acknowledging a group's ending is important (Jones, 2019; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Organizations often have groups working on specific tasks, and groups are dissolved upon reaching sought-after goals. Celebrating the successes of an accomplished group helps the members successfully navigate the transition process to the next group (Jones, 2019).

New organizations begin with an individual or group's innovative idea and enthusiasm around the idea. Leaders typically have strong convictions about how an organization should operate and hire like-minded others. If leaders successfully implement new ideas, culture begins to form. Therefore, leaders profoundly influence the process of creating culture (Schein & Schein, 2017).

Leaders must also be aware of how the culture development process is positively or negatively influenced by the formation of subcultures. Subcultures commonly exist in organizations and are based upon standard job functions, beliefs, values, or ideas the particular group shares (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Muhammad, 2018; Schein & Schein, 2017). Organizational leaders are tasked not only with being aware of subcultures but understanding how to manage the groups as well (Schein & Schein, 2017). In a school setting, subcultures can

become divisive and toxic if leaders do not attempt to exert influence to ensure alignment with school goals (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Muhammad, 2018). Because teacher subcultures are an especially significant factor in determining school culture, school leaders should try to understand teacher subculture goals and actively engage in dialogue with teachers around goal alignment (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Lee & Li, 2015; Muhammad, 2018).

**School Leadership**

Leadership is considered a complex, multidimensional concept. After more than a century of research, a single definition of leadership has not been articulated, but the importance of leadership is well established (By, 2021; Gandolfi & Stone, 2018; Kameli et al., 2020; Northouse, 2018). Leadership definitions are not superficial and have changed based on the influence of politics, world events, and the perspectives of the individual author (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018; Kameli et al., 2020; Northouse, 2018). Themes related to the definition of leadership identified within specific periods include the following (Northouse, 2018):

- 1900-1929: Leadership was based on power and control.
- 1930s: Leadership focused on traits of the leader and influence rather than dominance.
- 1940s: Leadership focused on behavior of the leader while managing activities of the group.
- 1950s: Three leadership themes were identified: 1) group theory, 2) importance of relationships focused on common goals, 3) effectiveness.
- 1960s: Leadership focused on leader behavior influencing others toward achieving common goals.

- 1970s: Leadership focused on organizational behavior and pushing groups to accomplish the goals of organizations.
- 1980s: Research increased significantly and focused on influence, leader traits, and the identification of a transformational leadership style.
- 1990s- present: Research emphasized leadership as a process and identified multiple specific leadership styles.

Despite the many variations in leadership definitions, common elements identified include a process orientation, the involvement of influence, the need for a group, and the identification of common goals or purposes (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018; Kameli et al., 2020; Northouse, 2018).

From an organizational perspective, leadership significantly influences culture and effectiveness (Purwadi et al., 2020; Rizanuddin, 2020; Rizki et al., 2019; Schein & Schein, 2017). The literature establishes a clear connection between school leadership and the development of positive culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ozgenel, 2020; Rapti, 2013; Smith et al., 2020; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). It indicates that establishing an intentional and positive culture requires a strong, charismatic, and supportive school leader (Abdulahi, 2020; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Fisher et al., 2012; Ismail et al., 2022; Kalkan et al., 2020; Mangin, 2021; Ozgenel, 2020; Smith & Shouppe, 2018). Influential leaders who promote positive school culture are able to do the following (Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021; Ozgenel, 2020; Ross & Gray, 2006; Sortino, 2018):

- Establish trusting and respectful relationships with and among staff members.
- Remain open to learning.

- Communicate the school's mission and vision effectively.
- Provide responsive support to staff and students.

School leaders need to get to know staff members personally and develop an understanding of strengths and areas for growth (Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018). In addition, school leaders who encourage and provide opportunities for professional development are more effective in creating a positive culture (Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Rapti, 2013).

School leaders who incorporate supportive practices promote staff engagement, collaborative culture, and increased teacher performance, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and commitment (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Ardliana et al., 2021; Carpenter, 2015; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Ilyas & Abdullah, 2016; Kalkan et al., 2020; Ni, 2017; Othman & Kasuma, 2017; Ross & Gray, 2006; Ucar, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Identified supportive practices include showing respect to staff by giving educators autonomy and leadership opportunities, modeling a positive attitude, being an effective communicator, and aiding staff in conflict resolution (Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Gawlik, 2012; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Rapti, 2013; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Regarding effective communication, school leaders should be visible, available to listen to all stakeholders, and focused on intentional, genuine, and consistent communication (Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020).

Engaging in distributed leadership is another practice of school leaders resulting in a positive culture of collaboration and a more engaged, trusting staff (Abdulahi, 2020; Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Smith &

Shouppe, 2018; Spillane et al., 2004; Thessin, 2021; Ucar, 2021; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Collaboration is necessary for productive professional learning communities and a positive school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Carpenter, 2015; DuFour et al., 2006, 2016; Othman & Kasuma, 2017; Thessin, 2021). When school leaders allow teachers to have input and encourage shared problem-solving, schools engage more effectively in continuous improvement and the development of collective goals (Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). This corresponds to research pointing to the significant role school leaders play in promoting and strengthening staff commitment to the collective goals of the school (Angelle, 2010; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ozgenel, 2020; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). In order to be successful instructional leaders promoting professional learning communities, school leaders must clearly communicate expectations, provide appropriate professional development, and continually focus efforts on student learning (DuFour et al., 2016; Thessin, 2021).

School leaders must acknowledge schools as unique and complex organizations and understand the significant influence leadership has on school culture and subcultures (Abdulahi, 2020; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ozgenel, 2020; Tonich, 2021). Principals' characteristics and attitudes influence the ability to lead, reflect the organization's culture, and affect the way teachers experience the work environment (Engels et al., 2008; Gawlik, 2012; Ozgenel, 2020). The type of school culture formed is most heavily influenced by the principal and other staff in leadership positions (Abdulahi, 2020; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Kalkan et al., 2020; Lee & Li, 2015; Rapti, 2013; Smith et al., 2020). Due to this identified correlation, there is a need to acknowledge that many school leaders lack the proper training to implement and support educators in promoting collaborative culture (Carpenter, 2015). School leaders need

to seek personal and staff training on how to collaborate effectively to promote positive culture (Carpenter, 2015; Thessin, 2021). Principals must focus energy on areas like school culture and collaboration, which are most impactful to student outcomes (Abdulahi, 2020; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ozgenel, 2020; Thessin, 2021).

**Development of Positive Culture**

Although direction for leaders attempting to develop positive culture in new schools is limited, leaders in existing schools attempting to work towards positive culture must be able first to analyze, comprehend, and identify positive and negative school culture elements (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Muhammad, 2018; Verma, 2021). A plan of influence and action is needed to encourage and grow a positive culture (Muhammad, 2018; Verma, 2021). The elements of an action plan include having a focus on student learning and other common goals, encouraging collaboration, providing support systems for teachers, creating opportunities for professional development, and celebrating staff and student successes (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Mangin, 2021; Muhammad, 2018; Thessin, 2021; Verma, 2021).

School culture improves when educators align priorities, purpose, and values (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Muhammad, 2018). The most crucial priority is a sharp focus on ensuring all students are learning at the highest level possible (Aguilar, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Muhammad, 2018; Verma, 2021). Identifying mission, vision, and values is a key exercise in positive culture development, but results are only realized with articulated, actionable goals and effective collaboration (Aguilar, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Muhammad, 2018; Thessin, 2021). Trusting, respectful relationships and a strong sense of community are vital to the collaboration process (Aguilar, 2016; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Verma, 2021). Therefore, social structures which enhance the ability of staff to

create relationships and community, such as time for collaboration, teacher teaming, celebrations, and meaningful professional development, are necessary for accomplishing the goal of positive culture (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Mangin, 2021; Muhammad, 2018; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 20018; Verma, 2021).

Building positive culture is a complex process necessitating the employment of influential school leaders (Abdulahi, 2020; MacNeil et al., 2009; Muhammad, 2018; Rhodes et al., 2011; Tonich, 2021). Influential school leaders share organizational management responsibilities and develop a clear understanding of the organizational population, purpose, mission, values, and action plans (Abdulahi, 2020; MacNeil et al., 2009; Muhammad, 2018; Rhodes et al., 2011; Thessin, 2021). Those who understand staff roles, are deliberate in forming culture, and have supportive relationships with staff, students, and parents are profoundly influential in the development of positive school culture (Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Ozgenel, 2020; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011). However, fostering supportive and collaborative relationships among teachers takes intentional effort and prioritizing teacher learning is as important as student learning in positive culture development (Aguilar, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012; Lee & Li, 2015; Verma, 2021). Therefore, systems are needed to build support for teachers to increase learning and skill development (Aguilar, 2016; Muhammad, 2018). Principals show support by encouraging growth through mistakes, seeking needed assistance, and emphasizing learning through quality, targeted professional development (Aguilar, 2016; Mangin, 2021; Muhammad, 2018; Verma, 2021).

Because immense pressure exists in education to continually implement new initiatives, the importance of positive school culture in the face of change cannot be overlooked (Hollingworth et al., 2018; Muhammad, 2018). Organizational change is challenging, and

negative culture is an obstacle to positive momentum (Muhammad, 2018; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Developing shared school norms around ceremonies and traditions is helpful in producing positive change. In addition, including parents and students in decision making increases buy-in for change (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Celebrating success, no matter how small, is another way to ease the difficulties of change and foster positive culture (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Muhammad, 2018; Verma, 2021). Organizations reinforce the importance of practice through celebration (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Muhammad, 2018). Celebrations also build community, gratitude, trust, and collegiality, which improve the ability of staff to effectively collaborate, affecting students' ability to achieve (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012; Muhammad, 2018).

Additional practices identified to develop culture positively begin with hiring staff members who understand and support the school's articulated mission, vision, and core values. (Fisher et al., 2012; Rhodes et al., 2011). Another necessary practice is giving staff regular feedback from leadership regarding areas of strength and recommended growth and providing support plans to address needs (Fisher et al., 2012; Verma, 2021). Establishing and maintaining high standards for staff and students supports a favorable environment (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Muhammad, 2018; Verma, 2021).

**Impact of School Culture**

In business, decades of research demonstrates that organizational culture positively impacts customer and employee satisfaction, performance, innovation, financial success, and overall effectiveness (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Ficarra et al., 2020; Gillespie et al., 2008; Gregory et al., 2009; Purwadi et al., 2020; Rizki et al., 2019; van der Post & de Coning, 1998). Similarly, school culture is critical to teacher and student outcomes and overall effectiveness

(Amtu et al., 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Fisher et al., 2012; Ismail et al., 2022; Khan, 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Tabak & Sahin, 2020; Verma, 2021). A positive and collaborative culture is one of the most impactful attributes in the success of any school organization (Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Tabak & Sahin, 2020). Specifically, teacher commitment and job satisfaction are teacher outcomes favorably affected by positive school culture, and these outcomes lead to improved student outcomes (Amtu et al., 2020; Khan, 2019; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). School culture also impacts teacher instructional practices and the way school experiences are received by students and staff (Hongboontri, 2014; Mangin, 2021; Rhodes et al., 2011).

Teacher commitment refers to the connection teachers feel to individual schools and is directly connected to school culture and leadership (Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Research shows teachers' dedication, commitment, and professionalism impact student learning and overall school success (Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Rapti, 2013). School culture is related to teacher motivation, with positive culture leading to a willingness to engage in work, higher job satisfaction, and greater overall commitment (Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Khan, 2019). One of the strongest predictors of teacher commitment is having supportive relationships with school staff, school leaders, and other school community members (Khan, 2019; Korumaz et al., 2020; Ni, 2017; Othman & Kasuma, 2017; Ross & Gray, 2006). Principals support teachers and increase commitment levels by sharing leadership, prioritizing collaboration and professional development, encouraging professionalism, and fostering teacher interactions to build relationships (Abdulahi, 2020; Othman & Kasuma, 2017; Ucar, 2021).

Although the literature is not clear on which has more impact on the other, sources indicate a teacher's feelings of commitment to a job and felt satisfaction with work are closely related (Demir, 2018; Werang & Agung, 2017). Additionally, a meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and positive school culture is noted (Abdulahi, 2020; Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Verma, 2021). Leadership style, culture, professional development, and communication collectively impact teacher job satisfaction (Abdulahi, 2020; Ilyas & Abdullah, 2016; Tampubolon & Harati, 2019). School principals who engage in supportive and collaborative practices successfully increase teachers' satisfaction (Abdulahi, 2020; Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Ilyas & Abdullah, 2016). High levels of job satisfaction are correlated with increased teacher performance and student learning (Abdulahi, 2020; Amtu et al., 2020; Ilyas & Abdullah, 2016).

As school culture influences teachers, it similarly affects student learning, development, and behavior (Abdulahi, 2020; Amtu et al., 2020; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Jain et al., 2015; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Students in schools with positive culture demonstrate improved outcomes overall (Abdulahi, 2020; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Jain et al., 2015; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Schools with positive, collaborative cultures see notable advancement in academic achievement and student learning (Abdulahi, 2020; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Muhammad, 2018; Ohlson, 2009; Smith & Shouppe, 2018). Additionally, student attendance improves, and suspension rates decline in a collaborative school culture (Ohlson, 2009; Ohlson et al., 2016).

**Measurement of School Culture**

Assessing an organization's culture aids in identifying areas of strength and need, which can be used to improve overall performance and effectiveness (Maslowski, 2006; Schein &

Schein, 2017; Wagner & O'Phelan, 1998). In surveying how school culture is measured, one must examine the history of research methods used to assess culture and climate (Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Schneider et al., 2013). Early researchers studied culture and climate differently. Climate was often explored through quantitative methods and culture through qualitative means. Culture was viewed as a more complex construct, not easily captured through survey questions. Although not without criticism, recent culture researchers have utilized quantitative methods to study culture (Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Schein & Schein, 2017; Schneider et al., 2013). According to some, qualitative methods are considered more appropriate for capturing the deeper aspects of culture, such as values, beliefs, and assumptions (Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Schein & Schein, 2017).

The variables measured in organizational and school culture surveys are primarily based on the originator's definition of culture. Specific definitions may lead to a narrow picture of culture, missing important nuances. However, when measuring the more superficial aspects of culture, survey research is practical and appropriate (Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Schein & Schein, 2017). In addition, surveys are helpful for comparison between organizations (Schein & Schein, 2017). Original surveys developed to measure school culture addressed common areas of culture still relevant today. While assessment areas are similar overall, the school culture surveys share three specific areas: collaboration, collegiality, and some form of self-determination/efficacy (Gruenert, 1998; Taylor, 1991; Wagner, 2006).

A collaborative community is known for working cooperatively to solve problems (Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2016; Gruenert, 1998; Thessin, 2021; Wagner, 2006). Teachers and other educational professionals collaborate when engaged in cooperative processes and practices, moving parties toward shared objectives (DuFour et al., 2006, 2016; Jarzabkowski,

2002; Ning et al., 2015; Thessin, 2021). The goal of collaboration is for teachers to work together to learn new concepts and skills to be applied to practice and ultimately improve student outcomes (DuFour et al., 2006, 2016; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Ning et al., 2015; Thessin, 2021). School leaders must foster an attitude of continuous improvement and deliver quality professional development to promote collaboration among teachers (DuFour et al., 2006, 2016; Thessin, 2021; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010).

Relationships with colleagues and students significantly contribute to teachers' job satisfaction and commitment (Jarzabkowski, 2002; Othman & Kasuma, 2017). Collegiality refers to the relational connections teachers form, on any level, with their professional peers (Jarzabkowski, 2002; Murray, 2021). Teachers with strong perceptions of collegiality feel supported, valued, and effective in working in an inclusive professional community (Gruenert, 1998; Ning et al., 2015; Taylor, 1991; Wagner, 2006). Research finds high levels of collegiality lead to stronger collaborative relationships among teachers (Jarzabkowski, 2002; Ning et al., 2015). Participating in collegial activities for professional and social purposes assists in the evolution of positive culture (Jarzabkowski, 2002; Mangin, 2021). Furthermore, there are benefits to emotional health and an enhanced ability to deal with the stress of the educational environment when teachers engage in social interactions that increase collegiality (Jarzabkowski, 2002).

Teacher efficacy refers to teachers' personal belief in their abilities to positively impact student learning or solve complex problems (DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Edwards, 1996; Hoy, 2000). Efficacy is linked to past experiences of success and failure (Edwards, 1996; Hoy, 2000). Experiences during teachers' preparation years play a significant role in developing teacher efficacy (Hoy, 2000). Teachers' perceptions of effectiveness are positively impacted by shared

leadership, positive school culture, vicarious experiences, observing effective teaching practices, and receiving motivational talks from a colleague or mentor (DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hoy, 2000).

**New Charter School Development**

Charter schools are defined as public schools of choice committed to specific, often innovative, educational methods and goals (Garcia & Salinas, 2018; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020). Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools have more autonomy and are excused from specific state and local regulations, although some regulations are applicable (National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Torres, 2020). Charter school laws and funding sources vary from state to state, creating unique challenges for opening a new charter school (National Charter School Resource Center, 2020).

After navigating the complex process of getting a charter approved, one of the first challenges encountered by new charter school founders is the procurement of a school facility (National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016). A school building is described as more than just a physical space (National Charter School Resource Center, 2020). The school building is an artifact of culture and a space used to build community (National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Schein & Schein, 2017). Students and teachers spend a significant amount of time in school buildings, and learning spaces impact student achievement, engagement, and aspects of health (Kariippanon et al., 2019; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Sasson et al., 2022). Finding or constructing a school building is difficult for charter schools. For example, already constructed buildings appropriate for school use are

challenging to locate, and constructing new buildings is costly and time consuming. Unlike traditional school principals who have district resources, charter school principals are often also charged with facility operation and management duties (National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016).

Once the physical learning space is determined, charter school principals have an overwhelming list of planning, such as hiring and developing staff, recruiting students, creating an accountability plan, and communicating with stakeholders (Lane, 2008; Thomas & Lacey, 2016; Torres, 2020). Throughout the process of opening new charter schools, principals must be masters of time management, learn to prioritize, and employ a leadership team to share the load (Thomas & Lacey, 2016). Charter school principals have the unique ongoing role of marketing and securing needed funding (National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016). Charter school principals often wrestle with the dual roles of manager and instructional leader, which creates frustration and conflict (Thomas & Lacey, 2016; Torres, 2020). By contrast, traditional public school principals are able to access and direct district resources to address many of the management tasks contributing to the significant workload of charter school principals (Torres, 2020).

Besides having to oversee the building logistics, new charter school principals are also charged with the significant task of leading the development of school culture. The first step to culture development in new schools is articulating the mission, vision, and values (Garraux, 2019; Wright & McNae, 2019). With input from stakeholders, culture is initially built as the leader creates artifacts like policies, procedures, handbooks, schedules, and mascots (Garraux,

2019; Schein & Schein, 2017). New school leaders then facilitate the development of relationships and the formation of culture through the various stages, identified as forming, storming, norming, and performing (Schein & Schein, 2017; Tuckman, 1965; Wright & McNae, 2019).

**Conclusion**

Research indicates school culture significantly impacts the effectiveness and success of schools (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Fisher et al., 2012; Ismail et al., 2022; Khan, 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013). Additionally, positive school culture has a beneficial effect on student outcomes specific to learning and behavior (Amtu et al., 2020; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Jain et al., 2015; Ohlson et al., 2016); Rapti, 2013; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Favorable school culture also influences teacher instructional practices and teacher motivation, leading to an increased willingness to engage in work, higher job satisfaction, and overall commitment (Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Hongboontri, 2014; Khan, 2019; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Teachers' dedication, commitment, and professionalism impact learning outcomes for students and, ultimately, school success (Amtu et al., 2020; Khan, 2019; Rapti, 2013).

The literature has established a secure connection between school leadership and the development of positive school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). School leaders who develop collaborative, trusting relationships with and among staff while engaging in distributed leadership are more likely to lead schools with positive culture (Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Lee & Li, 2015; Sortino, 2018). New charter school leaders face unique challenges in creating environments where positive culture can emerge

(National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016). In addition to the typical challenges of building trusting relationships and leading staff through the stages of group development, charter school leaders must also contend with difficulties related to facilities, staff and student recruitment, marketing, and ongoing funding concerns (Garraux, 2019; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016; Torres, 2020; Wright & McNae, 2019).

# Chapter III

## Design and Methodology

### Introduction

This mixed methods study examined school culture in newly established Idaho charter schools. The research aimed to confirm the presence or absence of a collective perception of positive school culture according to teachers in the participating schools. In addition, a deeper understanding of the development of positive school culture in newly established schools was sought. The purpose of the study was to identify commonalities and leadership practices, across levels of culture, among schools whose teachers perceived positive culture (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017).

Based upon the theoretical framework utilized for the study, leadership is a determining factor for school culture, which in turn affects teacher commitment and job satisfaction (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Ucar, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). An impressive amount of literature establishes leadership as a prominent influence on the formation of positive school culture (Carpenter, 2015; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ozgenel, 2020; Rapti, 2013; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). School culture, then, has a profound impact on school accomplishments and successes (Amtu et al., 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012; Ismail et al., 2022; Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Specifically, schools in which a positive culture prevails see increased levels of commitment and job satisfaction among teachers, which also benefit student learning and behavior (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Ucar, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021).

Chapter III explains the chosen research design and methodology used to collect and evaluate information related to teachers' perceptions of school culture and the commonalities across levels of school culture influencing development. The chapter includes specific information about study procedures, participants, sites, instrumentation, issues of validity and reliability, and the role of the researcher. Data analysis and study limitations are also discussed.

## Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of teachers who work in newly established Idaho charter schools concerning school culture?
2. What commonalities shared by newly opened Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture?
3. What common leadership practices used in new Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, lead to the development of positive culture?

## Research Design

Seeking quantitative and qualitative explanations for problems or questions is common across professions and allows for more profound knowledge and documentation (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Stentz et al., 2012). Mixed methods research includes the collection, examination, consolidation, and organization of both quantitative and qualitative data in the same study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006). Identified advantages to a mixed methods design include triangulation, greater depth and breadth of understanding of the topic, ability to address more complex constructs, multiple perspectives, and investigation and further explanation of unexpected results (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; McKim, 2017). The mixed

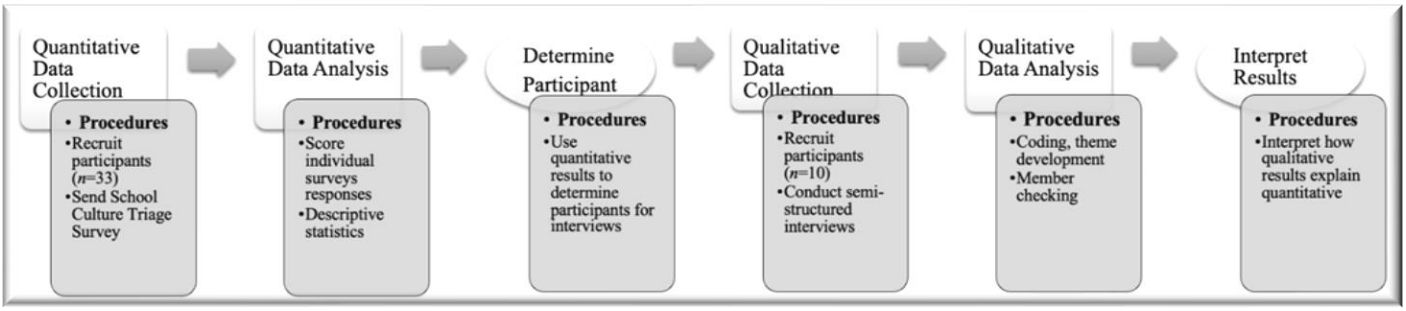
methods design was deemed appropriate for the current study because of the need to reach a deeper understanding of the complex construct of school culture (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006; McKim, 2017). This study specifically utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to examine teachers' perceptions of school culture and the common artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions which contribute to the development of positive school culture (Schein & Schein, 2017). An explanatory sequential mixed methods design is conducted in two separate phases: first quantitative, then qualitative (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006).

An important consideration in using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design is establishing whether quantitative or qualitative methods take priority (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006; Stentz et al., 2012). Although it is common for quantitative methods to take priority in an explanatory sequential design, in a case-selection variant, the researcher emphasizes the qualitative methods and uses the quantitative phase to identify and purposefully select participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). This study followed the case-selection variant model. The quantitative phase allowed for the collection of general information from a larger group, which more adequately addressed the first research question related to teachers' collective perception of school culture (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006). The qualitative phase facilitated a more in-depth exploration to address the remaining research questions related to the commonalities and leadership practices, across levels of culture, contributing to the development of positive culture in the participant schools (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz,

2017; Ivankova et al., 2006). Figure 3 represents the order of data collection and analysis and how quantitative and qualitative data interrelate.

**Figure 3**

*Model of Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design*




*Note:* Adapted from *Developing a Mixed Methods Proposal: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers* (p. 105) by J. T. DeCuir-Gunby, and P. A. Schutz, 2017, Sage.

Explanatory sequential designs necessitate the initial collection of quantitative data. The purpose of the data gathered in the second qualitative phase is to provide possible explanations for the analyzed quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). The current study utilized a Likert-scale survey to collect measurable data regarding teachers' perceptions of school culture. Data collected from the survey in the first quantitative phase effectively informed the direction of the second qualitative phase (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006; McKim, 2017). Analyzed survey data aided the researcher in identifying participants for the qualitative semi-structured interviews, which further explored school commonalities and leadership practices, across levels of culture. Interview questions shaped by quantitative data sought to deepen the understanding of the results from the quantitative survey (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006).

## Participants

Participants were recruited through convenience sampling for the initial quantitative survey, and then a subset of the those participants were interviewed to obtain qualitative data.

### *Quantitative*

Convenience sampling was utilized to recruit teachers from a list of newly established Idaho charter schools identified from a publicly available list on the Idaho State Department of Education website (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Convenience sampling is used to study a convenient, available sample and provides valuable information about the subpopulation but is not generalizable to a larger population (Andrade, 2021; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The sought-after participants were part of a group of 260 teachers in K-12 Idaho public charter schools who met the following criteria:

- Schools were newly established, with operation dates beginning in 2017-2021.
- Schools operated in person and did not include programs offered exclusively online.

Staff members identified in buildings as teachers for at least one full school year were eligible for study participation. A total of 15 Idaho charter schools met the criteria and were invited to participate (see Appendix A). Of the 15 schools, four principals agreed to send email invitations to 56 qualifying teachers. Three of the four schools reached a sufficient response rate. Although no universally accepted response rate for survey research exists, 50-75% is generally considered sufficient for emailed surveys. Study population, survey length, study topic, interest level, and follow-up practices may influence the determined response rate for a specific study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Mertler, 2016). A response rate of at least 75% was sought for the present study to ensure each school's staff was well-represented in the assessment of culture. School A had a response rate of 81.25%, with 13 out of 16 teachers with at least one year of experience at

the school completing the survey. Survey completion in School B involved 76.92% (10 out of 13) of qualified teachers participating. School C had a response rate of 83.33%, with 10 out of 12 teachers completing the survey. School D only had 33.33% (5 out of 15) of qualified teachers participating and was therefore excluded from the study. A total of 33 teachers were a part of the quantitative sample.

The participating schools had similar-sized teaching staffs. Student population size, grades served, and years in operation were varied. Table 1 illustrates the similarities and differences between the schools.

**Table 1**

*Participating School Demographics*

| | School A | School B | School C |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Student Enrollment | 326 | 418 | 383 |
| Grades Served | K – 6 | K - 6 | 6 - 12 |
| Total Number of Teachers | 25 | 20 | 22 |
| Number of Years Open | 4 | 2 | 1 |

*Note:* Names of schools have been omitted to protect participant anonymity.

***Qualitative***

The qualitative sample included 10 teachers from the 33 who completed the initial survey. Multiple sampling methods were employed in selecting participants. First, criterion sampling was used to affirm teacher participation in the initial quantitative phase of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Volunteer sampling determined participant willingness to engage in the qualitative phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Purposeful sampling was utilized to recruit participants to engage in semi-structured interviews based on teacher experiences of

school culture (Andrade, 2021; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Maxwell, 2013). Purposeful sampling involves intentionally choosing study participants to understand a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Four participants were chosen from each of the three participating schools whose teachers collectively perceived positive culture, as indicated by a 60 or higher mean score on the School Culture Triage Survey (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Wagner, 2006). Participants were randomly selected from volunteers at each school using an online randomizing tool. After being selected and agreeing to participate, two teachers (one from each elementary school) became unavailable. Attempts to recruit replacements from the survey participants were unsuccessful; therefore, the qualitative phase continued with 10 participants.

The small number of participants in the qualitative phase allowed the researcher to collect more in-depth information. Too many participants would impede the development of a thorough understanding of the details of individual experiences (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For qualitative research, the goal is to reach saturation, or the point at which new information is no longer being added. Therefore, study sample size must include enough participants to reach saturation while remaining manageable for the researcher (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). Based on a review of 23 studies investigating sample size for saturation, 9-17 interviews were determined to be adequate for reaching saturation (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

**Data Collection**

The researcher took measures to ensure the proper treatment of study participants. The Association of Clinical Research Professionals provided the researcher with training and certification before data collection (see Appendix B). In addition, approval was received through

Northwest Nazarene University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix C). As required by law, collected study data will be preserved for five years and kept secure with a physical lock and digital password protection. Study data will only be accessed by the researcher and will be securely disposed of after the five-year interval.

### *School Consent*

After receiving IRB approval, principals from 15 schools meeting the criteria received an email introducing the study and requesting site permission for participation (see Appendix D). Of the 15, four principals granted authorization to participate. A total of 96 teachers were employed by the four schools combined, but only 48 met the criteria of teaching at the school for at least one full school year. An email sent to the 48 teachers yielded 33 responses accepting the invitation and giving consent to participate in the study (see Appendix E). Study participation was entirely voluntary. Schools A and B were elementary schools serving students in grades K-6 and employing 25 and 20 teachers, respectively. School C was a secondary school serving students in grades 6-12 and employing 22 teachers. School D did not have sufficient teacher responses to meet the desired 75% response rate and was therefore excluded from the study.

### *Quantitative Survey*

In education, surveys are commonly used in research and have been for many years (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Survey research can be used to illuminate community interests, political trends, public opinions, and individual beliefs (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This study used a previously developed instrument to collect data about teachers' perceptions of school culture. Permission was granted to use the School Culture Triage Survey (Wagner, 2006) (see Appendices F & G). The survey addresses the first research question, which sought to identify schools with a collective perception of positive culture.

The School Culture Triage Survey was developed in 1996, revamped in 2002, and has been widely utilized by researchers and schools around the country to reflect presiding school culture (Littlejohn, 2021; Matthews-Chioma, 2017; Wagner, 2006). The School Culture Triage Survey consists of 17 Likert-scale items, answered by teachers indicating a level of agreement (1=*never*, 2=*rarely*, 3=*sometimes*, 4=*often*, 5=*always/almost always*). The survey measures and categorizes three specific behaviors: professional collaboration, affiliative and collegial relationships, and efficacy or self-determination (Wagner, 2006). Professional collaboration addresses the willingness of teachers to share ideas and jointly work to solve many kinds of school challenges (Wagner, 2006). Affiliative and collegial relationships are defined as those in which teachers show appreciation, respect, and support for colleagues (Wagner, 2006). Efficacy and self-determination refer to teachers' desire to hone their craft, increase their professionalism, and demonstrate initiative (Wagner, 2006).

The School Culture Triage Survey (Wagner, 2006) questions were entered into and distributed through Qualtrics (https://www.qualtrics.com). The survey link was included in the initial email to teachers requesting participation in the study and providing the opportunity to provide informed consent (see Appendices E & H). Consent was given by clicking on the link and completing the survey. Participants were required to share school names, so teachers could complete the School Culture Triage Survey confidentially but not entirely anonymously. Participants completed surveys at personally convenient times. Following survey completion, participants were given the option to volunteer to participate in the qualitative interview by clicking a link and providing contact information (see Appendix I). School and any other identifying information were kept confidential by the researcher on a password-protected device.

The School Culture Triage Survey administration suggestions indicated the survey should only be given to teachers and not include the portion describing scoring. Failing to exclude scoring information could impact the survey results. Additionally, names were not included on the survey to improve respondents' likelihood of honestly answering questions (Wagner, 2006). Teachers volunteering to participate in a qualitative interview had to provide a name to facilitate the appointment arrangement. However, the interview information was separated from the survey to maintain anonymity. Identifying information, including names, was replaced with a pseudonym on study documentation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

### *Qualitative Semi-structured Interviews*

Before beginning phase two, the semi-structured interview protocol was piloted (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Ivankova et al., 2006). Open-ended interview questions were constructed within the context of the theoretical framework, literature review, and data collected from the quantitative survey (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). Information related to Schein's three levels of culture was sought from participants. Specifically, interview questions aimed to gain insight into the artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions making up each school's culture (Schein & Schein, 2017). The School Culture Triage Survey provided initial information about areas contributing to school culture including professional collaboration, affiliative collegiality, and self-determination/efficacy (Wagner, 2006). The interview questions allowed participants to expand upon and further explain survey responses. In addition to the developed interview questions, the researcher collected information, as appropriate within the context of the conversation, regarding the perceived effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on individual school culture.

Feedback from an expert panel and two teachers who participated in pilot interviews was used to adjust and finalize the interview questions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Ivankova et al., 2006). Recommendations to modify question order, clarify language, and add or eliminate questions entirely were implemented. In order to maintain consistency between individual interviews, an interview protocol was developed, piloted, and utilized, enlisting the same questions and procedures while allowing for flexibility within the conversation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The protocol included a printed copy of the interview questions with space for documentation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Qualitative semi-structured interviews in this sequential explanatory design assisted in exploring the quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017). Interviewing is a popular data collection method in qualitative research and provides participants with the opportunity to relay experiences free from the interference of researcher perspectives. The advantages of using interviews include collecting more detailed information from participants that cannot be obtained through observation, following up and clarifying responses immediately, and asking specific questions to guide the information-gathering process (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The researcher employed the piloted semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix J) to collect qualitative data from 10 teachers working at three different schools (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants were chosen randomly from volunteer teachers and in numbers from each qualifying school to strive for equal representation. After initially volunteering to participate in interviews, several teachers indicated a change in availability. Participants agreeing to be interviewed included three teachers from School A, three

from School B, and four from School C. Interviews were conducted via Google Meet and lasted approximately 1 hour each. Each participant indicated preferred times and dates for the interview. Every effort was made to accommodate scheduling requests and avoid excessively interfering with participants' daily schedules (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The developed interview protocol was followed to ensure consistency across interviews and methods of collecting data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Each interview began with a short period of rapport building to increase the participant's comfort with the researcher.

In order to ensure the accurate collection of qualitative data, all interviews were audio recorded using two methods and transcribed (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). QuickTime Player for Mac was the primary recording method, and iPhone Voice Memos was used as a backup method. Permission to record was collected from participants prior to conducting interviews as part of obtaining informed consent (see Appendix H) (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Participants were also asked to confirm consent to the audio recording before beginning the interview. Brief notes taken during interviews included information about the conversation and observations related to participants' facial expressions, body language, and other notable aspects of the interaction (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Additional notes written after the interviews allowed the researcher to record overall impressions and reflections on the conversation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Also after the interviews, a debriefing form was sent to participants (see Appendix K). Completed interview audio files were uploaded to a protected cloud-based folder and shared with a contracted transcriber.

## Analytical Methods

The methods used to analyze the collected data were based on the data type: quantitative or qualitative.

### *Quantitative Analysis*

Quantitative analysis uses statistics to explain collected data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The School Culture Triage Survey (Wagner, 2006) was utilized to collect quantitative data related to teachers' perceptions of school culture and was completed by more than 75% of teachers meeting the criteria at each participating study site. Qualtrics (https://www.qualtrics.com) aided in the distribution of the 17-item survey as well as in the transfer of collected data to IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25) predictive analytics software for analysis.

A final School Culture Triage score was calculated for each survey by adding the chosen rating of each of the 17 items. The total possible scores ranged from 17-85, and the assessment scoring key from Wagner (2006) gave the following score ranges and explanations:

> **17-40** Critical and immediate attention necessary. Conduct a full-scale assessment of your school's culture and invest all available resources in repairing and healing culture.
>
> **41-59** Modifications and improvements are necessary. Begin with a more intense assessment of your school's culture to determine which area is in most need of improvement.
>
> **60-75** Monitor and maintain making positive adjustments.
>
> **76-85** Amazing! We have never had a score higher than 75! (p. 43)

According to the School Culture Triage Survey author, scores above 60 were considered in the positive range for school culture, and scores below 60 indicated a need for school culture

improvements (Wagner, 2006). Within IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25), survey data related to teachers' perceptions of culture was analyzed using descriptive statistics and frequency analysis. General tendencies (mean, mode) were determined to address the first research question and identify schools with overall scores indicative of a collective perception of positive culture (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In addition, response frequencies for each question were analyzed to inform the qualitative questioning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

***Qualitative Analysis***

Analyzing qualitative data occurred in phases typical to qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Data collected from interview transcripts and observational notes were first organized (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). Transcripts of interviews were read multiple times to gain insight and familiarity, and again, notes were taken to continue the process of organizing data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). During the next phase, notes were taken regarding data categories and relationships (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Maxwell, 2013).

Once organized, data was coded by hand using the interview transcripts (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). Coding is a method of analyzing qualitative data involving identifying words or phrases holding meaning for a study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Saldana, 2016). Meaningful, explanatory patterns are sought when coding (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Saldana, 2016). Frequently occurring codes were developed into significant themes to the point of saturation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In qualitative research, themes identified in the data should provide information relevant to the research questions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Finally, member checking was conducted to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's representation of the

interview data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). Member checking was accomplished by sharing a summarized version of transcripts with participants following interviews and soliciting feedback regarding the accuracy of the researcher's impressions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Table 2 identifies the quantitative and qualitative procedures used to investigate the research questions, along with the independent and dependent variables.

**Table 2**

*Research Questions and Tests*

| Research Question | Quantitative & Qualitative Test | Independent Variable | Dependent Variable |
|---|---|---|---|
| What are the perceptions of teachers who work in newly established Idaho charter schools concerning school culture? | Quantitative:<br>-Descriptive<br>-Frequency Analysis<br>Qualitative:<br>-Semi-structured interviews<br>-Coding | Perceptions of teachers | School culture |
| What commonalities shared by newly opened Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture? | Quantitative:<br>-Descriptive<br>-Frequency Analysis<br>Qualitative:<br>-Semi-structured interviews<br>-Coding | Commonalities shared by newly opened schools | Development of positive culture |
| What common leadership practices used in new Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, lead to the development of positive culture? | Quantitative:<br>-Descriptive<br>-Frequency Analysis<br>Qualitative:<br>-Semi-structured interviews<br>-Coding | Common leadership practices | Development of positive culture |

## Validity and Reliability

It is vital in mixed methods research to approach validity through the specific type of mixed methods design employed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This explanatory sequential mixed methods study addressed validity in various ways to allow the researcher to successfully integrate data from both study phases and draw strong inferences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Ensuring the validity of the chosen survey instrument, using triangulation, use of an expert panel, piloting the semi-structured interview protocol, and member checking were all methods used to ensure study validity (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

This study's survey instrument, The School Culture Triage Survey (Wagner, 2006) was initially piloted in 21 public high schools employing anywhere from 22-78 teachers (C. Wagner, personal communication, April 19, 2022). A total of 938 teachers participated, and the School Culture Triage Survey had an alpha coefficient of .89 (C. Wagner, personal communication, April 19, 2022). The School Culture Triage Survey is widely cited, indicating evidence of endorsement by other researchers (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Over 9,000 schools and school districts in the United States and many worldwide have utilized the School Culture Triage Survey to assess school culture (C. Wagner, personal communication, April 19, 2022).

Inherent in a mixed methods design is the ability to use triangulation, which refers to the corroboration of study findings through multiple individuals, data types, and data collection methods (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Maxwell, 2013). Triangulation increases the ability to generalize findings and improves credibility by reducing researcher bias (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Maxwell, 2013). In the current sequential explanatory mixed methods study, survey data from the initial quantitative phase and data from

individual semi-structured interviews provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006).

Several methods were used to validate the semi-structured interviews. Validity refers to an instrument's ability to measure the construct intending to be measured (Connell et al., 2018; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In order to establish face validity, referring to the relevance of individual instrument questions, the qualitative semi-structured interview protocol was given to a panel of three experts for review (Connell et al., 2018). The panel gave feedback on the interview questions' precision, significance, and utility as vehicles to collect data relevant to the study research questions. Specifically, the panel offered suggestions regarding the order of questions and language choices. The feedback resulted in changes to the order of the interview questions to improve conversation flow and clarification to vague language to ensure understanding by participants.

Further validity was established through piloting. Piloting is utilized by researchers to collect valuable feedback about a survey or interview questions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Prior to utilizing the semi-structured interview questions with study participants, the protocol was piloted with a comparable sample of two teachers to ensure question comprehension and utility of the process (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). An explanation was given to pilot interview participants about the exercise's purpose and role in the study. Requested feedback from pilot participants was used to improve the semi-structured interview protocol (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Pilot participants gave further input about modifying the order of questions to improve conversational flow. In addition, the wording of one question was difficult to answer and needed

clarification. The pilot participants' responses and feedback were not included in the study sample (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

A final validation method of member checking was used after the interviews were conducted to determine the accuracy of the researcher's findings and interpretations (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The researcher sent a summary of the interview transcript to each participant via email to collect feedback about the accuracy of the researcher's perceptions of the conversation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Participants' feedback was utilized to correct misinterpretations and improve the overall validity of findings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

**Limitations**

Possible weaknesses, or limitations, are present in every study and may impact study outcomes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Ross & Zaidi, 2019). In quantitative research, limitations are often related to small sample sizes, participant drop-out or lack of participation, measurement errors, and additional issues with collecting and analyzing study data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Ross & Zaidi, 2019). Limitations in qualitative research are often related to sampling and collecting data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Ross & Zaidi, 2019). Additionally, the researcher's influence on the participants and researcher bias in interpreting results can be cited as a study limitation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Maxwell, 2013; Ross & Zaidi, 2019). Presenting research limitations is essential for identifying possible areas of future research and giving readers a better understanding of the implications and generalizability of the study results (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Ross & Zaidi, 2019).

The first identified limitation of the present study was related to the restricted population. The participants came from three of the 15 charter schools in Idaho and met the criteria set forth

for study participation. The ability to generalize findings from mixed methods research has existing limitations, so adding a limited population may further lessen the impact of the researcher's study findings.

Another limitation of this study is the veracity of participant responses to survey and interview questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participant responses may have been affected by the researcher's presence (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Some study participants may have met or known the researcher through professional interactions, impacting reporting (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Culture can be an uncomfortable subject to discuss, especially if specific aspects of culture are perceived negatively, despite participants' overall perception of positive culture (Schein & Schein, 2017). Participants may be hesitant to discuss a personal topic with an unknown person (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Schein & Schein, 2017). Intentional rapport building and reassurance of confidentiality were utilized to build trust, making participants more comfortable and open to sharing truthful responses in interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016)

The current global pandemic was likely an additional limitation to this study. Dealing with the impact of COVID-19 put an incredible amount of added stress on educators, which undoubtedly impacted culture in schools worldwide (Varela & Fedynich, 2020). In order to address the COVID-19 limitation, a specific question was placed in the semi-structured interview inquiring about the perceived impact of the pandemic on school culture. However, the pandemic's true impact will likely not be realized for many years.

Finally, researcher bias may also be considered a limitation of this study. Potential researcher bias was addressed by explaining assumptions and peer debriefing (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). Although steps were taken to mitigate the limitation, such as member checking, the researcher must still interpret findings,

opening the door to some level of bias (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). It is possible the researcher formed assumptions and opinions as data was collected, impacting the interpretation of the results.

**Role of the Researcher**

Research is often conducted passionately and should reflect the researcher's identity while acknowledging the unavoidable, resulting bias (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). The design process should consider minimizing the impact of bias on study outcomes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013). One way to minimize the impact of bias is to identify and name the sources from the beginning (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013).

At the time of the current study, the researcher had worked as a school psychologist at a private Catholic school for students in grades K-8 since its inception, and the school was in only its fifth year of operation. The researcher had served on the committee charged with starting the school and assisted in developing every aspect: the physical building, hiring, the academic design, and cultivation of culture. Bearing witness to the process of developing culture in a newly established school fostered a fascination and curiosity of the subject in the researcher. A difference observed in the process of culture development in new schools versus culture change in established schools led the researcher to seek information related to the former. When information specific to culture development in new schools was not found, the researcher sought to add to the existing literature to assist future new schools.

# Chapter IV

# Results

## Introduction

Culture is an important factor in multiple measures of school success (Amtu et al., 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Ismail et al., 2022; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). Schools with positive culture benefit from increased levels of teacher commitment and job satisfaction and improved student learning and behavior (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Ucar, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Literature demonstrates school leadership is a significant factor in the development of positive culture (Carpenter, 2015; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Khan, 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ozgenel, 2020; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Building positive culture may be more difficult in newly opened charter schools as leaders tackle distinct challenges (National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016). In opening a new charter school, leaders are faced with relationship-building challenges as well as additional responsibilities related to facilities, staff and student recruitment, marketing, and funding issues (Garraux, 2019; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016; Torres, 2020; Wright & McNae, 2019). The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine teachers' perceptions of culture in newly opened Idaho charter schools and gain insight into school positive culture development by identifying commonalities and leadership practices, across levels of culture.

The present study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design is conducted in two separate phases, analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark,

2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006). In the first phase, quantitative data was collected and assessed using the previously developed and validated School Culture Triage Survey (Wagner, 2006). Quantitative findings informed the direction of the qualitative phase in which data was collected using individual teacher semi-structured interviews. The following research questions guided the research:

**Research Questions**

1. What are the perceptions of teachers who work in newly established Idaho charter schools concerning school culture?
2. What commonalities shared by newly opened Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture?
3. What common leadership practices used in new Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, lead to the development of positive culture?

The theoretical framework for the study, which combined two frameworks, provided additional direction for the research. Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture supplied a basis for understanding the relationship between leadership, organizational culture, and organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction/commitment (Aryani & Widodo, 2020). Edgar Schein's Levels of Culture framework was used as a lens through which to analyze collected data (Schein, 1981; Schein & Schein, 2017). The combination of theoretical frameworks identified school culture as the mediator between leadership and teacher commitment/job satisfaction across all three levels of culture (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Schein & Schein, 2017).

The purpose of Chapter IV is to provide outcomes from quantitative survey data and qualitative semi-structured interviews. The quantitative survey results were utilized to answer the

first research question. Qualitative findings and themes are presented to address the remaining research questions. Additionally, information about the study's methodology and design are incorporated.

## Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative data was collected using a validated survey instrument. Qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews.

### *Survey Instrument*

The previously developed and validated School Culture Triage Survey was utilized in phase one of this study (Wagner, 2006) (see Appendix D). The survey consists of 17 items answered by teachers, indicating a level of agreement to statements related to three specific behavioral categories: professional collaboration, affiliative and collegial relationships, and efficacy or self-determination (Wagner, 2006). Participants answered Likert-scale items using classifications of 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often, or 5- Always/Almost Always. The survey addressed the first research question, which sought to identify schools with a collective perception of positive culture.

An email sent to participants included an invitation to participate in the study and a link to the survey. By clicking the link, participants indicated they had read the consent form and were agreeing to participate. The survey questions were entered into Qualtrics. The final survey question gave participants the option to opt into the qualitative phase of the study. Names and contact methods were collected from participants willing to participate in semi-structured interviews.

### *Interview Protocol*

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed using the theoretical framework, literature, and data collected from the quantitative survey (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Questions within the protocol were specifically designed to uncover commonalities and leadership practices at the artifact, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions levels of culture. An expert panel reviewed the interview protocol, and pilot interviews were conducted with two teachers. The piloted interview protocol (see Appendix J) was used to conduct 10 interviews online via videoconferencing with teachers from three different Idaho charter schools.

## Participant Profile

The following sections explain the two groups of participants: those who completed the survey, and those who were interviewed.

### *Survey Participants*

The School Culture Triage Survey was sent to 56 teachers at four different Idaho charter schools meeting study criteria. Participants were part of a larger group of 260 teachers across 15 newly established, in-person K-12 Idaho public charter schools. Convenience sampling was used to identify potential participants from a list of newly established Idaho charter schools taken from the Idaho State Department of Education website (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). School staff working as teachers for at least one school year were identified as eligible for study participation.

Three of the four schools agreeing to participate had a sufficient response rate to be included in the study. Although 50-75% is considered an adequate survey response rate for emailed surveys, a 75% response rate was sought for this study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019;

Mertler, 2016). Table 3 displays the survey response rates of the schools initially agreeing to participate in the study. The quantitative sample included 33 teachers. The participating schools had a similar number of teachers but were somewhat variable in student population size, grades served, and years in operation (see Table 1).

**Table 3**

*Survey Response Rates*

| | Number of Teachers Eligible to Participate | Number of Teachers Participating | Response Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| School A | 16 | 13 | 81.25% |
| School B | 13 | 10 | 76.92% |
| School C | 12 | 10 | 83.33% |
| School D | 15 | 5 | 33.33% |

### *Interview Participants*

Multiple sampling methods were utilized in phase two of the study to choose 12 of the 33 teachers from the quantitative phase. Criterion sampling affirmed teacher participation in the survey phase of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Volunteer sampling determined the willingness of teacher participants to be involved in the qualitative interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Purposeful sampling assisted in recruiting participants for semi-structured interviews based on teacher experiences of school culture (Andrade, 2021; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Maxwell, 2013). Four participants were selected from each of the three participating schools. Teachers in participating schools indicated a collective perception of positive culture, as indicated by a 60 or higher mean score on the School Culture Triage Survey (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Wagner, 2006). Volunteer participants were selected randomly from each school

using an online randomizing tool. After conducting interviews had begun, two teachers withdrew from the qualitative phase of the study before participating, leaving the total number of participants at 10.

The researcher utilized the piloted semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix J) to collect qualitative data from 10 participating teachers working at three different Idaho charter schools (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Participants were randomly selected from volunteer teachers in numbers striving for equal representation at each school. Participants included three teachers from School A, three from School B, and four from School C. All interview participants were female except for one male participant from School C. Interviews conducted on Google Meet lasted approximately one hour each and began with rapport building to increase the participants' comfort with the researcher (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

**Validity and Reliability**

It is essential to ensure the validity and reliability of data collected in research, regardless of research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Validity was addressed in multiple ways in this explanatory sequential mixed methods study to allow the researcher to incorporate data from both study phases and draw compelling conclusions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Methods used to ensure study validity included utilizing triangulation, using a valid survey instrument, use of an expert panel, piloting the semi-structured interview protocol, and member checking (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Triangulation enhances study trustworthiness through the corroboration of evidence from multiple sources (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Ensuring the reliability of a specific instrument is important, aiding researcher confidence and consistency of the resulting scores (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

### *Survey Validity and Reliability*

A total of 938 teachers from 21 public high schools employing anywhere from 22-78 teachers participated in the initial piloting of the School Culture Triage Survey (C. Wagner, personal communication, April 19, 2022; Wagner, 2006). The result of the piloting of the School Culture Triage Survey was an alpha coefficient of .89, indicating strong reliability (C. Wagner, personal communication, April 19, 2022). In addition, the School Culture Triage Survey is frequently cited, indicating wide researcher support (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The School Culture Triage Survey is used worldwide and in over 9,000 schools and school districts in the United States to assess culture (C. Wagner, personal communication, April 19, 2022).

### *Interview Protocol Validity and Reliability*

Face validity was established by giving the qualitative semi-structured interview protocol to a panel of three experts for review (Connell et al., 2018). The panel provided feedback on the precision, significance, and utility of the interview questions as a means to collect data relevant to the research questions. The panel offered specific suggestions regarding the used language and question order. After receiving the feedback, the researcher made changes to the interview question order to improve the flow of conversation. In addition, language was clarified to ensure understanding by participants. Table 4 displays the demographics of the face validity experts.

**Table 4**

*Demographics of Face Validity Experts – Semi-Structured Interview Protocol*

| | Gender | Position | Institution | Years of Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expert 1 | Female | Researcher/ Psychologist | Private University/ Non-Profit | 1-5 years |
| Expert 2 | Female | Assistant Principal | Private Education | 21-25 years |
| Expert 3 | Female | Teacher | Private Education | 16-20 years |

Prior to the data collection process in phase two, the interview protocol was piloted with a comparable sample of two teachers (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) (see Table 5). The interview protocol pilot was conducted to ensure participants would understand the interview questions and to increase researcher comfort with the interview process (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). An explanation of the pilot participants' purpose and role in the study was given. Feedback received from pilot participants was utilized to improve the semi-structured interview protocol (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Pilot participants provided additional input regarding question order to improve the flow of conversation. There was also difficulty with the wording of one question requiring clarification. The responses and feedback of the pilot participants were excluded from the study sample (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

**Table 5**

*Pilot Semi-Structured Interview Participant Demographics*

| | Gender | Age | Grade Level Taught | Years of Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | Female | 20-24 | 1st | 1-5 years |
| Participant 2 | Female | 25-29 | Middle School | 6-10 years |

Member checking was used in the qualitative phase to ensure accuracy of the researcher's overall impressions and interpretations (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The researcher emailed a summary of the interview transcript to each participant to solicit feedback regarding the

researcher's perceptions of the conversation (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The feedback from participants was used to address any misinterpretations and improve the overall validity of findings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

**Quantitative Results**

Quantitative data collected from the School Culture Triage Survey were analyzed during the first phase of the study to address the first research question: "What are the perceptions of teachers who work in newly established Idaho charter schools concerning school culture?" A School Culture Triage score was computed for each survey by adding ratings of each of the 17 items. The possible scores ranged from 17-85, and the assessment scoring key from Wagner (2006) gave the following score ranges and explanations:

> **17-40** Critical and immediate attention necessary. Conduct a full-scale assessment of your school's culture and invest all available resources in repairing and healing culture.
>
> **41-59** Modifications and improvements are necessary. Begin with a more intense assessment of your school's culture to determine which area is in most need of improvement.
>
> **60-75** Monitor and maintain making positive adjustments.
>
> **76-85** Amazing! We have never had a score higher than 75! (p. 43)

According to the scoring explanation of the School Culture Triage Survey, scores above 60 were deemed in the positive range for school culture, and scores below 60 showed a need for improvements in school culture (Wagner, 2006). General tendencies (mean and mode) were calculated to address the first research question and determine which schools had scores suggesting teachers' collective perception of positive culture (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Based on calculated mean and mode scores, the reporting teachers in all three schools collectively indicated positive perceptions of culture. Table 6 details total school culture scores obtained by each of the three participating schools.

**Table 6**

*School Culture Triage Survey Scores by School*

| | School A | School B | School C |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 71.5 | 69.3 | 68.3 |
| Mode | 71.0 | 67.0 | 65.0 & 74.0 |

Response frequency percentages were also calculated for each question across all surveys to inform the direction of the qualitative questioning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The researcher used SPSS to examine data using frequency statistics. The first research question related to gaining information about participant perception of school culture was further addressed. Therefore, frequency statistics concentrated on the mode, allowing for inferences to be drawn (Field, 2013). Tables 7-9 display the 17 survey questions, broken into specific areas, with the frequency results for relevant rating categories.

**Table 7**

*Professional Collaboration: Survey Question Frequency Results*

| **Q 1. Teachers and staff discuss instructional strategies and curriculum issues.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 2 | 6.1 |
| Often | 14 | 42.4 |
| Always/Almost Always | 17 | 51.5 |

| **Q 2. Teachers and staff work together to develop the school schedule.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Never | 1 | 3.0 |
| Rarely | 3 | 9.1 |
| Sometimes | 8 | 24.2 |
| Often | 15 | 45.5 |
| Always/Almost Always | 6 | 18.2 |

| **Q 3. Teachers and staff are involved in the decision-making process with regard to materials and resources.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Rarely | 1 | 3.0 |
| Sometimes | 9 | 27.3 |
| Often | 15 | 45.5 |
| Always/Almost Always | 8 | 24.2 |

| **Q 4. The student behavior code is a result of collaboration and consensus among staff.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Rarely | 2 | 6.1 |
| Sometimes | 4 | 12.1 |
| Often | 15 | 45.5 |
| Always/Almost Always | 12 | 36.4 |

| **Q 5. The planning and organizational time allotted to teachers and staff is used to plan as collective units/teams rather than as separate individuals.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 7 | 21.2 |
| Often | 13 | 39.4 |
| Always/Almost Always | 13 | 39.4 |

The first five questions on the School Culture Triage Survey focused on teachers' perception of school collaborative activities. Overall, teacher ratings demonstrated agreement with statements indicative of collaborative school culture. An overwhelming majority of participating teachers (93.9% or 31 out of 33) endorsed often or always/almost always being involved, along with other school staff, in discussions around instructional strategies and curriculum issues. Over three-fourths (81.9% or 27 out of 33) of teachers reported often or always/almost always being involved in collaboration and consensus-building regarding plans for addressing student behavior. Twenty-six out of the 33 participating teachers (78.8%)

endorsed often or always/almost always using planning time to plan collaboratively rather than individually. A little over two-thirds (69.7% or 23 out of 33) of teachers reported often or always/almost always helping make decisions related to materials and resources. A smaller majority (63.7%) of teachers reported often or always/almost always being involved in developing the school schedule.

**Table 8**

*Affiliative Collegiality: Survey Question Frequency Results*

| **Q 1. Teachers and staff tell stories of celebrations that support the school's values.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 4 | 12.1 |
| Often | 7 | 21.2 |
| Always/Almost Always | 22 | 66.7 |

| **Q 2. Teachers and staff visit/talk/meet outside of the school to enjoy each other's company.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Rarely | 2 | 6.1 |
| Sometimes | 11 | 33.3 |
| Often | 14 | 42.4 |
| Always/Almost Always | 6 | 18.2 |

| **Q 3. Our school reflects a true "sense" of community.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 3 | 9.1 |
| Often | 13 | 39.4 |
| Always/Almost Always | 17 | 51.5 |

| **Q 4. Our school schedule reflects frequent communication opportunities for teachers and staff.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 4 | 12.1 |
| Often | 19 | 57.6 |
| Always/Almost Always | 10 | 30.3 |

| **Q 5. Our school supports and appreciates the sharing of new ideas by members of our school.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 6 | 18.2 |
| Often | 15 | 45.5 |
| Always/Almost Always | 12 | 36.4 |

| **Q 6. There is a rich and robust tradition of rituals and celebrations including holidays, special events and recognition of goal attainment.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Rarely | 1 | 3.0 |
| Sometimes | 8 | 24.2 |
| Often | 13 | 39.4 |
| Always/Almost Always | 11 | 33.3 |

The second section of six questions on the School Culture Triage Survey focused on teachers' perception of affiliative collegiality. Overall, teacher ratings showed a perception of the presence of affiliative collegiality. The most highly endorsed statement by participating teachers (90.9% or 30 out of 33) showed often or always/almost always having a true sense of school community. Twenty-nine out of 33 (87.9%) teachers reported often or always/almost always engaging in celebrations supporting school values and having a schedule allowing for frequent communication opportunities among teachers and staff. Twenty-seven out of the 33 participating teachers (81.9%) endorsed often or always/almost always having support and appreciation for sharing new ideas. Almost three-fourths (72.7% or 24 out of 33) of teachers reported often or always/almost always having a substantial tradition of rituals and celebrations. A smaller majority (60.6% or 20 out of 33) of teachers endorsed often or always/almost always engaging in social activities with other school staff outside of the school environment.

**Table 9**

*Self-Determination/ Efficacy: Survey Question Frequency Results*

| **Q 1. When something is not working in our school, the faculty and staff predict and prevent rather than react and repair.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Rarely | 5 | 15.2 |
| Sometimes | 11 | 33.3 |
| Often | 12 | 36.4 |
| Always/Almost Always | 5 | 15.2 |

| **Q 2. School members are interdependent and value each other.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 5 | 15.2 |
| Often | 15 | 45.5 |
| Always/Almost Always | 13 | 39.4 |

| **Q 3. Members of our school community seek alternatives to problems/issues rather than repeating what we have always done.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 6 | 18.2 |
| Often | 17 | 51.5 |
| Always/Almost Always | 10 | 30.3 |

| **Q 4. Members of our school community seek to define the problem/issue rather than blame others.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 6 | 18.2 |
| Often | 17 | 51.5 |
| Always/Almost Always | 10 | 30.3 |

| **Q 5. The school staff is empowered to make instructional decisions rather than waiting for supervisors to tell them what to do.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Rarely | 1 | 3.0 |
| Sometimes | 7 | 21.2 |
| Often | 14 | 42.4 |
| Always/Almost Always | 11 | 33.3 |

| **Q 6. People work here because they enjoy and choose to be here.** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating Category | N | % |
| Sometimes | 3 | 9.1 |
| Often | 15 | 45.5 |
| Always/Almost Always | 15 | 45.5 |

The final section of six questions on the School Culture Triage Survey focused on teachers' perception of self-determination and efficacy. Teacher ratings demonstrated an overall perception of high levels of self-determination and efficacy among school staff. The one exception was in the perception of school staff's ability to predict and prevent rather than be reactive in facing difficulties. Only slightly over half of participating teachers (51.6% or 17 out of 33) endorsed the statement. Conversely, nearly all teachers (91% or 30 out of 33) reported agreement (often or always/almost always) with a statement indicating school staff enjoy being a part of the school environment. Twenty-eight out of 33 (84.9%) of teachers endorsed often or always/almost always depending on and valuing members of the school community. Twenty-seven out of the 33 participating teachers (81.9%) suggested the school community often or always/almost always seeks alternatives to problems or issues and attempts to define the problem or issue rather than blaming others. Three-fourths (75.7% or 25 out of 33) of teachers reported often or always/almost always feeling empowered to make instructional decisions.

**Qualitative Results**

The qualitative phase of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study facilitated exploration of the remaining research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006). "What commonalities shared by newly opened Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture?" and "What common leadership practices used in new Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture?" Phase two of the study yielded qualitative data through individual teacher semi-structured interviews. The audio recorded interviews were

transcribed and analyzed initially using a process coding method. Multiple iterations of code mapping were then used to organize and categorize codes, eventually moving to concepts and themes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Saldana, 2016).

Process coding, also known as action coding, was utilized in analyzing data from semi-structured interviews (Saldana, 2016). Process coding identifies action and is helpful in studies seeking to uncover group routines, practices, and traditions (Saldana, 2016). Table 10 displays the top 22 identified process codes.

**Table 10**

*Process Code Frequency from Semi-Structured Interviews*

| Interview Process Codes | Frequency of Codes |
|---|---|
| Feeling supported by principal | 110 |
| Communicating expectations | 74 |
| Working together to solve problems | 67 |
| Principal being visible/accessible | 66 |
| Communicating consistently | 64 |
| Fostering personal relationships | 54 |
| Celebrating together | 53 |
| Engaging in community-building activities | 52 |
| Principal accepting feedback | 52 |
| Expressing appreciation | 50 |
| Acknowledging others' work | 48 |
| Helping each other | 48 |
| Staff getting together socially | 45 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Setting expectations | 43 |
| Talking through conflict | 40 |
| Sharing new ideas | 35 |
| Listening to teachers | 35 |
| Developing trust | 31 |
| Involving teachers in decisions | 26 |
| Displaying school values | 25 |
| Giving teachers freedom | 25 |
| Giving teachers responsibilities | 20 |

Process coding was followed by code mapping (Saldana, 2016). In the first iteration of code mapping, all codes were simply listed (Saldana, 2016). The goal of the second iteration of code mapping was to organize all codes under categories by identifying complementary actions (Saldana, 2016). The next code mapping iteration involved collapsing the codes and categories further (Saldana, 2016). For example, the actions of working together to solve problems, sharing new ideas, and helping each other were consolidated into one category designated Collaboration (see Table 11).

**Table 11**

*Constructed Categories from Semi-Structured Interviews*

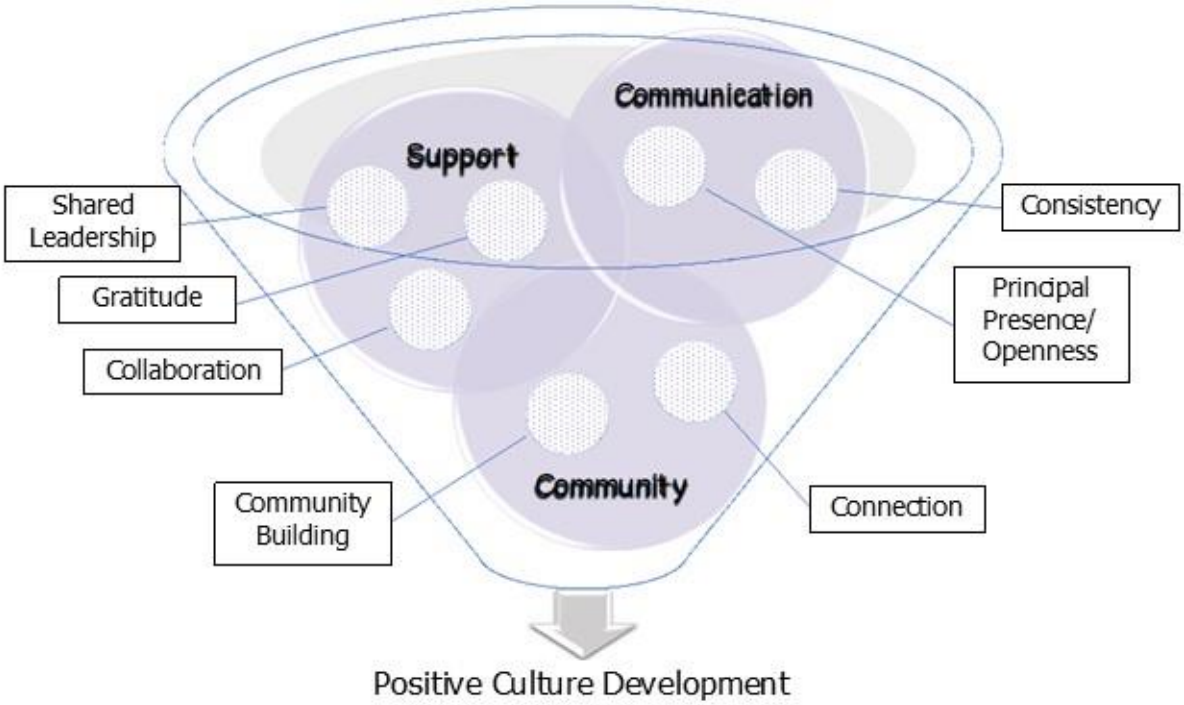
| Category | Frequency of Codes |
|---|---|
| Consistency in Communication | 181 |
| Principal Presence/Openness | 158 |
| Connection | 143 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Administrative Support | 110 |
| Community Building | 106 |
| Shared Leadership | 106 |
| Gratitude | 98 |
| Collaboration | 83 |

Repeated in-depth data analysis combined with knowledge of the study's theoretical framework increased the researcher's insight. Themes were generated from the constructed conceptual categories using knowledge of the analyzed data and the theoretical frameworks of the study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Saldana, 2016). Conceptual themes included Communication, Support, and Community. Figure 4 visually represents the conceptual themes.

**Figure 4**

*Conceptual Themes Developed from Semi-Structured Interviews*



***Communication***

The first identified theme was associated with teachers' perception of communication within the school environment, especially as it relates to principal communication. There was a total of 339 separate codes concerning communication. Interview data regarding the theme of Communication was distinctly centered around two ideas: Consistency and Principal Presence/Openness. The need for consistent communication was clearly highlighted by participants, with 181 associated codes. Participants shared preferences for methods of communication, with agreement for the importance of a "weekly email" communication from the principal. One participant passionately supported the weekly email saying, "…he writes out a really long, long, long email. I love that email…otherwise that's how you get in meetings like could have been an email…anything we need to know about the upcoming week is on there." Besides indicating a method of consistent communication, participants also suggested consistent communication requires "setting clear expectations." Comparable statements made by teachers included, "…I think having a really strong schedule and setting very clear expectations makes all the difference" and "Generally the expectations are pretty reasonable and straightforward."

The second sub-theme identified under the theme Communication was Principal Presence/Openness, pointing to teachers' valuing the visibility and accessibility of the school principal. Statements such as, "He's, like, really easy to approach. He's all over the building, he comes in the classrooms…he lets his guard down…" and "…I usually see him at least once a day just going through, he tends to walk around at lunch and I think one of his goals is to know the students" demonstrate teachers' perceptions of physical presence. Teachers also shared examples of emotional presence and openness including, "…the principal is willing to change ideas, you know, like if we say something to him… he's always willing to hear, like, maybe a better way to

do something" and "...he will let you just sit and cry in his office if you need to. And he may not be able to fix it, but he will at least hear what you have to say. So you do know you're genuinely heard…"

***Support***

The second theme dealt with teachers' perception of support within the school environment. With nearly 400 codes categorized under the broad theme of Support, teachers relayed multiple examples of school leaders supporting staff and staff supporting each other. For example, one teacher stated, "I know this is a hard year, but I have the support to help me through it." There were three sub-themes identified related to support including Shared Leadership, Gratitude, and Collaboration. The sub-theme Shared Leadership contained 106 codes representing teachers' feelings of support when the principal shares responsibilities and gives autonomy. Teacher perceptions were illustrated in statements such as, "…I really appreciate this year we established mentor groups…there's a couple of teachers that have been teaching for a very long time…and so they're acting as mentors" and "… they trusted me and I think that that's very clear, that they definitely seek out teacher input and trust it."

Gratitude, the second sub-theme containing 98 codes, came from teachers' perception that the school community acknowledges others' work and expresses appreciation. Teachers relayed examples of acknowledgment stating, "…we have a gathering where people are recognized…I think being recognized in that way meant a lot to me…" and "…we're hoping that they'll call each other out for the good work that they're doing." An example of an expression of appreciation was, "People are very good about sharing that, too. Just stopping each other in the

hall and saying thank you for this…it just is a lot of gratitude at our school." Teachers also expressed sincere gratitude for the many specific, personal, and touching ways school leaders show support to school staff.

> …one thing that (principal) is really good at is just little fun surprises and thoughtful, those just little touches of you get something in your mailbox or you find a little, she noticed that you loved something or thought it was cute or you like this artist…and finds a way to show you that she's thinking of you and to encourage you.

Collaboration is the final sub-theme under support. The coding surrounding collaboration focused on topics of "working together", sharing ideas, and helping one another. Teachers' statements exhibited individual experiences of this shared theme.

- "I think teacher collaboration is probably like the school's biggest priority"
- "…it's highly encouraged that you are working with other classrooms and your students are working with other kids in different grade levels too."
- "…we worked together as a community to set it up, and we worked together as a community to take it down."

***Community***

The final theme explored teachers' perceptions of Community. The word "community" was mentioned positively by participating teachers 66 times over the course of 10 interviews. One teacher summed up the collective sentiments when sharing about a time school staff were asked, "What does this workplace mean to you?" The teacher said of the answers, "Almost everyone was like community, family, belonging, opportunities." Interview data led to two identified sub-themes of Connection (143 codes) and Community Building (106 codes). Participants shared several examples of prioritization by administration, staff, students, and

parents of “relationships” and building “community.” “Everyone works together. We are all one team. If one of us fail, we all fail. If one of us rises, we all rise.” A participant said of the school principal, “…it’s a really big deal to him that we have a great school community.” Community was identified by participants as one of the most important values in getting through challenging times. For example, in discussing the difficulties of dealing with the pandemic, one participant expressed the importance of the school’s strong community saying, “If anything, it brought us closer together because we had to stand strong and united.”

Interviewed teachers gave many examples of fostering connection in the community through social gatherings and developing personal relationships. When asked about staff getting together outside of school, one teacher replied, “Oh all the time. We’re seriously, we’re like a big family…” Another teacher expressed the importance of fostering relationships saying, “And you are happier people and you’re happier teachers, and then you have a happier classroom and, you know, you want to build those relationships.”

**Conclusion**

Chapter IV provided details regarding methods of collecting data, participants, and quantitative and qualitative results pertaining to the perceptions of teachers related to culture in Idaho charter schools. Two separate phases were conducted as prescribed by the mixed method study’s explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Ivankova et al., 2006). Quantitative survey data was collected from 33 participants and analyzed in phase one using descriptive and frequency statistics. Analyzed survey data demonstrated collective teacher perception in all three participating study sites of positive school culture. Using a case-selection variant of the explanatory sequential design, the researcher used the information collected in the quantitative phase to identify and purposefully select participants (Creswell & Plano Clark,

2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). Data collected from semi-structured interviews were explored in the study's second phase. Three themes emerging from the process of coding and code mapping were Communication, Support, and Community. Participating teachers expressed shared perceptions of the importance of communication to the development of positive culture. Teachers specifically cited physical presence and openness of the principal and consistency as keys to effective communication. Support through shared leadership, gratitude practices, and collaboration was also identified by teachers as instrumental in establishing positive culture. Finally, teachers shared a common perception tying community to positive culture. Intentionally engaging in community building activities and fostering social and personal connections were discussed as essential elements in a strong community.

# Chapter V

# Discussion

## Introduction

Organizational outcomes, such as financial performance, innovation, and employee and customer satisfaction, are materially impacted by organizational culture (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Ficarra et al., 2020; Isac et al., 2021; Purwadi et al., 2020; Schein & Schein, 2017; Virgana & Kasyadi, 2020). In schools, culture is a similarly identified influence on key outcomes for teachers and students (Amtu et al., 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Ismail et al., 2022; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). When school communities are able to develop and maintain positive culture, teachers and students reap the benefits (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Ucar, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021) Levels of teacher commitment and job satisfaction are higher in schools with positive culture, and student learning and behavior are improved (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Jain et al., 2015; Khan, 2019; Ohlson et al., 2016; Rapti, 2013; Ucar, 2021; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). In the successful development of positive school culture, the influence of leadership must not be overlooked (Carpenter, 2015; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Khan, 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009; Ozgenel, 2020; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). In fact, literature points to principals as one of the most influential factors on the development of positive school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Lee & Li, 2015; Rapti, 2013; Smith et al., 2020; Tonich, 2021).

The process of opening a new charter school is fraught with unique challenges, and resources available for leaders are minimal (Garraux, 2019; National Charter School Resource

Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016). New charter school leaders must work tirelessly to build school community relationships while also attending to issues related to facilities, recruiting staff and students, marketing, and locating funding (Garraux, 2019; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016; Torres, 2020; Wright & McNae, 2019). Given the challenges of opening new charter schools and the known benefits of positive culture in schools, there is a need for specific research exploring the development of positive school culture in newly opened charter schools (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Garraux, 2019; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Significant overall population and student population growth in Idaho resulting in the need for a substantial number of new schools necessitates the current research specific to newly opened charter schools in Idaho (Idaho State Department of Education, 2019a; Public Impact, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers who work in newly established Idaho charter schools concerning school culture?
2. What commonalities shared by newly opened Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture?
3. What common leadership practices used in new Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, lead to the development of positive culture?

The purpose of Chapter V is to provide interpretation of the study results within the context of the reviewed literature and the presented theoretical frameworks. The researcher will also present recommendations for further research and discuss the implications of the study findings on practices within the field of education.

**Summary of Results**

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine teachers' perceptions of culture in newly opened charter schools and gain insight into school culture development by identifying commonalities and leadership practices, across levels of culture, among schools with positive culture. Utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a deeper and more comprehensive examination of the proposed research questions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Ivankova et al., 2006). An explanatory mixed methods design conducted in two phases—quantitative followed by qualitative—was employed (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Ivankova et al., 2006). Specifically, a case-selection variant, in which the quantitative phase is used to identify and purposefully select participants for the emphasized qualitative phase, was utilized in this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). In the first quantitative phase of this study, data was collected from 33 teachers across three newly opened Idaho charter schools using the previously validated School Culture Triage Survey (Wagner, 2006). Additional data collected from a fourth school was not utilized due to inadequate levels of teacher participation. The survey assessed teachers' perceptions of school culture in three areas including professional collaboration, affiliative collegiality, and self-determination/efficacy. In the second phase of the study, semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted, audio recorded, and transcribed. Collected data was analyzed through coding, categorizing, and the development of themes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Saldana, 2016). Triangulation and member checking were used to support the validity of qualitative findings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and frequency analysis within IBM SPSS (Version 25). Total School Culture Triage scores were calculated for each participant and school according to the survey's assessment scoring key. General tendencies (mean, mode) were calculated and scores above 60 represented teacher perception of positive culture (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Wagner, 2006). Calculations for all three participating schools demonstrated scores above 60 (see Table 6).

Calculating survey question frequencies allowed the researcher to make inferences regarding participating teachers' perceptions related to culture (Field, 2013). Three of the five Likert-based items related to professional collaboration were endorsed as often or always/almost always by 75% or more of participants, indicating a strong perception that teachers and staff work together to make decisions and solve problems. Questions related to affiliative collegiality yielded even stronger agreement from participants, with over 80% rating four of the six questions as often or always/almost always. Finally, five of the six questions related to self-determination/efficacy had 75% or more of participants rating as often or always/almost always.

Phase two qualitative findings supported data collected from the quantitative phase. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 teachers from three different newly opened Idaho charter schools. The interview transcripts were organized, coded by hand, and categorized before themes were developed (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Saldana, 2016). Purposeful and frequent immersion in qualitative data, paired with conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study, increased the researcher's understanding. Major themes developed from the data included Communication, Community, and Support (see Figure 4). Sub-themes

emerging from Communication included Consistency and Principal Presence/Openness. Community Building and Connection were sub-themes under Community. Support included sub-themes of Shared Leadership, Gratitude, and Collaboration.

**Research Question #1: Summary of Results and Discussion**

The first question steering this study was, "What are the perceptions of teachers who work in newly established Idaho charter schools concerning school culture?" Collective data from the conducted study indicated teachers' overall perceptions of school culture were positive (see Table 6). Positive school culture is an important factor to a school's efficacy (Jain et al., 2015; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Weiner & Higgins, 2017). As is represented in Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture (2020), schools with positive culture specifically have increased levels of teacher commitment and job satisfaction (Abdulahi, 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ni, 2017; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021).

Schools focused on strong community are more likely to develop positive culture (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Rhodes et al., 2011; Verma, 2021). Overall survey scores from the three participating schools indicated positive perceptions of school culture according to teachers (see Table 6). A majority of teacher ratings showed agreement with statements indicating high levels of professional collaboration, affiliative collegiality, and self-determination/efficacy at each of the participating sites (see Tables 7-9). Thirteen of the 17 items on the School Culture Triage Survey had over 70% of respondents endorsing items as often or always/almost always, and 10 of the items had over 80%. Positive ratings of the culture behaviors measured by the survey are

correlated with positive culture (Wagner, 2006). Study survey results showing positive perceptions of school culture from teachers were corroborated in the qualitative theme of Community. Supporting teacher statements indicating positive perceptions of school culture included, "…I really do like the culture here" and "… living at my school and seeing how our culture is really strong that's how I feel when I walk in the building, I feel good. I feel happy to be there."

Teachers who perceive high levels of collegiality have increased feelings of support, and this leads to stronger collaborative relationships and positive culture (Gruenert, 1998; Mangin, 2021; Ning et al., 2015; Taylor, 1991; Wagner, 2006). Survey items eliciting the most significant level of agreement among teachers (over 90%) included being involved in discussions around curriculum/instruction, having strong feelings of school community, and perceiving the school community as chosen and enjoyed by colleagues. Teacher statements supporting survey data included, "…we let our teachers choose our curriculum…it's a very collaborative effort" and "…our school really is a family…" In addition, one teacher stated, "…being intentional about being a community and being trusting and being cohesive is important."

Creating a school with positive culture requires a strong leader who fosters supportive and collaborative relationships among teachers (Abdulahi, 2020; Aguilar, 2016; Muhammad, 2018; Rhodes et al., 2011; Tonich, 2021; Verma, 2021). Survey data showed over 75% of teacher ratings in the area of collaboration were positive, answering often or always/almost always, suggesting effective efforts to create collaborative school environments. The qualitative data supported quantitative results through the theme of Community. Teachers acknowledged the principal's role in intentionally building culture by making statements such as, "And then I would say, like, really close to that would just be building that culture within the school and staff

and students. Like, it's a really big deal to him that we have a great school community" and "He was like, we want our kids to be here, we want our parents to keep showing up with their kids, and we want our teachers to be here. So it was community first. It was culture first. It was building a place of safety before anything else."

Survey results and supporting qualitative data viewed through the lens of Schein's Levels of Culture framework demonstrated schools' espoused values and beliefs related to community, with personal connection and trust indicating feelings of safety and contentment (Schein & Schein, 2017). Collaboration was also an identified value leading to perceptions of positive culture. Although participating schools had not been operating long enough to have adequately tested the reliability of the identified beliefs and values in addressing conflict over time, the high levels of survey agreement among participants and strong qualitative data supported the beginning development of underlying assumptions.

**Research Question #2: Summary of Results and Discussion**

In order to develop positive culture in existing schools, leaders must create an intentional plan to address any negative elements of culture while fostering the positive (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Muhammad, 2018; Verma, 2021). To be successful, the plan should focus on common goals, collaboration, supports for teachers, professional development, and celebration (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Mangin, 2021; Muhammad, 2018; Thessin, 2021; Verma, 2021). Seeking understanding of the needs of newly opened schools in developing positive culture, the second research question asked, "What commonalities shared by newly opened Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture?" Combined data from quantitative and qualitative analysis was used to address the question. Survey results showed strong agreement from participants in specific school practices

related to collaboration, affiliative collegiality, and self-determination/efficacy (see Tables 7-9). The quantitative findings were supported and further explained by interview participants within the developed themes of Communication, Community, and Support (see Figure 4).

### *Communication*

As identified in Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture, communication is an important factor in determining whether the culture of an organization is positive or negative (Aryani & Widodo, 2020). Although communication was not directly addressed in the study survey, a related item was noted. Almost 90% of survey participants reported a school schedule that allowed frequent communication opportunities for teachers and staff (see Table 8). Semi-structured interview questions included communication as a topic. In addition, communication was discussed frequently by participants across questions, leading to a total of 339 codes attributed to the broad theme of Communication. One of the two identified Communication sub-themes, Consistency, addressed commonalities shared by the participating schools. Nearly all participants discussed the importance of "setting clear expectations" and "communicating consistently." "Consistent communication" was relayed as important across all groups in the school community including between administration and staff, administration and parents, staff and students, staff and parents, and among staff. The most commonly discussed, however, was the necessity of consistent communication from the principal to the staff and from school staff to students. Research confirms the significance of school leaders' engaging in intentional, genuine, and consistent communication (Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020). The following examples of participant statements illustrate commonalities concerning consistent communication between administration and staff:

- "…we have a manual…we were all asked to read it and sign it. …the basic expectations of work hours and things like that…we're expected to be professionals."
- "So we, to start the year, they give us a handbook and it has all the expectations."
- "And they're really good about upfront being like these are the expectations, here's the handbook…"
- "There's definitely a staff handbook. And there's a code of ethics that we read at the beginning of the year."
- "…it's pretty clear what's expected of us."
- "The start of the year PD is very much grounded in what is expected, what are our values, what are we aiming for, who are we as a school, who are we as teachers."

Regarding communication from school staff to students, teachers shared common practices at the artifact level of culture (Schein, 1981, 1988; Schein & Schein, 2017). Identified artifacts, which are seen, heard, and felt, included having student handbooks, displaying expectations and school values throughout buildings, having schoolwide behavioral expectations, and using consistent language. Specific comments from teachers demonstrating commonalities in communicating from staff to students included:

- "…they know that's the expectation, whether they're in my class or another kindergarten class or in fifth grade, they all know."
- "…we have up on the board that are basically 10 profiles that we want our students and ourselves to live by."
- "The values of our school are definitely repeated throughout, and they're also repeated in, like, expectations that you might see in the hallway, etc."

- "…all of the classrooms have this [profile of school learner]…those are very, very important to teach our students and we incorporate them in different lessons throughout the week."
- "…some schoolwide systems that were absolutely non-negotiable…hall expectations is one of them…we do the [same phrase] for schoolwide attention."
- "We all do the same, like, requirements for kids to focus. So, we all say [the same prompt] so it's consistent throughout the school."
- "…we're all kind of doing similar things as far as management protocols…"

***Community***

Prioritizing community is instrumental in developing positive culture (Lee & Li, 2015; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Verma, 2021). Survey items related to affiliative collegiality aligned with the qualitative theme of Community in which 249 codes were included (see Table 8). Affiliative collegiality refers to teachers' perceptions of experiencing support and being valued members of a community (Wagner, 2006). A little over 90% of participants reported experiencing a strong sense of school community and almost 73% of teachers perceived having strong traditions of celebrations and rituals (see Table 8). According to Schein's Levels of Culture framework, participant responses demonstrated "community" as an espoused value held by the participating schools, and the traditions of celebrations and rituals are the artifacts supportive of the value (Schein & Schein, 2017). Community Building, a sub-theme of Community, included 106 codes. Participants shared countless stories of engaging in "community building activities" and "celebrating together," both within the school staff and the larger community. Excerpts from participant stories provided support for the significance of community building.

- "…our family picnic on the last day of school…all the families can come…each year it just gets better and better."
- "…one of my favorite traditions is that every winter, every, like, December we have a staff party…it's a nice, like it's a whole community."
- "…once a month we all bring in something and celebrate whoever's birthdays were that month."
- "…we have a fall carnival, and it's just gotten bigger each year. And this last time, our school really is a family…"
- "They set it up so that anybody can come, so all families can invite as many people as they want…it's just like a big, giant community family-feel."
- "Celebrations of things like big growth…we've got a bulletin board that shares that…and (school assembly) is a big place where that's celebrated."
- "…it feels like we're kind of always celebrating something."
- "…one of the team building things that we do that I have loved is the last two years, we've gone to the hot springs…"

Opportunities for community building activities and celebrations enhance relationships and ultimately contribute to positive culture (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Mangin, 2021; Muhammad, 2018; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 20018; Verma, 2021). The activities and celebrations are the seen, heard, and felt artifacts further supporting the espoused value of community (Schein & Schein, 2017).

Getting together socially with colleagues, fostering personal relationships, and developing trust are essential factors to creating connections, which research shows is important to effective collaboration (Aguilar, 2016; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe,

2018; Verma, 2021). Survey data revealed a majority of participants positively endorsed items related to collegial relationships. Eighty-five percent of teachers suggested school staff depend on and value each other (see Table 9), and a smaller majority (60.6%) endorsed often or always/almost always getting together socially with colleagues outside of the school setting (see Table 8). Participating teachers discussed the positive impact of "creating connections" within the school community. The teachers perceived overlap in descriptions of social gatherings and personal relationships, and the combined illustrations accounted for the bulk of the codes (112 out of 143 or 78%) under the Connection sub-theme. Examples of participant statements included:

- "We're seriously, we're like a big family. And that is the theme that keeps coming up over and over."
- "We all, we like each other."
- "You hear that over and over …I am home here and this is family…this is home and this is where I want to be."
- "We have some pretty close friendships."
- "Definitely a lot of emphasis on building relationship, of having a buddy, having friends."
- "We just really are a part of each other's lives."
- "…the staff is, I mean, we're friends and we like to hang out with each other outside of school hours, we enjoy each other's company."
- "…they brought us lunch and so we all just, like, socialized on a Friday…we'll do social events like that all the time just anyway at the school."

- "…I think they're trying really hard to create lots of different opportunities for everybody to feel comfortable in getting together in different ways. So, I think that's really cool."
- "We do a lot outside of work."
- "…we're a really, really good staff and we really care about each other."

Comments such as the following illustrated how developing trust on many levels contributes to the positive perceptions of teachers: "…everybody knows that it's a priority that yes, being intentional about being a community and being trusting and being cohesive is important. And we all lean on each other a lot" and "…just being trusted as a professional, as an expert in what you do, I think keeps people there and feeling really like, okay, I am valued and I'm seen as a professional." Although words such as "trust", "care", "value", and "relationship" cannot be tangibly seen on walls or in newsletters, the qualitative words identified by teachers speak to the espoused values and beliefs created within the culture of the schools and larger communities. Schein's Levels of Culture framework demonstrates espoused values and beliefs are supported by artifacts and become underlying assumptions when applied successfully over time in addressing challenges (Schein & Schein, 2017). Participants also specifically identified trust as an important factor in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on school culture, as evidenced by statements like, "…even with the families and stuff, the ones that have stuck with us…they trusted us. They trusted what we were doing, they trusted that what we were doing was the best for the most amount of people" and "So in that sense, I think that yes, it [the pandemic] strengthened our community just because the people that believed in what we were doing stuck with us." Trust is a vital piece of the puzzle when it comes to creating positive culture, and intentionally building community, fostering relationships, and celebrating together help solidify trust (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Muhammad, 2018).

***Support***

Although literature robustly demonstrates the positive impact of school leaders' incorporating supportive practices, this study also illustrated the positive effect of support among school staff (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016; Ardliana et al., 2021; Carpenter, 2015; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Ilyas & Abdullah, 2016; Kalkan et al., 2020; Ni, 2017; Othman & Kasuma, 2017; Ross & Gray, 2006; Ucar, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). The qualitative theme, Support, encompassed all five survey items related to professional collaboration and two of the six items under the category of self-determination/efficacy (see Tables 7 and 9). Over 40% of the total themed codes were associated with the broad theme of Support.

Collaboration is a qualitative sub-theme of Support, and literature points to the necessity of effective collaboration in developing positive school culture (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Verma, 2021). There was compelling agreement among participants (93.9% and 81.9%, respectively) regarding teachers' involvement in discussions surrounding instructional strategies and curriculum, as well as schoolwide behavior planning (see Table 7). Concerning involvement in decisions about schoolwide discipline, one participant stated, "…I would say all of us, like every teacher is involved in that." Approximately 80% of teachers endorsed being given time to plan with teams (see Table 7), which was supported by comments like, "The grade level teams, they definitely work together." Participants also strongly endorsed depending on and valuing colleagues, with 85% rating the item as often or always/almost always (see Table 9). Participants gave examples such as, "I'll go to her and just talk through ideas" and "…makes me feel valued when people like ask me my advice, so that's really cool." Another teacher stated, "…they rely on me to help them find solutions." A smaller majority of teachers

(63.7% and 69.7%, respectively) perceived being involved in developing the school schedule and making decisions regarding materials and resources (see Table 7). Participants positively described involvement in such decision-making as "teacher-initiated." Engaging in collaboration and being involved in decisions creates a sense of shared purpose for teachers (Deal & Peterson, 2016).

Narratives of collaboration were widely shared by participants and included 150 separate codes. Teachers across sites gave examples of working together to solve problems, helping colleagues, and openly sharing new ideas. Research shows, and statements made by participants supported, collaboration as a common factor contributing to positive culture (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Verma, 2021). Examples specific to working together and helping one another included:

- "So that in itself is collaboration of all of us and just looking at our data, where are we, where are we headed, what can we do to change things."
- "The grade level teams, they definitely work together."
- "…I had a few meetings where they were helping me problem solve how I could do small group learning a little bit more…"
- "Everyone works together, we are all one team. If one of us fail, we all fail. If one of us rises, we all rise."
- "I spend a lot of time with those teachers trying to support them with particular students."
- "I had so many people to talk to. I always had support...I've always had that kind of support. And that kind of community bleeds into the community with the students."

- "We check on them (newer teachers), like their emotional wellness, their physical wellness, their planning, how their classroom is running, what supports do they need, those kinds of things."

Sharing new ideas, especially those in the best interest of students, was also brought up as an important part of collaboration. Eighty-two percent of participants positively endorsed supporting and appreciating sharing new ideas among staff (see Table 8). Teachers made supporting statements such as, "I think we have a real culture of let's try new things. Especially if it's a win for students" and "Everyone is really dedicated to kids…I think that new ideas are generally well received with an open mind." Other participants indicated feeling confident in the acceptance of all ideas, stating, "I think you could bring any idea you have and it will get tested out" and "…I feel like we all feel very comfortable voicing our opinion or voicing an idea." Successful collaboration necessitates the open sharing of and acceptance of new ideas among staff (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Wagner, 2006).

Gratitude, another sub-theme of Support, also applied to the research question seeking charter school commonalities contributing to positive culture development. Although gratitude was not specifically addressed through the survey, literature identifies gratitude as a factor supporting effective collaboration (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012; Muhammad, 2018). Gratitude was identified by participants as an espoused value according to Schein's Levels of Culture framework, and teachers shared multiple artifact-level examples across sites of acknowledging one another's work and expressing appreciation for each other (Schein & Schein, 2017). Several participants reported doing frequent "shout-outs" among staff to "show how much we appreciate each other and support each other." The "shout-outs" are also used to "lift each other up and celebrate each other and celebrate the things we do." Teachers reported

sharing gratitude with colleagues and students by starting meetings and classes with "sharing something good that happened…whether in our home life or work life and then we end with gratitude always." Teachers shared showing appreciation for colleagues in simple ways as well, with one participant reporting, "People are very good about sharing that too. Just stopping each other in the hall and saying thank you for this…just a lot of gratitude at our school."

**Research Question #3: Summary of Results and Discussion**

Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture and research presented in literature recognize school leadership as a vital influence on the development of positive school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Khan, 2019; Ozgenel, 2020; Smith et al., 2020; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). Impactful leaders in established schools must be able to build trusting relationships, be open to learning, communicate effectively, and provide adequate support (Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021; Ozgenel, 2020; Sortino, 2018). The third research question attempted to uncover knowledge of leadership practices necessary to successfully develop positive culture while dealing with specific issues needing to be tackled in opening a new charter school. Therefore, the third question addressed in this study was, "What common leadership practices used in new Idaho charter schools, across levels of culture, contribute to the development of positive culture?" The question was addressed using data synthesized from quantitative and qualitative analysis. Although the survey did not contain a category specific to leadership practices, items eliciting teachers' perceptions regarding school schedules, involving teachers in decisions, and empowering teachers instructionally were all related, and the majority of participants rated the items positively (see Tables 7-9). In addition, the remaining survey items

represented practices and values influenced at least indirectly by the school leader. Therefore, quantitative survey data demonstrated agreement in the perception of teachers related to leadership practices contributing to positive culture. The quantitative results were supported by qualitative data within the themes of Communication, Support, and Community (see Figure 4).

### *Communication*

Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture (see Figure 1), identifies effective communication from school leaders as having a positive impact on staff engagement and as an aid in the development of positive culture (Aryani & Widodo, 2020; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021). The quantitative survey did not mention communication directly; however, there was one communication-connected item related to leadership. In alignment with the process code of talking through conflict, a little over 80% of participants indicated a school community practice of seeking explanations to problems instead of assigning blame to others (see Table 9).

Leaders effectively communicating means school leaders should be visible, available to listen to all stakeholders, and focused on intentional, genuine, and consistent communication (Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020). The two Communication sub-themes, Consistency and Principal Presence/Openness, apply to the third research question. Participants commonly shared the utility of receiving necessary information consistently through a "weekly email" from the principal. One participant was particularly enthusiastic, stating, "…he writes out a really long, long email. I love that email…anything we need to know about the upcoming week is on there." Others commented on the preference for an email over in-person meetings, "Every Sunday he sends out a weekly digest…an overview of what's coming up for the week…I prefer that, rather than little meetings throughout the week...I

can go to the Sunday email if I'm looking for something…" The "weekly email" as a method of consistent communication was mentioned at least once by all 10 participating teachers. According to Schein's Levels of Culture framework, the "weekly email" would be considered an artifact of culture supporting the espoused value of consistent communication (Schein & Schein, 2017). Over time, with successful application of values such as communication, values become the group's unconscious underlying assumptions (Schein & Schein, 2017).

The second identified sub-theme under Communication was Principal Presence/Openness. Common leadership practices having a positive effect on culture as identified in literature and by participants included having a visible and accessible administrator who is willing to support communication through conflict and accept feedback (Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020). Leader visibility and accessibility was not addressed through the survey; however, there were 66 related codes. The practice of school leaders' being intentionally visible and accessible would be classified as an artifact of culture, supporting the organizational value of communication according to Schein's Levels of Culture (Schein & Schein, 2017). Some powerful examples of teacher perspectives of administrator visibility and accessibility included:

- "He is full access...He makes himself very, very available to us... He's alongside us for this ride. He's alongside for this vision and this mission that we're on…we are in this together, we're doing this together."
- "[Principal] is very accessible and open and really easy to…get ahold of. She's warm and welcoming and empathetic."
- "…I can talk to them about any problem, any issue."

- "…I usually see him at least once a day just going through, he tends to walk around at lunch and I think one of his goals is to know the students."
- "…we see her every day, all day…"
- "Our particular principal is incredible in terms of just being accessible and caring and thoughtful and tuned into what people, you know, just tuned into them."
- "We know he is our principal, but we also know that we can talk to him about anything."
- "I can take him every single problem, big or small."
- "…they're just present. So, they know what my kids are learning, they know what's happening in my classroom, they know the way I do things…they make it an effort to be present."
- "He's actually really accessible. He's really good about dropping things too."

Supportive leader practices include assisting staff in conflict resolution (Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Lee & Li, 2015). While not specifically addressing conflict resolution, survey data showed positive perceptions in manners of dealing with problems/issues (see Table 9). Over 80% of participants chose often or always/almost always to endorse items indicating the school community seeks new solutions in dealing with problems and does not blame others (see Table 9). When sharing stories regarding how administrators addressed conflict, participants described similar experiences. Administrators commonly encouraged honest communication between parties involved in conflict as evidenced by statements such as, "…there's a culture of if you have a conflict, be honest and communicate honestly and take ownership" and "…you have to be willing to go into those hard conversations to be able to problem solve…we're encouraged to address it." Additionally, a participant noted,

"…one of our essential agreements is about being honest and upfront with people…if there was major issues, we would just want to talk about it right away, get it out of the way and then move on." The processes and procedures school leaders use to create norms and address conflict are placed at the artifact level of culture according to Schein's Levels of Culture framework and additionally support the organizational value of communication (Schein & Schein, 2017).

Along with visibility, accessibility, and assisting with conflict resolution, accepting feedback is an identified leadership practice contributing to positive culture (Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020). Although leaders' accepting feedback was not an explicit survey item, a related item, staff supporting and appreciating the new ideas of others, was positively endorsed by 82% of participants (see Table 8). Teachers' perceptions of the principal's willingness to accept feedback was closely tied to the principal's being willing to admit mistakes. Confirming statements included, "And he knows that he's not perfect and makes mistakes and he owns up to that…he gives us as much grace as he wants us to give him. So, there's a lot of grace that's given on both ends" and "I mean, he'll flat out say…I don't know all the things. He's constantly being like if you can come up with a better solution, if you can come up with a better way…then go do it." There were also several comments about the principal being open to change and different approaches. Statements included, "He might have to think about it, but he's always willing to hear, like, maybe a better way to do something" and "If somebody pushed back…there would be a total willingness to explore it." The espoused value of communication is further supported at the artifact level of culture when principals model accepting feedback and admitting mistakes.

***Community***

School leaders directly impact the social structures allowing teachers to successfully develop relationships, foster community, celebrate, and build trust, all of which are needed for positive culture (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Mangin, 2021; Muhammad, 2018; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 20018; Verma, 2021). The social structures were represented in the survey through the assessment of teachers' perceptions of practices related to affiliative collegiality (see Table 8). The positive ratings by participating teachers, with over 70% responding often or always/almost always on five out of the six items, strongly demonstrated the school leaders in all three sites have engaged in leadership practices fostering community. Qualitative data supported the survey data by identifying specific leadership practices related to Community sub-themes of Community Building and Connection. Examples of leadership practices observed by participating teachers across sites were captured in comments such as:

- "The schedule this year makes it so that kinder, first grade, and second grade all have the same lunch break together. So, we all eat lunch together. And then third, four, five, six also have similar times for their group. So, they all eat lunch together."
- "Before the school even opened, you know, we were having barbeques and we were going out and doing things and staff was invited different places. And the principal's opening up his house and he's having coffee with different staff members and just making those connections before we even opened our doors."
- "But I think she [principal] just really values relationships and just wants you to know she just cares and will check in on you."

- "And she [principal] literally says, "I want you to have people you care about and that you connect with here at our school. And we're going to make sure that we have experiences, that we get to know each other."
- "[Principal] makes a lot of effort to foster that [staff relationships] outside of school…"
- "I had Covid recently…I was receiving daily texts just to check in on me…"
- "…my husband had emergency surgery…so I got a text from my principal for three days checking on him…checking just on him, checking on me as a person. So, those kinds of things where you know when they say family first...it's not just lip service."

Community and relationship building should be a school leader's priority and requires scheduled time, modeling, and engagement (Deal & Peterson, 2016). According to Schein's Levels of Culture framework, identified artifacts used within the study for strengthening community as an espoused value included the discussed leadership practices of ensuring time for community building activities and fostering relationships through modeling (Schein & Schein, 2017).

***Support***

Supportive practices incorporated by school leaders have been tied directly to fostering collaborative culture and increasing teacher job satisfaction/commitment/self-efficacy (Ardliana et al., 2021; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Ucar, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Supportive practices identified in research include respecting teachers by giving autonomy, sharing leadership, fostering collaboration, effectively communicating, and being willing to assist in resolving conflict (Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Gawlik, 2012; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Mangin, 2021; Rapti, 2013; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Quantitative survey results

and qualitative data demonstrated teachers' positive perceptions of supportive leadership practices across sites. Survey data showed a majority of participating teachers perceived being involved in decision-making/problem-solving and having a sense of autonomy regarding instruction (see Tables 7 and 9). Support was the qualitative theme with the highest percentage of codes overall (43%). Many of the comments from participants related directly to support from referenced leadership practices. The sub-themes of Shared Leadership, Gratitude, and Collaboration encompassed the leadership practices contributing to teachers' positive perceptions of support. Participating teachers also shared multiple individual stories of principals demonstrating support in touching, personal ways.

Sharing leadership fosters engagement and trust among staff and positive school culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Spillane et al., 2004; Thessin, 2021; Ucar, 2021; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Survey results gave insight into teachers' perceptions of involvement in decision-making which is an element of shared leadership (Angelle, 2010; Carpenter, 2015; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). A majority of participating teachers (from 63.7% to 93.9%) rated five questions related to shared decision-making as often or always/almost always (see Tables 7 and 9). Items represented teachers' involvement in decisions related to instruction, curriculum, school schedules, materials/resources, and student discipline (see Tables 7 and 9). Examples of shared leadership practices were relayed by participants through discussion of principals' listening to and involving teachers in decisions, giving teachers autonomy, and trusting teachers with responsibilities. Teachers from all three sites gave examples of principals' sharing leadership, specifically as it related to listening to teachers and involving teachers in decision-making, including:

- "And they really take that input in before they make a decision."
- "And they trusted me and I think that that's very clear, that they definitely seek out teacher input and trust it."
- "Lots, just as much teacher input as administration input."
- "I think almost every team at our school that's any kind of decision-making force…you can get into if you want as a teacher…"
- "…we let our teachers choose our curriculum…it's a very collaborative effort."
- "[curriculum decisions] I'd say it's more driven by teachers than anything."
- "…the teachers are heavily involved in the curriculum choice process."
- "He [principal] does listen to what teachers have to say…"
- "…so, he [principal] is really good about kind of stepping back or listening to what people need."
- "…he does listen to teachers on kind of what works and what doesn't."

The artifact-level leadership practices identified by participants, such as creating procedures for teachers to give input and assist in decision-making, contribute to the development of the espoused values of trust and support. Giving teachers autonomy is another way school leaders can share leadership and engage in supportive practices (Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Lee & Li, 2015; Mangin, 2021). Survey data showed just over 75% of teachers perceived feeling empowered to make independent instructional decisions (see Table 9). Qualitative examples of principals' sharing leadership through giving teachers responsibilities and autonomy included:

- "…if I'm going to do something different in my classroom or I'm going to change something instructionally…he (principal) was like yeah…you guys are the ones teaching

it, you understand where the kids are in the process, and so if you feel like it needs to be changed then change it."

- "I think that's good, that we have that autonomy to be able to do that and make some change."
- "…we have the freedom to be as flexible with the curriculum as we choose to be."
- "…you want to change things or do something different or take something out and replace it with something else, everybody has the freedom to do that…we can make it what we think is best for our class."
- "She'll [principal] let you try anything."
- "…just always encouraging us to do what's best for our students. I think that's what she's really good at is knowing that if we're trying something because we think it's benefitting the students, then absolutely, go for it."
- "…we do have a lot of freedom when it comes to choosing where we want to take our classes."
- "…I feel like with giving us so much freedom, that automatically empowers us."
- "…we are given a lot of freedom to make our own decisions when it comes to how we teach and how we handle our students and things like that."
- "…he's put me in some leadership roles at school…and he's always telling me, like, I value your opinion, I value what you have to say…and so I definitely feel like what I say matters…"
- "…I feel like they give responsibilities to people that, I mean, everybody who can manage them."
- "I think they recognize that. So, then I've been asked to be the mentor to other teachers."

Gratitude is identified in research as having a positive effect on collaboration (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Fisher et al., 2012; Muhammad, 2018). Although gratitude was not addressed through the survey, interview participants identified the positive impact of expressions of acknowledgement and appreciation from school leaders across sites. Teachers shared examples of principals' sharing gratitude directly, such as, "But they definitely encouraged me and the admin tend to give teachers shout-outs whenever, you know, they're doing a good job…" and "…we get emails also, like saying thank you for your hard work." Participants also discussed principals' fostering gratitude by creating opportunities for all staff to show appreciation for each other. One teacher stated, "We just did a thing at our staff meeting where we traced our hand and we all went around and wrote adjectives about the person in their hand. And they were all really nice and made us feel really good." Other teachers identified feeling appreciated when principals give gifts, provide resources, or honor teachers' time with monetary rewards. Visible signs of gratitude and appreciation are artifacts, identified by Schein's Levels of Culture framework, further supporting the espoused values of trust and support (Schein & Schein, 2017). Examples given by teachers included:

- "I'm retiring here. I don't have to beg for supplies. In fact, I'm pretty spoiled."
- "…I think every couple of years I'll end up going to a conference, they pay for everything. They take you to really nice restaurants…they do a lot of small things to just, regularly."
- "…she'll surprise the staff during one of those big meetings…with…a new t-shirt. Or like the holidays last year, she gave everybody new (school) beanies and a couple other things."

- "They really do support us…they know that we need resources and we need materials in order to do our job well. And so, they are really, really good about that."
- "So, the state just gave some extra money for education and they gave the teachers a bonus with it."

Finally, there were over 100 codes related to administrators' supporting teachers. The examples shared, at the artifact level of culture, were often personal and specific to individual teachers' needs. The interviewed teachers conveyed appreciation for principals' "taking time to connect" and "showing support" to staff. Many of the actions were small and seemingly insignificant but clearly made an impact on the teachers' perceptions of culture. A few of the many statements concerning principal support included:

- "But yeah, when your principal is out there doing recess duty, I'm like, you're in a good place."
- "…I don't feel like I'm judged by my admin…"
- "…I'm literally in his office crying. First time I cried in his office…this has been so hard. And he's sitting there, he goes, so let's fix it."
- "They know it's hard and they're in the trenches with you. They're not in their office with the door closed…they are in the trenches suffering along with you…they understand. And you feel like…they are one of you instead of above you looking down…"
- "…she just completely calmed me down and explained to me a gave me a hug and explained to me that it's not anything I did wrong and I meet the needs of my students well. And so, it was nice just to kind of be talked off the ledge…"

- “They always say that if we ever want to observe another classroom, they will cover for us any time.”
- “And then, the principals always handle more of the uncomfortable parents or the really upset ones…and they every single time, are like no problem, I’ll take care of it. And so, they are really good about taking that burden.”
- “And even during things like observations when I know I’m still learning and…making mistakes all the time, everything is really met with a lot of encouragement.”
- “And both, really all of the leadership team will pop in just to check and to encourage and leave a note of encouragement.”
- “And he will let you just sit and cry in his office if you need to. And he may not be able to fix it, but he will at least hear what you have to say. So, you do know you’re genuinely heard even if you don’t get kind of the solution that you would have liked.”
- “…we’re encouraged…he’s told a bunch of us if you’re super passionate about something, find a way…do what you’re passionate about.”

**Conclusions**

Positive school culture is a substantial factor in creating satisfied and committed teachers and successful students (Amtu et al., 2020; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Ismail et al., 2022; Khan, 2019; Lee & Li, 2015; MacNeil et al., 2009; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). School leaders are conductors of culture, having significant influence on whether positive culture develops (Abdulahi, 2020; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Lee & Li, 2015; Rapti, 2013; Smith et al., 2020; Tonich, 2021). New charter school leaders, facing multiple challenges with little support, need specific guidance related to the role of leadership in fostering positive culture to ensure sustained school success (Garraux, 2019;

National Charter School Resource Center, 2020; Thomas & Lacey, 2016). In support of the combined theoretical framework of the study, the current findings established leadership practices across levels of culture, artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions needed to positively influence culture and improve teachers' commitment/satisfaction (see Figure 2). Synthesized results from quantitative and qualitative study phases indicated leadership practices related to communication, community, and support should be utilized to positively impact culture development in new charter schools.

Research confirms the importance of school leaders who are intentional, genuine, and consistent communicators and who are visible and available to all stakeholders (Hollingworth et al., 2018; Mangin, 2021; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020). Combined evidence from this study indicated teachers in new charter schools value honest, open, and consistent communication from school leaders. Specific artifact-level principal behaviors and created structures/processes make teachers feel comfortable initiating conversations to access resources, address conflict, or provide feedback. It is helpful when school leaders are physically present throughout the school, prioritize making time for conversations with staff, and encourage honest staff feedback. School leaders can also set clear expectations for teachers and create a system for communicating consistently. The seen, heard, and felt communication artifacts created by school leaders reinforced the espoused communication values of the participating schools. Teachers expressed comfort with navigating challenges and approaching conflict because of the organizational values of open, honest, and consistent communication. School leaders can reinforce the communication values through continued focus on the artifacts which create successful communication experiences for staff.

Leadership practices pertaining to building community and fostering connection were also endorsed through the combined data of this study. Literature recognizes trusting, respectful relationships among teachers and a well-developed sense of community are important to successful collaboration (Aguilar, 2016; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Verma, 2021). Participating teachers appreciated school leaders' efforts to provide opportunities to celebrate and engage as a community and form relationships through social interactions. Artifacts, such as school schedules, staff meetings, and event planning are under a school leader's control and can be set up intentionally with community building and connection in mind. By prioritizing the creation of traditions and rituals for staff, students, and the larger community, school leaders can promote espoused values within the community.

This study demonstrated teachers recognize a supportive environment as a significant factor in the perception of positive culture. Teachers identified supportive leadership practices as being especially impactful. Supportive practices embodied by school leaders are connected to collaborative culture and increased teacher job satisfaction/commitment (Ardliana et al., 2021; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Kalkan et al., 2020; Ucar, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Teachers reported feeling support from school leaders through opportunities of shared leadership such as involvement in decision-making, providing feedback, and taking on responsibilities. In addition, giving teachers autonomy was cited as vital to teachers' positive perceptions of leader support. Fostering collaboration and expressions of gratitude were also identified as important supportive leadership practices. School leaders can foster collaboration by giving teachers ample time within the schedule to work together and provide mutual assistance. Additionally, when

principals model acceptance of and excitement for new ideas, collaboration is encouraged. Visible signs of gratitude, such as notes of thanks, staff shout-outs, and providing gifts or resources, are leadership practices at the artifact level of culture teachers found encouraging.

Over time and with repeated success in confronting challenges, espoused beliefs and values become unconscious underlying assumptions (Schein & Schein, 2017). School leaders can assist in this process by intentionally embedding espoused beliefs and values (Schein & Schein, 2017). School leaders communicate the importance of values and beliefs through granted attention, reactions to incidents, allocation of resources, personal actions, modeling, rewarded behavior, and recognition (Schein & Schein, 2017). Organizational artifacts prioritized by leaders also contribute to the process of espoused values and beliefs becoming underlying assumptions (Schein & Schein, 2017). While the combined data from this study was not sufficient to support the identification of underlying assumptions, there was evidence that leadership practices can encourage the progression. For example, teachers relayed narratives of principals' showing gratitude through monetary bonuses and gifts. The manner in which leaders allocate resources is one way to demonstrate the importance of a value (Schein & Schein, 2017). Another way leaders demonstrate the importance of a value is through modeling (Schein & Schein, 2017). The language principals use was perceived as significant to participants, as teachers viewed the use of language as a way for the administrator to model the importance of the value, consistent communication.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings of this study substantiated the consequential interaction between school leadership and culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Khan, 2019; Tonich, 2021; Verma, 2021). This mixed methods study sought to examine teachers' perceptions of culture in newly opened Idaho charter

schools and gain insight into school positive culture development by identifying commonalities and leadership practices, across levels of culture. Idaho's significant increase in student population will require an increase in the number of charter schools in the coming years, as is the case nationwide (Public Impact, 2022). According to the latest enrollment information provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (2022), from 2009-2019 the number of students enrolled in public charter schools nationwide increased by 1.8 million and the number of charter schools increased by 2,500. Further research will provide resources and best practices to leaders of new charter schools as they attempt to build positive culture, increasing the likelihood of sustained school success.

Culture is complex, multifaceted, and best discovered through interaction (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Schein & Schein, 2017). However, a researcher entering an organization to collect data is in itself an intervention, and the members of the group are affected by the researcher's presence (Schein & Schein, 2017). Therefore, to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of the culture in new schools, future research could be conducted using a practical action research design. The goal of practical action research is to examine and improve a specific local situation, such as in a school (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The research would be conducted by an educator or team of educators within the school, which may increase the ability to uncover the levels of culture not readily visible to an outsider. Given the importance of positive culture to overall school success, new schools would benefit from culture research early on to assess and address any problematic culture issues before they can negatively impact teacher and student outcomes.

Literature shows school leaders are instrumental in developing positive culture (Abdulahi, 2020; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Khan, 2019; Sortino, 2018; Tonich, 2021). School leaders' perspectives on culture are not represented in the current study and may be vastly different from the perspectives of teachers. In order to create buy-in from the leaders who so greatly impact culture in schools, it would be beneficial to have a better understanding of the leaders' perspectives. Further research could examine potential discrepancies between the perspectives of school leaders and teachers regarding culture and whether discrepancies impact leadership practices known to contribute to positive culture.

Aryani and Widodo's Conceptual Framework of Organizational Culture and additional literature support the idea that schools with positive culture have increased levels of teacher commitment and job satisfaction (Abdulahi, 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ni, 2017; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Weiner & Higgins, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). In addition, supportive practices incorporated by school leaders are connected to collaborative culture and increased teacher job satisfaction/commitment/self-efficacy (Ardliana et al., 2021; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Ucar, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). This study demonstrated teachers' perception of positive culture was significantly impacted by supportive environments and leadership practices. Therefore, positive teacher commitment and job satisfaction were implied in this study from teacher perspectives of positive culture. However, this research could be extended to further explore the impact of positive culture on teacher commitment and job satisfaction. Specific quantitative and/or qualitative measures could be employed to gain deeper perspective into teacher commitment/job satisfaction and the subsequent impact on student outcomes.

A restricted population was an identified limitation of the current study. Participants were selected from three of the 15 Idaho charter schools meeting study criteria, limiting the ability to generalize findings. Additional research, conducted in other geographical regions across the United States, regarding the development of positive culture in new charter schools would be beneficial. Conducting further studies related to school culture in the United States is also needed because a majority of school culture research published in the last decade has been conducted in other countries (Abdulahi, 2020; Amtu et al., 2020; Ardliana et al., 2021; Atasoy, 2020; Bayar & Karaduman, 2021; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Ghosh & Srivastava, 2014; Gun & Caglayan, 2013; Hongboontri, 2014; Ismail et al., 2022; Kalkan et al., 2020; Kalman & Balkar, 2018; Khan, 2019; Kiral & Kacar, 2016; Korumaz et al., 2020; Lee & Li, 2015; Melesse & Molla, 2018; Ning et al., 2015; Othman & Kasuma, 2017; Ozdemir, 2021; Ozgenel et al., 2020; Rapti, 2013; Stamatis & Chatzinikolaou, 2020; Tabak & Sahin, 2020; Tas, 2017; Tonich, 2021; Ucar, 2021; Verma, 2021; Virgana & Kasyadi, 2020; Werang & Agung, 2017; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). More research would be helpful to reestablish an understanding of school culture development in the ever-changing educational landscape in the Unites States.

**Implications for Professional Practice**

This study discovered various implications for professional practice to aid school leaders in developing positive culture in new charter schools. The implications include equipping school leaders with knowledge of specific leadership practices related to communication, community, and support that contribute to positive school culture.

Fostering collaboration has been identified in literature and in this research as an important leadership practice contributing to positive culture development (Abdulahi, 2020; Carpenter, 2015; DuFour et al., 2006, 2016; Othman & Kasuma, 2017; Thessin, 2021). Having

knowledge of influential leadership practices does not mean school leaders possess the necessary training to implement the practices, such as supporting educators in effectively engaging in collaboration (Carpenter, 2015). Therefore, training specific to supportive leadership practices, such as collaboration, is needed for both in-service and pre-service principals, especially for school leaders taking on the added challenges of opening a new charter school (Carpenter, 2015; Thessin, 2021). Training for in-service and pre-service principals should take place prior to starting a position as a new school leader, either through professional development or pre-service course offerings, as leaders of new organizations create culture from the organization's inception (Schein & Schein, 2017). New school leaders who are unaware of the impact of leadership on the formation of culture may inadvertently send mixed messages, creating negative subcultures and conflict (Schein & Schein, 2017). Trainings for new school leaders could include topics such as leadership practices that encourage positive culture, ideas for intentionally building community, and methods for effective communication. For example, workshops providing opportunities for school leaders to learn and practice conflict management techniques would be helpful. Additionally, school leaders may benefit from specific information regarding planning a master schedule to include sufficient time for collaboration, community building activities, and social gatherings.

School leaders' understanding the significant impact of leadership practices on culture formation does not necessarily make the practices easy to implement. Social structures promoting the formation of relationships and community, such as time for collaboration, teacher teaming, celebrations, social gatherings, and meaningful professional development, are needed (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Mangin, 2021; Muhammad, 2018; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 20018; Verma, 2021). Although charter schools have

more autonomy than traditional public schools, there are still regulations to be followed and a governing board (Garcia & Salinas, 2018; National Charter School Resource Center, 2020). This study indicated dedicating time to practices that encourage building community, connection, collaboration, and gratitude enhances teachers' positive perceptions of culture and should therefore be prioritized. New charter school leaders must build consensus among stakeholders concerning protecting time in the school schedule and dedicating resources to adequately address positive culture formation needs. For example, one of the study's participating schools employed a four-day student week to ensure adequate time for practices related to communication, community, and support. The teachers conveyed positive perceptions of school culture as a result of the leadership's dedication of time and resources.

Just as building community takes intentional action on the part of school leaders, building adequate structures for staff support requires intentional action as well (Aguilar, 2016; Deal & Peterson, 2016; DuFour et al., 2006; Mangin, 2021; Muhammad, 2018). Leaders employing supportive practices will see the benefit of a more collaborative culture with more satisfied and committed teachers (Ardliana et al., 2021; DeMarco & Gutmore, 2021; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020; Ucar, 2021; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2021). Sharing leadership is an important supportive practice identified in literature (Carpenter, 2015; Cetin & Dogruyol-Aladak, 2019; Deal & Peterson, 2016; Hollingworth et al., 2018; Lee & Li, 2015; Mangin, 2021). Collective data from this study supported research in identifying shared leadership as influential to teachers' perceptions of culture. It is therefore vital for new school leaders to immediately create structures for shared leadership. Principals can develop and communicate consistent systems for soliciting teacher feedback. Establishing goal-oriented teacher committees can assist in soliciting staff feedback and increasing staff involvement in decision-making.

Generously giving teachers responsibilities and specific leadership positions will also increase positive responses from teachers. This was evidenced by the experiences of teachers from one participating school where the principal started a “teacher mentor” program.

Encouraging social gatherings among staff, fostering personal relationships, and developing trust are vital strategies leaders can use to create connections, which research also demonstrates are important to effective collaboration (Aguilar, 2016; Rapti, 2013; Rhodes et al., 2011; Smith & Shouppe, 2018; Verma, 2021). Although not highly coded, a word mentioned as important to all school stakeholders was trust. Study data showed participants saw trust as essential to successful collaboration, relationships, and ultimately, positive culture formation. Participants identified trust as necessary between parents and all school staff, administration and staff, as well as students and staff. To develop trust among all stakeholders, principals must take intentional action. Prioritizing and taking time to listen to staff, parents, and students is an important first step to building trust. Principals need to create opportunities for members of the school community to ask questions and share feedback or concerns. For example, a monthly “coffee with the principal” could be implemented, allowing parents to get to know the principal in a more casual setting. Study data supported granting autonomy and sharing leadership as closely connected with teachers’ perceiving trust as well. Principals can give autonomy by allowing teachers to choose and/or be involved in curriculum decisions and by trusting teachers’ instructional decisions. Additionally, principals can promote autonomy by creating an environment supportive of trying new instructional strategies and adjusting curriculum to meet the needs of students. Giving autonomy increases feelings of trust, but it is also important for

principals to support the decisions teachers make, especially if questioned by parents. Shared leadership can be accomplished by creating decision-making committees and giving teachers leadership positions such as mentoring colleagues, participating on leadership teams, and assisting with professional development planning.

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**Appendix A**

**List of Idaho Charter Schools**

# Idaho Charter Schools

This list contains general and contact information for the charter schools in Idaho. Also contained are application deadlines. Charter schools in Idaho are required to conduct lotteries if they have more applications than the seats available. The schools do accept applications all year, however the deadline provided is for the next lottery. Please contact the school for the specific application information.

For general charter school questions contact: Michelle Clement Taylor, School Choice Coordinator; mtaylor@sde.idaho.gov; 208-332-6963.

[Table of Contents Removed]

## A

### Alturas International Academy - LEA# 495

Reece Drkula, Principal reece.drkula@alturasacademy.org
Michelle Ball, Executive Director michelle.ball@alturasacademy.org
Grades: K-5 / Opened in 2016
Focus/Program: International Baccalaureate
151 N. Ridge Ave., Idaho Falls, ID 83402 208-522-5145
Application deadline late March Alturas International Academy School Website

### Alturas Preparatory Academy - LEA# 560

Brian Bingham, Principal brian.bingham@alturasacademy.org
Michelle Ball, Executive Director michelle.ball@alturasacademy.org
Grades: 6-10 / Opened in 2021
Focus/Program: International Baccalaureate
2280 E 17th Street, Idaho Falls, ID 83404 208-932-99440
Application deadline late March Alturas Prep Academy School Website

### American Heritage Charter School - LEA# 482

Tiffnee Hurst, Elementary Principal hurstt@ahcspatriots.us
Shawn Rose, Secondary Principal roses@ahcspatriots.us
Grades: K-12 Opened in 2013
Focus/Program: Core Knowledge
1736 South 35th West, Idaho Falls, ID 83402 208-529-6570
Application deadline late March American Heritage Charter School Website

## Another Choice Virtual Charter School – LEA #476

Laura Sandidge, Administrator lsandidge@anotherchoicecharter.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened in 2010
Focus/Program: Online Education
1014 W. Hemingway Boulevard, Nampa, ID 83651
208-475-4255
Call the school for application deadline Another Choice Virtual Charter School Website

## Anser Charter School – LEA #492

Michelle Lee Dunstan, Educational Director mdunstan@anser charterschool.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 1999
Focus/Program: Expeditionary Learning
202 E 42nd Street, Garden City, ID 837014 208-426-9840
Application deadline mid-February Anser Charter School Website

# B

## Bingham Academy – LEA #485

Mark Fisk, Principal mfisk@bingham.academy
Grades: 9-11 / Opened 2014
Focus/Program: STEM, College/Career Technical
1350 Parkway Drive #18, Blackfoot, ID 83221 208-557-4003
Application deadline in early March Bingham Academy Website

## Blackfoot Charter Community Learning Center – LEA #477

Craig Gerard, Administrator cgerard@bcclc.com
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2000
Focus/Program: Brain-based learning
2801 Hunter's Loop, Blackfoot, ID 83221 208-782-0744
Application deadline in mid-March Blackfoot Charter Community Learning Center Website

# C

## Cardinal Academy – LEA #566

Emily Bergstrom, Executive Director ebergstrom@cardinalacademycharter.org
Deborah Hedden-Nicely Director dheddennicely@cardinalacademycharter.org
Grades: 9-12 / Opened 2021
Focus/Program: Academic program for expectant and parenting students
9492 W. Emerald Street, Boise, ID 83704
208-918-1693
Contact the school for the application deadline Cardinal Academy Website

## Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy – LEA #483

Joel F. Weaver, Director joel.weaver@cteacademy.org
Cyd Crue, Director cyd.crue@cteacademy.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2013
Focus/Program: Dual Language and Culture - Shoshone Bannock, English
38 South Hiline Road, P. O. Box 217, Fort Hall, ID 83202
208-237-2710
Contact the school for the application deadline Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy Website

## Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy – LEA #491

Daniel Nicklay, Principal dnicklay@cdacharter.org
Grades: 6-12 / Opened 1999
Focus/Program: College Preparatory
4904 N Duncan Drive, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815 208-676-1667
Application deadline early March Coeur d'Alene Charter Academy Website

## Compass Public Charter School – LEA #455

Susan Luke, Elementary Principal sluke@compasscharter.org
Kelly Trudeau, Charter Administrator ktrudeau@compasscharter.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2005
Focus/Program: Strong academics, safe school culture, and college prep academics
4667 W. Aviator, Meridian, ID 83642 208-855-2802
Application deadline mid-February Compass Public Charter School Website

## Connor Academy – LEA #460

Joel Lovstedt, Administrator joel.lovstedt@academycharter.net
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2006
Focus/Program: Safe environment; challenging, accelerated learning
1295 Alpine Ave, Chubbuck, ID 83202 208-232-1447
Application deadline early March Connor Academy Public Charter School Website

**D**

## Doral Academy of Idaho – LEA #550

Julianna Turley, Administrator julian.turley@doralidaho.org
Grades: K- / Opened 2020
Focus/Program: Arts focused education
2511 W Cherry Lane, Meridian, ID 83642
208-901-8281
Contact the school for the application deadline Doral Academy of Idaho Website

**E**

## Elevate Academy – LEA #523

C. J. Watson, Principal cjwatson@elevate2c.org
Grades: 6-10 / Opened 2019
Focus/Program: Career Technical, Alternative
114 W. Chicago St., Caldwell, ID 83605 208-407-4963
Application deadline in mid-March Elevate Academy Website

**F**

## Falcon Ridge Public Charter School–#456

Christie Jorgensen, Administrator cjorgensen@falconridgecharter.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2005
Focus/Program: Develop a passion for learning and academic excellence
278 S Ten Mile Road, Kuna, ID 83634
208-922-9228
Applications deadline in mid-March Falcon Ridge Public Charter School Website

## Fern Waters Public Charter School – LEA #531

Kristin Foss, Administrator kristinfoss@fernwaters.org
Grades: 4-8 / Opened 2019
Focus/Program: Individualized instruction, multi-grade setting
103 Van Dreff Street, Salmon, ID 83467
208-742-1881
Application deadline in early April FernWaters Charter School Website

## Forge International School – LEA #528

Darci Stelzner, Head of School darci.stelzner@forgeintl.org
Grades: K-9 / Opened 2019
Focus/Program: International Baccalaureate
208 S. Hartley Lane, Middleton, ID 83644 208-244-0577
Application deadline in late February Forge International School Website

## Forrest M. Bird Charter School – LEA #487

Mary Jensen, Charter Administrator maryjensen@forrestbirdcharterschool.org
Jennifer Greve, Principal jennifergreve@forrestbirdcharterschool.org
Grades: 6-12 / Opened 2001
Focus/Program: Project-Based Learning
614 South Madison Avenue, Sandpoint, ID 83864
208-255-7771 - Middle School
208-265-9737 – High School
Application deadline late March Forrest M. Bird Charter School Website

## Future Public Charter School – LEA #499

Amanda Peterson, Director amanda@futurepublicschool.org
Grades: K-6 / Opened 2018
Focus/Program: STEM and future-focused teaching
511 E 43rd Street, Boise, ID 83714 208-854-3923
Application deadline in mid-February Future Public School Website

## G

## Gem Prep: Meridian – LEA #498

Liz Warburton, Principal lizwarburton@gemprep.org
Grades: K-10 / Opened 2018
Focus/Program: Blended, Personalized Learning 2750 E.
Gala Street, Meridian, ID 83642
208-917-9150
Application deadline early February Gem Prep: Meridian Website

## Gem Prep: Meridian North – LEA #549

Nanette Merrill, Principal nanettemerrill@gemprep.org
Grades: K-5 / Opened 2021
Focus/Program: Blended, Personalized Learning 5390
McDermott Road, Meridian, ID 83646
208-373-9950
Application deadline early February Gem Prep: Meridian North Website

## Gem Prep: Nampa – LEA # 796

Gerald Love, Principal geraldlove@gemprep.org
Grades: K-10 / Opened 2016
Focus/Program: Blended, Personalized Learning
310 W Iowa Ave, Nampa, ID 83686 208-468/2848
Application deadline early February Gem Prep: Nampa Website

## Gem Prep: Online – LEA# 534

Heather Mckenna heathermckenna@gemprep.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2004
Focus/Program: Online Education, Dual Credit
Resource Centers in Post Falls, Pocatello, and Meridian
Physical Address: 606 South Avenue, Deary, ID 83823 208-877-1513
Application deadline early March Gem Prep: Online Website

## Gem Prep: Pocatello – LEA #496

Jake Sorensen, Principal jakesorensen@gemprep.org
Grades: K-10 / Opened 2014
Focus/Program: Blended, Personalized Learning
4145 Yellowstone Ave, Chubbuck, ID 83202 208-238-1388
Application deadline early February Gem Prep: Pocatello Website

**H**

## Hayden Canyon Charter School – LEA #508

Cynthia Lamb, Administrator CLamb@HaydonCanyonCharter.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2020
Focus/Program: Expeditionary Learning
13782 N Government Way, Hayden, ID 83835
208-477-1812
Application deadline in mid-March Hayden Canyon Charter Website

## Heritage Academy – LEA #479

Christine Ivie, Superintendent civie@heritageacademy.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2011
Focus/Program: Schoolwide Enrichment Model and Social Emotional Learning
500 South Lincoln, Jerome, ID 83338 208-595-1617
Application deadline late March Heritage Academy Website

## Heritage Community Charter School–LEA #481

Shantell Mullanix, Interim Executive Director smullanix@heritagecommunitycharter.com
Grades: K-8 Opened 2011
Dual Language
1803 E. Ustick Ave., Caldwell, ID 83605 208-453-8070
Application deadline mid-March Heritage Community Charter School Website

# I

## Idaho Arts Charter School – LEA #795

Kendal Fleshman, Principal grades K-4 kendal.fleshman@idahoartscharter.org
Marie McGrath, Principal grades 5-12 marie.mcgrath@idahoartscharter.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2005
Arts Based, Focused Investigations
1220 5th Street N., Nampa, ID 83687 208-463-4324
Application deadline mid-March Idaho Arts Charter School Website

## Idaho Connects Online School (ICON) – LEA #469

Vickie McCullough, Administrator vickie.mccullough@iconschool.org
Grades: 6-12 / Opened 2009
Online Education including an alternative school
5680 E Franklin Road, Suite 200, Nampa, ID 83687 208-475-3093
Enrollment occurs daily. Contact the school for details.
Idaho Connects Online School Website

## Idaho Science & Technology Charter School – LEA #468

Tami Dortch – Director tami.dortch@istcharter.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2009
Science & Technology
21 N. 550 W., Blackfoot, ID 83221 208-785-7827
Application deadline early March Idaho Science & Technology Charter School Website

## Idaho Technical Career Academy – LEA # 489

Monti Pittman, Administrator mpittman@k12.com
Grades: 9-12 / Opened 2014
On-line Career Technical Education
1965 S. Eagle Road, Suite 150 Meridian 83642 208-917-2420
Applications accepted year round, with enrollment cut offs. Contact the school for specific details. Idaho Technical Career Academy Website

## Idaho Virtual Academy – LEA #452

Kelly Edginton, Head of School kedginton@k12.com
Kerri Brown, Principal grades K-5 kebrown@k12.com
Jenny Whelan, Principal grades 6-12 jwhelan@k12.com
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2002
Online Education including an alternative school
1965 S Eagle Road, Suite 190, Meridian, ID 83642 208-322-3559
Applications deadlines are based on the cohort schedule. Contact the school for details.
Idaho Virtual Academy Website

## Inspire Connections Academy – LEA #457

Karen Haines, Principal khaines@inspire.connectionsacademy.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2005
Online Education
600 N Steelhead Way, Suite 164, Boise, ID 83702
208-322-4002 Application deadline based on the semester dates. Contact the school for details.
Inspire Connections Academy Website

## Island Park Charter School – LEA #540

Connie Day, Director of Education islandparkelementary@gmail.com
Grades: K-4 / Opened 2020
Multi-age classrooms allowing for individual needs and different learning styles
4133 Shoshone Ave, Island Park, ID 83429
For enrollment information contact the school. Island Park Charter School Website

## iSucceed Virtual High School – LEA #466

Katie Allison, Executive Director kallison@isucceedvhs.net
Clayton Trehal, Principal ctrehal@isucceedvhs.net
Grades: 9-12 / Opened 2008
Online Education including an alternative school
6148 N, Discovery Way, Suite 120, Boise, ID 83713
208-375-3116
Enrollment occurs throughout the year for each quarter. Contact the school for details. iSucceed Virtual High School Website

**K**

## Kootenai Bridge Academy – LEA #470

Charles Kenna, Program Director kootenaibridgeacademy@gmail.com
Grades: 9-12 / Opened 2009
Online, Non-Traditional Students
606 River Street, Coeur d' Alene, ID 83814 208-930-4515
Enrollment occurs on the first Monday of each month, with a few exceptions. Contact the school for details.
Kootenai Bridge Academy Website

**L**

## Legacy Charter School – LEA #478

Seth Stallcop, Administrator admin@legacycharterschool.net
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2011
Harbor Method
4015 S. Legacy Way, Nampa, ID 83686
208-467-0947
Application deadline early April Legacy Charter School Website

## Liberty Charter School – LEA #458

Mark Wachsmuth, Principal mwachsmuth@libertycharterschool.com
Grades: K-12 / Opened 1999
Harbor Method
9955 Kris Jensen Lane, Nampa, ID 83686 208-466-7952
Application deadline early April Liberty Charter School Website

**M**

## Meridian Medical Arts Charter High School – Joint School District #2

Dawnetta Earnest, Principal earnest.dawnetta@westada.org
Grades: 9-12 / Opened 2003
Health Science Professions
1789 E Heritage Park Lane, Meridian, ID 83646 208-855-4075
Application deadline early-February Meridian Medical Arts Charter High School Website

## Meridian Technical Charter High School – Joint School District #2

Randy Yadon, Principal Randy.yadon@mtchs.org
Grades: 9-12 / Opened 1999
Technology, Engineering, College Preparatory
3800 N Locust Grove, Meridian, ID 83646 208-288-2928
Application deadline early-February Meridian Technical Charter High School Website

## Monticello Montessori School – LEA #474

Jeanne Johnson, Administrator administrator@monticellomontessori.com
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2010
Montessori education
4707 S. Sweetwater Way, Ammon, ID 83406
208-419-0742
Application deadline mid-April Monticello Montessori School Website

## Moscow Charter School – Moscow School District #281

Tony Bonuccelli, Principal tonyb@moscowcharterschool.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 1999
STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math
1723 East F Street, Moscow, ID 83843 208-883-3195
Application deadline late March Moscow Charter School Website

## MOSIACS Public School - LEA #544

Anthony Haskett, Administrator ahaskett@mosaicsps.org
Grades: K-4 / Opened 2020
STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math
3121 Lincoln Road, Caldwell, ID 8605 208-402-8899
Application deadline late March MOSIACS Public School Website

## N

### North Idaho STEM Charter Academy – LEA #480

Scott Thomson, Administrator sthomson@northidahostem.org
K-12 / Opened 2012
STEM Education
15633 N. Meyer Road, Rathdrum, Idaho 83858
208-687-8002
Application deadline late February North Idaho STEM Charter Academy Website

### North Star Charter School – LEA #493

Melissa Andersen, Secondary Administrator mandersen@northstarcharter.org
Shay Davis, Elementary Administrator sdavis@northstarcharter.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2003
School of Business, International Baccalaureate
839 N Linder Road, Eagle, ID 83616 208-939-9600
Application deadline early March North Star Charter School Website

### North Valley Academy – LEA #465

Jeff Klamm, Principal klammj@navapatriots.us
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2008
Core Knowledge with an emphasis on Patriotism
906 Main Street, Gooding, ID 83330 208-934-4567
Application deadline late March North Valley Academy Website

## P

### Palouse Prairie Charter School – LEA #472

Jeneille Branen, Executive Director jbranen@palouseprairieschool.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2009
Expeditionary Learning
406 Powers Ave, Moscow, ID 83843
208-882-3684
Application deadline late March Palouse Prairie Charter School Website

### Pathways in Education: Nampa – LEA #497

Sue Lux, Administrator susanlux@pathwaysedu.org
Grades: 9-12 / Opened 2017
Blended Customized Learning
124 Holly Street, Nampa, ID 83686 208-505-4800
Applications accepted year round, with enrollment cut offs. Contact the school for details.
Pathways in Education - Nampa Website

### Payette River Technical Academy – Emmett School District #221

Patrick Goff, Principal pgoff@pr2ta.com
Grades: 9-12 / Opened 2010
Career Technical Education
721 W 12, Suite A, Emmett, ID 83617 208-365-0985
Contact the school for enrollment details. Payette River Technical Academy Website

## Peace Valley Public Charter School – LEA #511

Andrew Ross, Administrator a.ross@boisewaldorf.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2018
Waldorf methods
1845 S Federal Way, Boise, ID 83705 208-205-8818
Application deadline in mid-April Peace Valley Charter School Website

## Pinecrest Academy of Idaho – LEA #553

Denise Schumacher, Principal Denise.Schumacher@pinecrestidaho.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2020
STEAM focus
209 5th Ave N, Twin Fall, ID 83843 208-944-2129
Application deadline late March Pinecrest Academy of Idaho Website

## Pocatello Community Charter School – LEA# 494

Michael Mendive, Administrator michael.mendive@pccs.k12.id.us
Grades: K-8 / Opened 1999
Expeditionary Learning
995 S Arthur Street, Pocatello, ID 83204 208-478-2522
Application deadline late February Pocatello Community Charter School Website

## Project Impact STEM Academy – LEA #513

Jill Hettinger, Administrator jhettinger@pistem.org
Grades: K-11 / Opened 2018
STEM, project based learning
2275 W Hubbard Road, Kuna, ID 83634
208-576-4811
Application deadline in late April Pi STEM Academy Website

**R**

## Richard McKenna Charter School – LEA #453 Dennis

Wilson, Director dwilson@rmckenna.org
Grades K-8 / Opened 2016
Montessori methods
1305 East 8th North, Mountain Home, ID 83647
208-580-2347
Application deadline late February
Grades 9-12 / Opened 2002
Online and Onsite Options
675 South Haskett Street, Mountain Home, ID 83647 208-580-2449
Application deadline varies by program. Contact the school for details
Richard McKenna Charter School Website

## RISE Charter School – Kimberly School District #414

Heid Child, Administrator hchild@kimberly.edu
Grades: 4-8 / Opened 2021
Personalized Learning
141 Center Street West, Kimberly, ID 83341 208-939-5400
Application deadline early April RISE Charter School Website

## Rolling Hills Charter School – LEA #454

Shane Pratt, Administrator spratt@rhpcs.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2005
Personalized Learning
8900 Horseshoe Bend Road, Boise, ID 83714 208-939-5400
Application deadline early April Rolling Hills Charter School Website

# S

## Sage International School of Boise – LEA #475

Kali Webb, Head of School kali.webb@sageinternationalschool.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2010
International Baccalaureate
457 E. Park Center Blvd., Boise ID 83706 208-343-7243
Application deadline end of February Sage International School Website

## Southeastern ID Technical Charter School - Preston School District #201

Rachel Madsen, Principal rachel.madsen@malad.us
Grades: 9-12, Opened 2013
Professional Technical
105 E 2nd S, Preston, ID 83263 208-852-0283
Call the school for the application deadline SEI Tec Charter School Website

## Syringa Mountain School – LEA# 488

Nigel Whittington, Director of School nwhittington@syringamountainschool.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2014
Waldorf Inspired Methods
4021 Glenbrook Dr., Hailey, ID 83333 208-806-2880
Application deadline mid-February Syringa Mountain School Website

# T

## Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School – LEA #461

Seth Boyle, Principal sboyle@tceagles.com
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2006
Harbor Method
1445 N Wood River Drive, Idaho Falls, ID 83401 208-552-0397
Application deadline mid-March Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School Website

## Thomas Jefferson Charter School – LEA#559

Jodi Endicott, Principal jendicott.tjcs@tjcharterschool.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2004
Harbor Method
1209 Adam Smith Avenue, Caldwell, ID 83605 208-455-8772
Application deadline late February Thomas Jefferson Charter School Website

## Treasure Valley Classical Academy – LEA #532

Stephen Lambert, Principal slambert@tvcacademy.org
Grades: K-7 / Opened 2019
Classical education
500 SW 3rd St., Fruitland, ID 83619
Application deadline in early April Treasure Valley Classical Academy Website

## U

### Upper Carmen Public Charter School – LEA #486

Becky Smith, Principal uppercarmencharterschool@gmail.com
Grades: K-3 / Opened 2005
Individualized instruction in multi-grade classes
508 Carmen Creek Road, Carmen, ID 83462
208-756-4590
Application deadline Upper Carmen Public Charter School

## V

### Victory Charter School – LEA #451

Marianne Saunders, Co-Administrator
Tera Luce, Co-Administrator admin@victorycharterschool.net
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2005
Harbor Method
9779 Kris Jensen Lane, Nampa, ID 83686 208-442-9400
Applications deadline early April Victory Charter School Website

### Village Leadership Academy – LEA #473

Josh Noteboom, Administrator joshnoteboom@thevillagecharterschool.org
Grades: K-8 / Opened 2011
Leadership School; cultivating critical thinkers
1747 N. Fairmeadow Dr., Boise, ID 83704 208-336-2000
Application deadline early April Village Leadership Academy Website

### Vision Charter School – LEA #463

Wendy Oldenkamp, Administrator wendyoldenkamp@visioncsd.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2007
Classical Education
19291 Ward Road, Caldwell, ID 83605 208-455-9220
Application deadline early March Vision Charter School Website

## W

### White Pine Charter School – LEA #464

Ron Cote, Director cotero@wpcscougars.org
Geoff Stubbs, Elementary Principal stubbsge@wpcscougars.org
Mark Olsen, Secondary Principal olsenma@wpcscougars.org
Grades: K-11/ Opened 2003
Core Knowledge, STEM
Elementary Site: 2959 John Adams Parkway,
Ammon, ID 83406 208-522-4432
STEM Academy:
2664 1st Street, Ammon, ID 83401
208-715-9772
Application deadline early April White Pine Charter School Website

## X

### Xavier Charter School – LEA #462

Gary Moon, Administrator gmoon@xaviercharter.org
Grades: K-12 / Opened 2007
Classical Education, Core Knowledge
1218 North College Road West, Twin Falls, ID 83301 208-734-3947
Application deadline late March Xavier Charter School Website

Note. Retrieved October 1, 2020, from sde.idaho.gov/school-choice/charter/files/Idaho-schools/List-of-Charter-Schools.pdf

# Appendix B

## Ethics Training Certification

ACRP

FOR LEARNING FOR LISTENING FOR LIFE

**Certificate of Completion**

*This is to certify that*

Andrea Zambukos

*has successfully completed*

**NO CREDITS - Ethics and Human Subject Protection: A Comprehensive Introduction**

**Date of completion:** Jan 19, 2020

**Jim Kremidas — Executive Director**

ACRP

The Association of Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP) provides contact hours for this educational activity.

# Appendix C

## IRB Approval

Dear Andrea,

The IRB has reviewed your protocol. You received a "Conditional Approval". Please make the corrections/changes listed below. You can access your protocol at https://nnu.submittable.com/submit. There you will see a drop box titled "Dashboard." In the drop list will be an option titled "My Submissions." Here you will find your protocol.

Here are the necessary changes, additions, and edits.

1) Change the stop date (date of completion) to 02-2023. It currently has 2022 as stop date.

2) Reword the consent for the interview. It doesn't read smoothly and it isn't as clear as it should be.

3) Please attach the principal permission (to contact teachers), once you have this in hand.

Once all of these corrections/changes have been made, please resubmit the protocol (by clicking the "mark as done and closed for editing" button) and send an email to me (jabankard@nnu.edu), your research adviser and the IRB (irb@nnu.edu) letting us know that the protocol has been edited and resubmitted.

Dear Andrea,

The IRB has reviewed your protocol. Your edits look good. You received "Full Approval". Congratulations, you may begin your research. If you have any questions, let me know.

Northwest Nazarene University

Joseph Bankard

IRB Member

623 S University Blvd

Nampa, ID 83686

## Appendix D

### Email for Principal Consent to Recruit Teachers

Good morning,

My name is Andrea Zambukos, and I am a doctoral student at Northwest Nazarene University. I am conducting a mixed methods study investigating the development of school culture in newly established Idaho charter schools.

I am looking for schools who would be willing to participate in my study by having teachers complete a 17-question survey designed to assess their perceptions of specific aspects of school culture. The survey should only take a short time to complete. I will also be seeking teachers for the second phase of my study, which will include an interview and potential follow-up contacts.

I am hoping you would be willing to allow me to contact your teachers to request their participation in this study. If you are willing to allow teachers at your school to participate, please respond to this email and indicate your interest. Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at azambukos@nnu.edu

Gratefully,

Andrea Zambukos
Doctoral Student
Northwest Nazarene University

## Appendix E

## Email for Teacher Recruitment

Good morning,

My name is Andrea Zambukos, and I am a doctoral student at Northwest Nazarene University. I am conducting a study related to the development of school culture in newly established charter schools. Your principal granted permission to contact you in order to request your participation in this study.

I am looking for teachers who would be willing to complete a 17-item survey designed to assess perceptions of specific aspects of school culture. The survey should only take a short time to complete. I will also be seeking a small number of teachers for the second phase of my study, which will include an interview and potential follow-up contacts.

If you are willing to participate in either or both phases of this study, click HERE (will be hyperlinked) to be directed to the initial consent form and survey. Following the survey, you will be given the option to indicate your interest in participating in the interview phase of the study. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at azambukos@nnu.edu

Sincerely,

Andrea Zambukos
Doctoral Student
Northwest Nazarene University

# Appendix F

## School Culture Triage Survey

*Figure 1*

### School Culture Triage Survey

SCORING: 1 = NEVER 2 = RARELY 3 = SOMETIMES 4 = OFTEN 5 = ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS

**Professional Collaboration**

1. Teachers and staff discuss instructional strategies and curriculum issues. — 1 2 3 4 5
2. Teachers and staff work together to develop the school schedule. — 1 2 3 4 5
3. Teachers and staff are involved in the decision-making process with regard to materials and resources. — 1 2 3 4 5
4. The student behavior code is a result of collaboration and consensus among staff. — 1 2 3 4 5
5. The planning and organizational time allotted to teachers and staff is used to plan as collective units/teams rather than as separate individuals. — 1 2 3 4 5

**Affiliative Collegiality**

1. Teachers and staff tell stories of celebrations that support the school's values. — 1 2 3 4 5
2. Teachers and staff visit/talk/meet outside of the school to enjoy each others' company. — 1 2 3 4 5
3. Our school reflects a true "sense" of community. — 1 2 3 4 5
4. Our school schedule reflects frequent communication opportunities for teachers and staff? — 1 2 3 4 5
5. Our school supports and appreciates the sharing of new ideas by members of our school. — 1 2 3 4 5
6. There is a rich and robust tradition of rituals and celebrations including holidays, special events and recognition of goal attainment. — 1 2 3 4 5

**Self-Determination/Efficacy**

1. When something is not working in our school, the faculty and staff predict and prevent rather than react and repair. — 1 2 3 4 5
2. School members are interdependent and value each other. — 1 2 3 4 5
3. Members of our school community seek alternatives to problems/issues rather than repeating what we have always done. — 1 2 3 4 5
4. Members of our school community seek to define the problem/issue rather than blame others. — 1 2 3 4 5
5. The school staff is empowered to make instructional decisions rather than waiting for supervisors to tell them what to do. — 1 2 3 4 5
6. People work here because they enjoy and choose to be here. — 1 2 3 4 5

**Scoring the School Culture Triage Survey**

**The lowest triage score is 17 and the highest score is 85. After using the triage questions in several program evaluations, our data suggest the following:**

**17–40** Critical and immediate attention necessary. Conduct a full-scale assessment of your school's culture and invest all available resources in repairing and healing the culture.

**41–59** Modifications and improvements are necessary. Begin with a more intense assessment of your school's culture to determine which area is in most need of improvement.

**60–75** Monitor and maintain making positive adjustments.

**76–85** Amazing! We have never had a score higher than 75!

Before engaging in an elaborate and extensive analysis of the school culture, this quick assessment of current status can assist in determining the wise allocation of time and resources.

PL December 2006 43

Note. From "The school leader's tool for assessing and improving school culture" by C. R. Wagner, 2006, *Principal Leadership, 7*(4), p.43. Used with permission (see Appendix G).

# Appendix G

## School Culture Triage Survey Permission

**Christopher Wagner** Sun, Apr 17, 11:45 AM (7 days ago)

to me

Hello Andrea,

Permission is granted to you for the use of the School Culture Triage Survey (SCTS). If you have any questions about the survey, please contact me. (270 791 3088 or on email) I will be attaching a copy of the SCTS, a tally form and scoring information, etc..

I wish you every success on your research.

Best regards,

Christopher

# Appendix H

## Informed Consent Form

### A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Andrea Zambukos**,** a doctoral student in the Department of Education at Northwest Nazarene University, is conducting a research study related to the development and promotion of positive culture in newly established charter schools. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a teacher at a newly established charter school in Idaho.

### B. PROCEDURES

1. By clicking to link to take the 17-item survey, you are giving your informed consent to voluntarily participate in the study.
2. Based upon overall school survey responses, you may be requested to answer a set of interview questions and engage in a discussion on your perception of the characteristics and practices of your school that contribute to its culture. This discussion will take place via an online platform, be audiotaped, and is expected to last approximately 60 minutes.
3. You will be asked to read a debriefing statement at the conclusion of the interview.

These procedures will take a total time of approximately 120 minutes.

### C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

1. Some of the discussion questions may make you uncomfortable or upset, but you are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
2. If you are uncomfortable answering any of the study questions, you may leave them blank.
3. Confidentiality: A risk of participation in research is a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study. All data from notes, surveys, audio recordings, and computer software will be kept in a locked file cabinet, password-protected computer or in password-protected files. In compliance with the Federal-Wide Assurance Code, data from this study will be kept for three years, after which all data from the study will be destroyed (45 CFR 46.117).
4. Only the primary researcher and the research supervisor will be privy to data from this study. As researchers, both parties are bound to keep data as secure and confidential as possible.

### D. BENEFITS

There will be no direct, personal benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information you provide may help educators to better understand the factors contributing to school culture, which will enhance the school environment to be a place of positive staff and student relationships.

**E. PAYMENTS**
There are no payments for participating in this study.

**F. QUESTIONS**
If you have questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with the researcher. Andrea Zambukos can be contacted via email at azambukos@nnu.edu or phone at 208-867-0099. You may also contact Dr. Heidi Curtis, Professor at Northwest Nazarene University, via email at hcurtis@nnu.edu, telephone at 208-467-8250.

Should you feel distressed in any way due to participation in this study, you may contact your health care provider or find mental health resources by visiting https://www.rtor.org/directory/mental-health-resources-in-idaho/

**G. CONSENT**
You may print a copy of this consent form to retain for your records.

**PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY.** You are free to decline to be in this study or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will not influence your current position or present or future status as a student at Northwest Nazarene University.

***By clicking on the survey link HERE, I acknowledge reading and understanding the informed consent form and give my consent to participate in this study:***

**THE NORTHWEST NAZARENE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD HAS REVIEWED THIS PROJECT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH.**

# Appendix I

## Interview Consent

*By clicking the link HERE and completing the following form, I acknowledge reading and understanding the informed consent form and give my consent to participate in the study interview. By clicking the link and completing the form, I further consent to have the study interview audio recorded and my direct quotes used.*

Interview Participant Form

Name:

School:

Phone number:

Email:

## Appendix J

## Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- Describe what you see upon entering your school building. (What is the physical layout?)
- Describe the symbols/logos prominent in your school building. What do they represent?
- Talk about your school's daily schedule for staff. Why was the schedule set up this way?
- Describe the dress code for staff. Why were these expectations articulated?
- How are staff made aware of expected behavior? Are there certain expectations that the principal emphasizes more than others?
- If staff do not meet expectations, what are the consequences?
- How do staff access and interact with the principal?
- How are building decisions made? Discuss the process and who is involved.
- How are conflicts among staff addressed?
- Discuss teacher collaboration. Is that a priority in your building? If so, why? How is it built into the schedule?
- Describe staff interactions outside of the school day.
- How are new ideas received among staff?
- How are new ideas received by the principal?
- How does the principal communicate with staff?
- Describe some of the most significant traditions in your school.

## Appendix K

## Debriefing Form

Thank you for participating in my study. Please read the important information below and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Purpose of the Study:

I previously informed you that the purpose of the study was to explore the development and promotion of positive culture in newly established charter schools. The goal of my research is to identify common characteristics and practices promoting the development of positive school culture.

I realize that some of the questions asked may have provoked negative emotional reactions. As a researcher, I do not provide mental health services and I will not be following up with you after the study. However, if needed you may contact your health care provider or find mental health resources by visiting https://www.rtor.org/directory/mental-health-resources-in-idaho/.

Confidentiality:

A risk of participation in research is a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study. All data from notes, surveys, audio recordings, and computer software will be kept in a locked file cabinet, password-protected computer or in password-protected files. In compliance with the Federal-Wide Assurance Code, data from this study will be kept for three years, after which all data from the study will be destroyed (45 CFR 46.117).

Final Report:

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report of this study (or a summary of the findings) when it is completed, please feel free to contact me.

Contact Information:

If you have questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact Andrea Zambukos at azambukos@nnu.edu or 208-867-0099.

*****Please keep a copy of this form for future reference. Once again, thank you for your participation in this study!*****