Local and Global Capacity Building for a Sustainable School Community

Partnership: Implications for Policy and Practice

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School-community partnerships have an extensive history and a promising future. Strong partnerships empower both the school and the community, but even more important, they engage and enlighten the students. The result, for the students, is a powerful combination of mentors and resources which, without such partnership, would otherwise have been difficult, if not impossible, to attain. While there are many different types of partnerships and varying degrees of commitment, the best partnerships stand apart from the rest due to their ability to "create capacity" or to improve many facets of the school, such as awareness, effectiveness, resource pools, visibility, and sustainability. With so many different types of school-community partnerships to emulate, it is becoming increasingly difficult for educators, businesses, community leaders, and parents to determine which partnership to focus on, let alone how to achieve similar results.

Although many school-community partnerships have proven to be successful, one partnership, in particular, adheres strongly to the core values which school-community partnership experts have identified as imperative for success. Through the examination of one particular school-community partnership, the Georgia Project, one can perceive a template for other school-community partnerships to follow. The Georgia Project addresses the needs of an ever-growing population of students who speak Spanish as their primary language by sponsoring bilingual teachers who can help students to assimilate while respecting cultural differences. The community is united in a common purpose, and the partnership even offers professional opportunities to local and future teachers to meet their needs as well.

By surveying a statistically significant number of participants in the Georgia Project about the project's history, current process, and future plans, an accessible roadmap for other school-community partnerships becomes apparent. This critical, qualitative case study provides an in-depth examination of how the Georgia Project was established and the various manners in which the partnership has sustained itself over time. It also describes the specific features of the Georgia Project that have been noted by other researchers as qualities of successful school-community partnerships. Finally, it addresses how this particular partnership has institutionalized itself in terms of creating strategies to build capacity in the project.

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of public education, one of the major goals of education has always been to improve student performance. As problems arose that impeded the goal of improvement, so also followed the development of strategies to remove such impediments. For instance, one of the major factors that have affected education has been poverty. Impoverished citizens have had difficulty receiving quality education in the United States. Recognizing the correlation between poverty and poor education, the United States Government has attempted to use various strategies to fight against poverty throughout the history of education. One of those strategies has been school and community partnerships. School and community partnerships provide new resources and fresh ideas to the overburdened school, often resulting in student empowerment. In fact, one of the driving forces that guide school and community partnerships was also an important principle during the founding of public education—the "common man" should be educated. Horace Mann, the former secretary of education of Massachusetts, established the necessity of education for more than just the elite (Cremin, 1957). However, in order to educate the masses, more resources

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needed to be allocated to education. School and community partnerships became an approach for struggling schools to fill the resource gap. This approach has been considered one of the most effective avenues in improving student achievement. However, each community has implemented different approaches when connecting with a school. According to the literature, successful community and school partnerships have their own strategies for success. Specifically, this study examines a successful school community partnership to determine strategies used to build capacity for sustainability.

The Georgia Project was established in 1996 ("The Georgia Project," 2006) to address school and community issues that aroused from an influx of Hispanic immigrant families. They came to Whitefield County to work primarily in the carpet industry. In fact, the Whitfield County communities' Spanish-speaking population increased from 30% to 80% in ten years. As a result, the community and school district needed to be proactive in helping assimilate the children and families. In an effort to address the changing demographics of Whitefield County, the Georgia Project implemented local, international, and professional programs to improve the education of all children in the school district. This study explores the multifaceted approaches used to develop and implement the school community partnership in Georgia. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How did the Georgia Project evolve?

2. How did the school community partnership in Georgia build local and international capacity for sustainability?

1.1   LIMITATIONS OF THE CASE STUDY

The definition terms such as "capacity building," "partnerships," "community," "school," and "community partnerships" are specific to this study. The demographics are unique to Whitefield County in Georgia; therefore, the results of this study may not be generalizable to other communities across the United States.

2.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To better understand school-community partnership, the review of the literature will critically examine the history of school community partnership, components of a school community partnership, communities, partnerships, and key features of a school community partnership, capacity building, cultural competency, and conceptual framework.

2.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Since its inception and constitutional approval, the goal of public education has been to create employment opportunities for all citizens. Beginning with the Massachusetts colonies, our educational system continues to suffer from poverty and educational dilemmas that have led communities and schools to devise strategies which would help learners to achieve and provide education for all. Community and school

partnerships have emerged as a strategy to provide help to schools and to promote greater citizen involvement in the American educational system.

This strategy was initially implemented by Horace Mann, Massachusetts Secretary of Education from 1837 to 1848, to involve community members in the educational system for the purpose of Americanizing and educating the free man (Cremin, 1957). Mann realized that if only one class of people continued to become educated while the "common man" did not, American industry and the economy would suffer. In the 1840s, students attending schools were from affluent families who paid private tuition, while students who could not afford private schools attended "charity schools" established for impoverished students.

During this period, Massachusetts legislators, and, in particular, the Massachusetts Secretary of Education, discussed the concept of "common schools"—the new term for the schools that Mann and the Massachusetts state legislature would eventually form. These schools were the equivalent of what the present day educational system terms "elementary schools." Mann proposed that schools should not be for the "select few" but "universal." His goal was to work with multiple communities in order to establish common schools throughout the country. Mann believed that the United States government should "support all families [and provide opportunity] for children to study in 'common schools'" (Graham, 2005, p.13). He also advocated that funding for these schools be provided by property taxes. Mann believed that the common schools

would help stabilize the poverty problem in the United States. Cremin (1957) suggests that Mann assumed there would be less poverty and crime as a result of educating more people within the country. As a result, community and school partnerships became one of the strategies for the government's fight against poverty.

The aggressive promotion of education throughout the community was championed in the revolutionary period by Thomas Jefferson who viewed free public education as the key to building and preserving liberties won during the war of independence. Although Jefferson succeeded only in securing legislature and other funding to establish the University of Virginia, as Loder (2006) points out, "Jefferson was convinced that public schools would play an indispensable role in the newly created U.S. republic by educating the populace and, more important, the leadership to become competent, active, and engaged participants in the American democracy" (p.30).

Jefferson's focus was to decrease poverty by establishing communities that would work together with schools for the economic and political success of the United States. Furthermore, the emphasis was also on collective community action, thus giving rise to local control of schools which has become the hallmark of U.S. education.

Moving from the 19th century to the 20th century, the common school movement continued in Massachusetts, and the relationship that had formed between the government and communities became more apparent with the influx of new citizens to

the United States. New immigrants meant a continued need for educational access. The numbers of the underprivileged immigrants who would need education were staggering. Graham (2001) suggests that "half of the U.S population lived in communities of 2,500 or more, and three-quarters of the immigrant population resided in cities" (p. 14). The government began to look at various ways to address community and school partnerships in the context of whom to approach, which organizations had the most influence in the community, and what strategies would have the most impact in helping people participate in schools and communities.

Political leaders worked with churches to improve the schools in their communities, and parental involvement in schools was encouraged by churches, synagogues, and neighborhood meetings (Button, 1989; Graham, 2005; Pulliam, 2003). Areas in the northeast, such as New York and Boston, were flooded with immigrants and offered significant challenges to political leaders attempting to work with members of the community. The difficulty of communicating and establishing networks in order for schools to function became overwhelming. The various newspapers were written in the vernacular of the homeland of a particular community. Churches seemed to be the only medium that could bridge the gap between all citizens (Button, 1989; Gaither, 2003).

Although the success of the church did make an impact on the collaboration and partnerships between schools and communities through clergymen speaking to their

congregations, state legislators wanted to have more of an influence by reaching out to other key community leaders, such as local businessmen and neighborhood leaders. In addition to reaching the community and schools, the government officials wanted to decrease poverty, and they believed that education would be the key.

As the 20th century continued, schools became congested with the influx of immigrants, and the government started to institute various programs to improve and expand education (Button, 1989; Gaither, 2003; Graham, 2005; Pulliam, 2003; Rippa, 1997). This expansion in education meant that schools were mandated to work on reforms to promote achievement among students. One mechanism was through community and school partnerships. As the new era of schools commenced, community and school partnerships evolved in the 20th century with higher education institutions partnering with high schools. High schools were historically connected with colleges and traditionally referred to as "academies" (Graham, 2005).

Because of the decline in college applicants, presidents of universities developed affiliations with school communities to improve high schools. In the earlier days, problems were significant as administrators noticed that less than 5% of students graduated from high school. Therefore, high schools instituted alliances with communities and built partnerships with institutions like Harvard College. President Charles William Eliot of Harvard began to address the high school dropout issues with organizations such as The National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education

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and National Education Association (Pulliam, 2003; Rippa, 1997). These organizations helped build programs to decrease the attrition rates in high schools. In 1918 the National Educational Association created a report called the "Seven Cardinal Principles" which addressed the debate between schools and daily life (*Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, 1918). This approach was not entirely academic in nature. It addressed issues, such as ethics and civic engagement, rather than focusing on academic content, such as math, science, and English.

In 1929, the Great Depression hit. The country began to slump economically, and poverty became a major concern for politicians, schools, and communities. Again, the government sought strategies that would address community and school partnerships. As the depression continued, the United States legislators believed that the key strategy to help communities and schools flourish was through community-school partnerships (Pulliam, 2003). The government approached the struggling educational system, and the focus of the government was again geared toward tackling poverty through education. School and community partnerships began to receive funding from outside sources, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, established in 1930, and The Pew Charitable Trusts, established in 1948 ("Pew Charitable Trust," 2006; "W.K. Kellogg Foundation," 2006). These external foundations helped communities and gave leverage for the organization of school and community partnerships. This leverage included funding, resources, and help from other organizations.

During the 1940s, the industrial age continued to develop. As the population continued to grow, the need for public schools continued to increase; in order for individuals to achieve or sustain high-quality living within mills and factories, they had to be literate (Rippa, 1997). Political leaders worked with churches by providing resources to improve the schools in their communities and encouraged parental involvement through media, such as churches, synagogues, and neighborhood meetings (Button, 1989; Graham, 2005; Pulliam, 2003). However, regardless of the community involvement and external resources, poverty continued to be a factor in education.

As schools approached the middle of the 20th century, educational philosophers, such as John Dewey (1938), continued to emphasize the importance of community and school partnerships. Educational philosophers and state legislators believed that in order for schools to fully reach their potential and become successful, they would have to become the center of communities, and partnerships with businesses would have to be established if the government was going to be successful in improving the nation's educational system (Blank, 2003; Dewey, 1938, 1966).

Old Constitution and unconstitutional practices became targets of the courts and legislatures in the mid 20th century. Landmark cases brought about significant changes in various communities in the South and the North. In 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education* case changed how minority communities worked with the

government for educational improvement (Korchnak, 2002; Underwood, 2006). Although the government enforced court orders and subsequent laws for schools to desegregate and ordered communities to work together for the improvement of students, racial discrimination in the form of lingering Jim Crow laws and de facto of school segregation affected African-American communities in the southern portion of the United States and elsewhere.

Graham (2005) suggests:

When schooling was seen as primarily serving the needs of the society to prepare citizens, few whites wished to spend much of their limited funds on schooling for their black neighbors, who, despite the post-Civil War amendments to the U.S. Constitution, still did not enjoy full rights as citizens (p.20).

During this time, black communities created their own affiliations--educating minority students through the development of black schools and partnerships with historically black universities, thus improving the education of African-Americans in the southern United States. All schools in the United States turned their attention to the demands for desegregation and providing access to all students. Interestingly, seven of the southern states did not want to desegregate and forbade black and white students from attending the same school. The *Brown v. Board of Education* case declared segregation be prohibited in schools, and the government

continued to push forward in its attempts to build partnerships with communities to improve schools (Button, 1989; Graham, 2005; Korchnak, 2002; Pulliam, 2003; Rippa, 1997; Underwood, 2006).

Throughout the 20th century, community and school partnerships were still formed district by district. It was not until 1965, with the signing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) by President Lyndon Johnson, that Title I funding was made available for children from low income housing. This program provided new opportunities and forced many local agencies to work with schools to provide children with services that would help alleviate the disparity in resources for low socioeconomic families (Graham, 2005; Pulliam, 2003; Rippa, 1997). The ESEA provided financial support for programs that would help improve student learning. This act ensured that federal funding was provided to schools with the most needs. Because of the ESEA, programs, such as head start, were founded. This program is, to this day, the longest running national readiness program in the United States.

In the late 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, schools and communities focused on achievement and accountability. The United States government began to look at how all students could advance and become involved in science and mathematics. A committee was formed to look at the state of the American educational system. "The National Commission," Brewer (1999) notes, "reported its findings to the Secretary of Education on April 26, 1983, in an open letter to the

American people entitled, "*A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*" (p.1). The purpose of this report was to give the government and the nation a view of the problems in the American educational system. This report sparked immediate focus on the improvement of the American educational system. It also specifically confronted the issues of content, expectations, time, and teachers' instructional habits in the United States. At the end of the report, recommendations were made on how to improve and strengthen the American educational system.

However, the recommendations were short lived as a new presidential administration changed the focus of education. At the end of the 20th century, Goals 2000, created by the Bush Administration, focused on eight goals which the American educational system must attain. While each goal in Goals 2000 focused on the improvement of schools throughout the nation, the eighth goal focused specifically on the improvement of community and school partnerships. Brewer (1999) suggests that "every school will promote partnerships to increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (p.10). The government believed that schools should no longer focus only on students succeeding on their own, but that there should be collaboration with the community to affect the students' environment in order to promote academic achievement. The Goals 2000 framework gave the government a way to assist local schools and communities in helping with the improvement of student learning. Although, in the beginning, Goals

2000 was not well accepted by local state agencies, this initiative began to push schools and communities toward a discussion about student achievement that included parents and organizations.

By the 21st century, community and school partnerships were not a well-established concept. Because of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which placed tremendous pressure on schools for student achievement, schools are now requiring parental involvement and organizational input in order to ensure student success. Presently, the NCLB has "mandated the development of school-community partnerships in Title I schools" (Bryan, 2005, p.220). This mandate is due to the enormous amount of accountability placed on instructors, teachers, principals, and all other members in the school system for student achievement. The NCLB has forced schools to look at other resources to encourage academic advancement. District-wide initiatives include school and community partnerships, as well as state and local efforts. For example, in the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPELS), standard number six indicates the importance of "collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources" (Association of California School Administrators, 2005). The example of California has set a precedent for national requirements by the federal government to enforce these standards as a part of teacher and administrator training.

As is shown by the extensive history of community and school partnerships, collaboration between communities and schools is not a new idea. The history of community and school partnerships has been a positive venture for the government, school, and community. The partnerships have also attempted to solve the issue of poverty and can be prompted by many different circumstances to address various issues.

2.2   THE COMPONENTS OF A SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

In a school and community partnership, there are a number of components that are necessary for the partnership to be successful. The partnership must include agreements between the following: 1. the school and the community, 2. the community and businesses, 3. the school and businesses, and 4. the students and families involved in the partnership and the school, community, and local business. As schools continue to make progress toward student achievement, the goal of k-12 schools should be to create relationships that will help learners perform at higher levels in critical thinking, testing, and state requirements. Rumberger, W. and his colleagues suggest that families and communities affect student achievement tremendously. Their findings illustrate a shift in the understanding of student short-term success as well as long-term progression (Rumberger et al., 1990). In order to offer an in-depth discussion of the

short-and long-term implications, several key terms must be defined for clarity and context.

2.2.1   COMMUNITY

Redding (2001) suggests that "'community' is a term that is much used and little defined" (p.1). Educational philosophers use this term loosely without interpreting the context of communities in the educational system. At times, there seems to be confusion among schools concerning the definition of "community," and as a result, school and community partnerships have been misinterpreted. Therefore, the meaning of a "community" can be unclear, especially in the context of education. Redding (2001) states that a "school community is portrayed as: (a) inclusive of families of students and some elements of the community beyond the school doors, and (b) operating on the basis of shared values, trust, expectations, and obligations rather than tasks, rules, and hierarchies" (p.1). Within this context, there are two types of communities: (a) a community that is established among the faculty and staff of an organization which is also known as a learning community (Sergiovanni, 1994); and (b) a community which is inclusive--that involves all members in a school including parents, teachers, community members, and local organizations--that publicly engages all members involved (Reform, 1998). Although these two definitions are usually interchanged, they have two different meanings. The first discusses community in the context of internal school

development where administrators work with teachers, janitors, and all other members who are part of the school's day-to-day operation to improve student learning in a cohesive manner. The latter is an encompassing development that includes all members in and out of the school system who help in the development of children. Once these differentiations are clear, one can begin to understand the context of the community in school and community partnerships.

For communities to be involved in schools, there are different types of involvements and connections that schools attempt to make. According to Delgado-Gaitan (2001), "community" is defined as parents, students, and any outside organization that helps to encourage students to achieve and succeed at any capacity. Schools that establish communities within and outside the school doors are shown to have increased student performance in all academic areas. These communities view themselves as resources that school systems can use to their advantage and work with in order to improve on areas of weakness. For example, if a school cannot afford to fund a particular stadium, a community may decide to help in funding the stadium. Another example might be the case of an instructor who is struggling to reach a child. In this case, parent-teacher collaboration can help in turning that child around, encouraging better performance. In some instances, community and school partnerships are defined solely through parental involvement. However, Sheldon and Voorhis (2004) suggest that this engagement takes more than parental involvement. The components include a

wide variety of community members, such as local organizations, local businesses, and school organizations that can help push student achievement.

2.2.2   PARTNERSHIPS

"Partnership" is a legal term defined as "an association of two or more people who agree to share in the profits and losses of a business venture" ("The Lectic Law Library," 2006). Schools and communities depend on partnerships to function and become successful. The term "partnership" tends to have multiple interpretations in the context of school and community functions. In certain cases, what schools define as a "partnership" can be called a "parasitic relationship." Schools attempt to accomplish their goals by using the community's resources and the community does not always gain in the interchange. The legal context of a partnership is usually a binding contract between two parties. However, in the context of schools and the community, there are no written contracts, although, in some cases, there are verbal agreements. It is assumed, at times, that if one group contributes, then the other group will contribute as well. This, however, is not always the case. For example, a school may need funding to implement a program for a particular community, and the school board may insist upon raising taxes for that particular program. The community may not have the

resources or may not want to contribute in this fashion. Thus, only one group potentially benefits from this type of partnership.

The term "partnership" is a term that at times is assumed but not defined. Dunlap and Alva (1999) suggest that "partnerships can only grow when they are based on mutual trust and respect for the other's values, perspectives and experiences" (p.124). The common focus of a partnership is for two parties to be involved with each other in gaining and contributing to a specific cause. When schools and communities engage themselves in partnerships, there are specific types of involvements that should take place in order for a partnership to become successful. These involvements exist on multiple levels between schools and communities. Simmons and Epstein (2001) propose that there are six types of involvements that a school should have in order for it to be in a partnership with the community: 1. parent collaboration; 2. communication; 3. volunteerment; 4. learning at home; 5. decision-making; and 6. shared responsibility (Simon, 2001). These six complex involvements play an important role in the establishment or framework of school and community partnerships.

Although parental involvement is considered the highest priority in community and school partnerships, authors, such as Carmen and Dunlap (1999) imply that it takes more then just parental involvement. A school should reach out for multiple partnerships to become successful and effective in today's society. And the government reinforces this same idea in National Goals 2000 which suggests that the involvement of

parents should be one of the schools' priorities in fighting high dropout rates and other problems but not the only factor in helping students (Brewer, 1999; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; J.L. Epstein, 1991; Simon, 2001). Many authors debate which affiliation works best for a particular community and school partnership. However, one thing is clear: In order for a school to succeed, it is important that there be some sort of involvement on the part of the members of the community, the school, or the private business sector (Baker, 2001; Blank, 2003; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Epstein, 1991, 1992; Farley, 2005; R. Jones, 2001; Redding, 2001; Simon, 2001).

With the development of communities and organizations, one of the growing partners of the school district has been the private sector. The private sector is beginning to exceed in its endeavor to help schools save money and use funding resources for students in need. For example, this can be seen in the partnership between Dade County, Florida schools, and a company that builds satellites. The partnership between the Dade County Schools and the satellite company "has saved the school district $7 million and $15 million each time three small satellites are put into office parks" (David, 1992, p.2). This partnership has given the school and the community members other ways of addressing student needs throughout the community. The process and the purpose of this partnership have been to help students achieve academically for better opportunities in society.

As one continues to look deeper into partnerships between schools and communities, it is apparent that the development of student achievement in academic settings is based upon the participation of the community. Partnerships among communities and schools have helped to promote achievement, empowerment, and an increase in student long-term development. Partnerships have also helped communities identify and set expectations for success. Dunlap and Alva (1999) state that "collaborating with parents and communities, while capitalizing on their resources and strengths, promotes social and emotional growth for children" (p.124) and helps them to become empowered to believe that they can and will succeed in their community.

2.2.3   FEATURES OF A SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Successful school and community partnerships have certain characteristics in common regardless of the context (rural, suburban, or inner city). These features include the following: (a) various involvements with families, business, and community leaders; (b) empowerment that produces examples and community encouragement; (c) collaboration among teachers and administrators who build a community within the school; (d) funding from the federal government and private organizations that contribute directly to schools; (e) partnerships that foster academic achievement; (f) state requirements for school administrators to understand partnerships; (g) shared responsibility from all members; (h) partnerships that provide family and community

services; (i) written policies describing the partnership and the responsibility of all members; and (j) positive attitude of school personnel toward partnerships.

Though partnerships include various involvements within schools, the most important involvement, according to the literature, is parental involvement (Baker, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Epstein, 1991, 1992 ; Epstein, Conners, 1994; Epstein 1995; Hiatt- Michael, 2001; Jones, 2001). Without the cooperation of parents, schools experience difficulty establishing external connections to the community. When there is no parental involvement, it becomes difficult for schools to gain help from the outside community. Although partnerships are not impossible without parents, the task becomes very difficult to help students connect and stay involved in school endeavors. This problem is seen clearly in low socioeconomic communities and challenges school administrators to help learners in the community (Bryan, 2005; Lareau, 1987, 1996).

Schools may not have parents involved in partnerships for multiple reasons that are out of the schools' control. For example, parents may not have the time due to busy work schedules. Another reason may be that a family is coping with issues like drug addiction, alcoholism, or multiple problems that influence their lives more than a school involvement. However, this does not mean that schools cannot push forward in establishing community and school partnerships. The challenges become greater without parental involvement. If parents are not aware of community and school partnerships, that is one issue: If, however, parents do not want to participate, then

schools are presented with a different issue that requires alternatives. Some authors (Conners, 1994; Cunningham, 2002, April; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Epstein, 1994) suggest that there are other involvements, such as business involvements from the private sector, decision-making involvements, and other engaging activities that could influence and have a major impact on the organizational structure of schools and the development of academic achievement in student performance.

The private sector is beginning to take the initiative, making a major difference by establishing partnerships for the purpose of improving schools. For example, the Mall of Americas in Minnesota has formed a partnership with specific school districts to improve student services. David (1992) states that there are "partnerships between the public schools and the private sectors that may alleviate some of the pressures on school districts, enabling them to continue to provide vital services and infrastructure" (p.1). The alliance has provided school districts with the opportunity to tap into other resources that will help in the success of schools throughout the country. Since the cost of education has increased, school districts must venture into the private sector for funding. This has provided school districts with the extra funding for computers, books, and other expenses that the community may be unable to afford.

Empowerment is a key component that school and community partnerships provide to families in the community. Delgado-Gaitan (2001) advises that "empowerment of individuals, families, and the Latino community at large evolves as

individuals emerge from isolation into connectedness" (p.5). Although Delgado-Gaitan was addressing a community with a large Latino population, the principal of empowerment applies to all students in communities throughout the world. The context of empowering communities to take the initiative in improving student achievement in the community helps establish partnerships and sustains partnerships for the long-term. When focusing on empowerment techniques, communities learn how to self-govern and organize themselves successfully. In this context, school and community partnerships that have empowered people are able to accomplish their goals quicker than communities that lack this quality. Delgado-Gaitan (2001) suggests that a community that is empowered teaches itself how to communicate, collaborate, identify major issues of concern, and organize ways of approaching how to be successful in its particular situation.

For example, in Carpinteria, California, the student population consists of Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students. The majority of Spanish-speaking students are the children of Latin American immigrants who speak Spanish at home and in the community. When schools want to communicate with these parents and address the issues in this community, they find the task challenging. As a response, one school decided to help this community form a voice in the school which is called the Committee of Latin American Parents (COPLA). This group worked with other organizations in the school to address the concerns of students and bring Latin

American influence into the schools (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001). This group was empowered by the school to participate and work with the different school organizations to address and help the school push forward in addressing the Latino community. This has not only helped the school but has also helped the Latinos in that community to grow and become a part of the community as a whole.

Features of a successful community and school partnership vary. When looking at features, such as collaboration among school personnel, collaboration among community members, and shared responsibility, these concepts could be labeled as internal points of a community and school partnership (Blank, 2003; Bryan, 2005; Epstein, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1994). These internal points are tools which enhance the overall goal of student achievement. For there to be a collective understanding, longevity, and sustainability within a school and community partnership, a collective direction among stakeholders should be agreed upon and established. As educational leaders address stakeholders in a community, internal features should be the first priority for establishing a community and school partnership.

The features described previously are variables that can be initiated by the school to attract the involvement of the community. For example, building a learning community within the school focuses on internal responsibility. Internal connections are the core of school and community partnerships (Epstein, 1995). Without the connection of these internal components, schools cannot reach out to the community. Barriers to

internal component placement can be: confusion about the mission of the partnership, not understanding the purpose of the community, not learning how a community would like to help, and not learning if the educational administrators are building capacity within the schools, the last which will be discussed at greater length below.

External issues, such as written agreements and written community expectations and involvements, are factors that are just as important as internal issues. However, they play different roles in the configuration of a successful community and school partnership (Comer, 1987; David, 1992; Epstein, 1995; Patty, 1999). Both internal and external partnerships are needed in the development of schools. When combined together they work to maintain sustainability, longevity, and consistency in a community. The importance of school and community partnerships is not only how the features function in a community but the results that these components produce which are community empowerment and academic achievement.

2.2.4   CAPACITY BUILDING

"Capacity Building" is defined by Barber (2005) as "changes in the way system leaders conceptualize problems, formulate corresponding strategies, and allocate resources" (p.32) within a framework for the overall function of an organization. In this context, a leader's function is to help the organization to continuously improve by the process of implementing programs that will sustain the long-term development of the

cooperation as a whole. As Lambert (2003) states, leaders should establish "features of high leadership capacity: broad-based, skillful participation; a shared vision; and develop norms of inquiry and collaboration; [that allow for] reflective practices; and improving student achievement" (p.1). By focusing on the features listed above, an organization leader can establish overall understanding throughout an organization.

Regarding the focus of a school district, the concept of capacity building may have various protocols that can be decided upon by the leadership organization. However, the final product of the implementation of programs, reforms, and mandates should establish a long-term development and build capacity within an organization. In the context of partnerships, this paradigm would have programs implemented into an organization that would create the correct amount of tools to maintain sustainability. This does not suggest that the leadership team only use tools from the organization for development and improvement. Instead, the use of outside resources might give all stakeholders a shared understanding and focus for long-term community development. This idea builds capacity throughout an organization and allows a cooperation to lead and maintain itself (Lambert, 2003).

As stated previously, the features of building capacity can be linked to an implementation process that includes groups and members processing information and programs incorporated into an organization for understanding and development. As individuals in the group begin to understand and incorporate different levels of

capacity, ownership and structure become the main initiatives, and collaboration is essentially integrated into the culture of the group.

The key to capacity building is connecting accountability to the overall structure of the organization through the organizational leader. If there is no accountability, then there is no capacity building. Capacity building is an approach to school reform that provides a framework within which school districts can identify goals and objectives in collaboration with faculty and administrative personnel and define strategies for achieving these goals and objectives. This approach stresses that the entire process is about learning, specifically improving student learning—what they know and are able to do with what they learned. It is also about motivation: motivating administrators who motivate, encourage, and support faculty, who in turn motivate, encourage, and support students. Moreover, it is about involving the community, beyond a parent-teacher-student association, in the life of the school. Finally, it is about nurturing success and sustaining it over time which means modifying it periodically based on assessment and other data obtained.

The process of capacity building has existed for nearly a half century. Educational leaders have integrated the capacity building framework with accountability to challenge school districts to initiate, implement, and sustain reform efforts. Considering the history of capacity building, it was not until 1965 that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provided funding specifically for

low-income and minority students, due to school districts ignoring poor children and withholding the same amount of money for children across districts. At the time, educational leaders attempted to find different avenues for compensating educational opportunities and partnerships that would benefit all students.

Following 1965, the ESEA was reauthorized in 1988 and focused on providing high quality instructional programs for all students. This process was completed through the internal and external involvement of community connections (Brewer, 1999). Again, in 1994, ESEA was reauthorized as "Improving America's Schools Act" (IASA), a performance-based accountability system designed to improve student achievement. This Act pressured schools and instructors to look to communities for other avenues of help in obtaining student achievement. Finally, in 2001, ESEA was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Unlike earlier authorization of ESEA, NCLB requires all children to take a standardized assessment. Test data are disaggregated by student subgroups: minorities, students in special education, and students with limited English proficiency.

This particular Act has been unprecedented. NCLB forced educational leaders to build capacity in their schools to increase students' ability to excel in school achievement with numerous reforms. This movement intended to improve the achievement of all students and challenge school districts to develop, implement, and sustain effective reform. The standards movement in schooling has encouraged school

districts and state departments of education to focus on "student outcomes" or what a student knows and is able to accomplish with what has been learned at the end of a particular course or sequence of courses. The resulting standards-based assessments are analyzed not only for "general results," but also consider information about racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, children living in poverty, students with special needs, students in early intervention programs, and any other category that may prove significant in guiding districts as they attempt to decide what all the assessment data mean and to use the information to improve student learning.

Current federal legislation in the form of NCLB is a reflection of, and an attempt to cure the ills besetting today's schools as school districts are increasingly overwhelmed by the pressures to improve the learning of an increasingly diverse population and simultaneously foster an inclusive environment in schools. Even though research has identified effective schools and practices, widespread and systematic implementation of the research results remains a complex and challenging endeavor. Because one size does not fit all, the successes of one district or a single school do not easily transfer to another. Educational leadership has worked to provide capacity building by attempting to sustain the overall structure of the school district. Whatever plan is being integrated into the school, the process of how it is implemented into the system is considered the capacity building process.

2.2.5 CAPACITY BUILDING IN A SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Community and educational partnerships are pathways for instructional leaders to build capacity among districts, schools, teachers, parents, and community partnerships. In today's society, schools have become the center of neighborhoods, and education has become the priority of schools. The one link that can bridge schools and communities is educational partnerships. When partnerships are established, students gain opportunities that give them tools to achieve academically and socially. In addition, student achievement in that community becomes the common goal for success. This goal benefits students within the community, and provides opportunities for families to become more aware of their civic engagement in neighborhoods (Epstein, 1995). Thus, schools and communities see partnerships as an educational opportunity that might supplement the structure of the educational system. When this foundation is established, the community may take ownership in establishing success for academic achievement and success for all students.

Communities and educational partnerships provide different approaches for school districts in building capacity in a neighborhood (Seeley, 1986). As communities continue to develop with organizations, there are resources and relationships which partnerships bring to local schools and districts, such as funding for tutors, academic

programs, corporate learning, and school volunteers (Seeley, 1986). Although schools have had effective practices identified, partnerships have not been explored by all communities. The reasons can stem from poverty to the school leaders' lack of knowledge regarding how to build these relationships.

When looking at effective educational partnerships, "the most effective partnerships are the ones which assist students to make the transition from school to the world of work" (School to Work, 1996, p.1). These partnerships consist of clear goals for students that should help learners achieve academically and benefit people in that particular neighborhood. Partnerships provide opportunities for schools to become involved with neighborhoods in ways they may not have had access to in the past. Private and public business organizations give students and communities access to resources and unlimited amounts of aid for improving underserved and poor areas. The purpose of these partnerships is to help individuals who come from underprivileged homes enjoy the opportunity to have experiences that would not have been available if there had not been assistance. Educational and community partnerships can foster student resilience and help bridge the gap between schools and families.

Some of the most challenging partnerships are in areas that serve urban schools with poor and minority students. These areas have such academic barriers and circumstantial problems that affect schools that most partnerships attempt to offer strategic patterns that help individuals change their negative patterns (Bryan, 2005).

One of the keys in capacity building through partnerships is the opportunity to break through cultural barriers in schools. The complexity of schools and the diverse population of students make it difficult for schools to succeed. When communities and schools work together, the opportunities to expose students and families to cultures outside of their own experiences become possible (Bryan, 2005).

Educational partnerships have attempted to help parents and students become involved in educational improvement. Like NCLB, previous reforms allowed parents to have more choices in decision-making and how students should be educated. Implementation of programs that provide the public with information is one of the goals of the new reforms on Capitol Hill. Another area in which the government has attempted to connect communities and schools is in Goals 2000. The government put in place Goals 2000 legislation which attempted to make educational partnerships the national goal for schools (Brewer, 1999; *Integrated Services Partnerships*, 1996; "School-To-Work," 1996). However, after this legislation was established, the government still found challenges in linking community involvement with schools in all levels of education.

As stated previously, the major components of successful partnerships are: funding, empowerment, shared responsibility, fostering of academic achievement, providing family services, connecting schools and communities, written agreements, personnel with positive attitudes, family involvement, community involvement, and

building capacity. These elements are produced in various forms from multiple community and school organizations. When comparing some of the major organizations according to the number of components used in some of the country's successful and well-known grassroots community partnerships, the variations become considerable. Tables 1 & 2 highlight a matrix of some of the major community and school partnership features that several organizations consider important. As the data show, each foundation has focused on specific features; however, no partnership covers them all. For example, organizations such as the MacDonald school and community partnership, Mall of America's school partnership, the satellite company in Dade County which formed a school and community partnership, and Adopt-a-School which utilized a business focus in helping schools to succeed through the process of financial support (David, 1992). Thus, these partnerships have private sector media that control the growth and the determination of what should be the focus of the particular partnerships.

As for organizations, such as Pew Charitable Trust, Kellogg Foundation, and America's Promise, they take more of a grassroots approach which would be likely to affect the entire community ("America's Promise," 2006; "Pew Charitable Trust," 2006; "W.K. Kellogg Foundation," 2006). These programs do not necessarily look exclusively at education but the community as a whole. Student achievement, in their context, is based on community self-improvement and revitalization of the whole community.

Student achievement is a factor but not necessarily the primary focus. These organizations would like for students to attend school and become efficient in learning. However, the emphasis is not necessarily on how well the learners perform in schools. For example, the foundations of the Carpinteria school and community partnership and the Georgia Project are based on community and student achievement (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; "The Georgia Project," 2006).

The purpose of these partnerships is to improve the community through the lens of student achievement. If we look closely at Table 2, the partnerships chosen have features, such as empowerment, shared responsibility, connecting school and community, positive attitude, and community involvement. However, areas of difference are funding, written agreement, partnerships that are geared towards school achievement, parental involvement, and capacity building. Some of the partnerships do not focus on parental involvement. Some students do not have involved parents for various reasons, such as an imprisoned parent or other unfortunate incidents that partnerships cannot control. Other areas, such as capacity building, are not a consideration for some partnerships due to the inability to sustain a program or put the correct individuals in place. This can be caused by insufficient funding or the organization has a lack of interest in continuing the program due to political reasons. Additionally, the lack of "organizational glue" to implement resources and put the

community in a position to be self-sustaining may be a reason (Elmore, 2000; Lutz, 1992).

Finally, at times, agreements are not in place to state the function or the role of the community, the school, and partnerships. As stated previously, stakeholders often assume these participants exist, but they are not well delineated; therefore, they fall apart when specific components are not in place. One such component is the establishment of an understanding of what both parties (communities and schools) would like to achieve. Another important component is a written agreement stating what each stakeholder will contribute to the partnership and in what capacity the members will serve. The process of community and school partnership leads to sustainability which promotes success. This can cause a long-term opportunity for growth in a school and community partnership. As partnerships continue, one of the goals is to create capacity and ensure distribution of resources. Lambert (2003) suggests that the process of capacity building can be the only opportunity for schools to maintain self-improvement and longevity throughout their organization. The process of capacity building will aid in understanding how a particular partnership is mapped for longevity and sustainability.

2.3   CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural competence is defined as "a set of cultural behaviors and attitudes integrated into the practice methods of a system, agency, or its professionals, that enables them to work effectively in cross cultural situations" (Administration of Aging, 2001, p.9). In the context of school and community partnerships, programs implemented in areas that have high multicultural and multilingual populations encounter the challenge of cultural competency. In our society, which is diverse in ethnicity, race, gender, and social class, individuals are "uneasy with the increasing emphasis and focus on culture and ethnicity, especially as it relates to ethnic minorities in this country" (Isaacs, 1991, p.5). For English Language Learners (ELL) in the United States, school districts encounter the issue of cultural competence in populations with high ELL learners. The function of instructors in populations with high non-English speakers becomes a challenge culturally and academically due to language and cultural misunderstandings (Minami, 2000). If a school district with a diverse population is considering improving student learning as well as sharpening instructors' pedagogy, the challenge in the implementation of any program in school districts with diverse populations is the issue of culture. In addition, school-community partnerships should systematically establish a process that will integrate its employees and community to understanding cultural awareness, cultural diversity, and cultural customs. As Cross et

al. (1989) suggests, in order for communities and populations to increase their understanding in improving the needs of a particular population, programs should become competent in building capacity to function in culturally integrating environments. Programs that were successful in multicultural populations made the necessary adjustments to increasing their understanding of disparate cultures and populations. Programs sponsored by the National Center for Cultural Competence of Georgetown University addressed the subject of cultural competence in the health field and made advancements in various populations (Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, 2006). In school and community partnerships that address student performance in non-English settings, the achievement of cultural competence becomes important in the development of administrators, instructors, communities, businesses, and community leaders. The goal of school community partnerships is to establish a sustainable program that will benefit all stakeholders in that particular area and create a cultural competent population that will improve partnerships among the community and schools.

2.4   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Future school leaders can build a better connection between schools and communities. Investigating what has already been accomplished should always be the

school leaders' first step. This review found ten central features (see Table 1) derived from the literature concerning school and community partnerships. While there are no recipes for building capacities in school and community partnerships, the researcher will look at the unique connections in a particular example, the Georgia Project, of a school and community partnership. The investigator will examine in depth the qualities of a community and school partnership. Capacities in schools have a better chance of succeeding as long as they can be sustained.

As stated in the literature about school and community partnerships, school and community programs will not have all of the features. Each community and school uses different resources and strategies based on their context and objective. To illustrate, the investigator has constructed a matrix which presents the qualities unique to these programs. In Table 2, the column headings list qualities identified for school and community partnerships reflected in the literature. The left column lists national, governmental, and local partnerships. The foundations that establish partnerships among schools and communities are The Kellogg Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust. School and community partnerships, such as Adopt-a-School and America's Promise are national partnerships. The Carpentaria, California Partnership, MacDonald Research Partnership, Mall of America Partnership, Dade County's Satellite Partnership, and the Georgia Project are local district and state community and school partnerships. As shown in the table, each check mark represents the quality that each

partnership and foundation has implemented into their organization. The following

case study will explore and give an in-depth examination of the qualities the Georgia

Project has implemented and sustained and how it has established capacity.

Table 1 Key Characteristics of Partnerships According to the Literature

Various Involvements (Parents, School Administrators, Business)	Hiatt-Michael (2001); Baker (2001); Delgado-Gaitan (2001); Dewey (1938); Dewey (1966); Wallace (1996); Blank (2003); Epstein (1991); Epstein (1992); Redding (2001); Simon & Epstein (2001); Mapp (2002); Reform (1998); Dunlap & Alva (2005); Delgado-Gaitan (1991); Farley (2005); Jones (2001); Lareau (1987); Mcintyre (2001); Seeley (1986); Voorhis (2004); Cunningham (2002); Hiatt-Michael (2001); Conners (1994)
Empowerment	Delgado-Gaitan (2001); Dewey (1938); Dewey (1966); Wallace (1996); Blank (2003); Simon & Epstein (2001); Reform (1998); Dunlap & Alva (2005); Comer (1987); Jones (2001); Mcintyre (2001)
Connecting Family and Schools	Hiatt-Michael (2006); Mcintyre (2001); Epstein (1995); Maria Teresa Piedra (2006); Negroni (2002); Seeley (1986); Voorhis (2004); Hiatt-Michael (2001);Coleman (1987)
Partnership between Teachers and Administrators	Sergiovanni (1994); Blank (2003); Administrators (2005) California professional Standards for educational leaders (2005); Reform (1998); Coalition for Community Schools (2005); Comer (1987)
Partnerships that Foster Academic Achievement	Bryan (2005); Dewey (1938); Comer (1987); Jones (2001); Mcintyre (2001); Seeley (1986); Voorhis (2004); Cunningham (2002); Hiatt-Michael (2001); David (1992)
State Requirements for School Personnel to Understand Partnerships	Administrators (2005) California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders; Blank (2003);
Shared Responsibility from all Members	Hiatt-Michael (2006); Jones (2001); Epstein (1995); Lareau (1987); Seeley (1986)
Provision of Family Services	Mcintyre (2001); Epstein (1995)
Funding (Federal & Private)	Brewer (1999); School to Work (1996); Integrated Service Partnerships (1996); America's Promise (2006); Reform (1998); Coalition for Community Schools (2005); Comer (1987); Negroni (2002); David (1992)
Written Agreement	Negroni (2002); Epstein (1995)
Examples of Partnerships	Richardson (1999); Conners (1994); David (1992)
Attitudes about Partnerships	Conners (1994)

Table 2 Community and School Partnership Features For Capacity Building

Programs	Parental Involvement	Community Involvement	Empowerment	Connecting School and Community	Funding	Partnerships that Foster Academic Achievement	Shared Responsibility	Provision of Family Services	Written Agreement	Positive Attitude
Carpentaria California Community Partnership	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Pew Charitable Trust	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Adopt-a-School		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
America's Promise	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Kellogg Foundation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Mac Donald Research Partnership		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Mall of America in Partnership School Districts		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Dade County's Satellite in Partnership with Businesses		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓

3.0   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the development and implementation that allowed the Georgia Project to build capacity. The collection of data was accomplished through various approaches. These approaches allowed the investigator to discover the true story of the Georgia Project through various layers. Areas that were investigated include school administrators, community members, Georgia Project members, and partners from institutions of higher learning who were interviewed to allow for in-depth analysis. The efficacy of this approach allowed the researcher to learn the functions of the project, explore how it was put together, and to closely examine the critical incidents that led to the creation of the organization. She choose participants that were essential for the development of the Georgia Project. This chapter describes the setting of the Georgia Project, instruments used in the interview process, the method used to determine the sample population and collection analysis of data.

3.1   CONTEXT

3.1.1   Setting

The headquarters of the Georgia Project is located in Whitfield County in a city called Dalton. This county is located in Georgia, near the Tennessee state line and has a population of 89,734 people. The average number of members per household is about three people. The average labor force in Whitfield County is estimated to be 45,704. The city of Dalton, located in Whitfield County, has a population of 37,912. Presently, the population of Whitfield County is 69% Caucasian, 28% Hispanic, and 3% African-American. In 1996, Hispanics made up 4% of the student enrollment. In 2007, Hispanics comprise 64% of the district's students. In 2007, both districts now have a student population of 80% Hispanic, and the rate is growing. As the Hispanic population increases in Whitefield County, the economy expands. Hispanics work primarily in two industries which dominate the economy of Whitfield County. The first industry is the carpet industry where 60% of all carpet in the world is made, and the second is the poultry business. The influx of Hispanics into these communities has been due to the rapid growth of these two industries. The Hispanic workers in Whitfield County are from various Latin American countries; however, the majority is from Mexico.

3.1.2 Participants

The Georgia Project is organized around a board of directors drawn from local business owners, physicians, state legislators, attorneys, a congressional representative, and former school administrators. The chairman and founder of the board, Mr. Erwin Mitchell, has been the driving force of this project since its inception. The sample population in this study was identified by Dr. JoAnne Schick, the Executive director of the Georgia Project. The Executive Director chose from a list of partners to identify the sample population for the investigator. Below is the list of interviewees chosen, identified, and interviewed by the investigator.

The interviewees of this case study were American teachers who attended the summer institute at the University of Monterrey, Mexico, along with instructors from that very institution. These were joined by an associate superintendent from the American local school district, the former superintendent of the school district and representative of the state legislature, the chairperson and board members of the Georgia Project, and professors and administrators from the partnering institutions: Dalton College, Baldwin College, and University of Monterrey, Mexico. Representing areas outside of academia were business owners and civic leaders as well as a local city administrator.

3.2   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What capacity building strategies were used by the Georgia Project to sustain a school and community partnership?

3.3   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following chart, Capacity Building Framework, contains embedded questions that were considered by the researcher to expand on the guided research questions. The Framework illustrated in Table 3 gives an overview and scope of the case study (this chart begins on the following page.)

Table 3 Capacity Building Framework

Questions	Methodology	Source	Connection to Conceptual Framework
1. How did the Georgia Project begin?	Conduct Interviews based on protocol for this study, data analysis, and review newspaper accounts	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Understanding the context of the case
2. Why did the Georgia Project get started?	Conduct Interviews based on protocol for this study	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Understanding the context of the case
3. What were the experiences of this community partnership as it unfolded?	Conduct Interviews based on protocol for this study	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Discovering some of the challenges and context of the partnership
4. What activities contributed to the town providing support for this program?	Conduct Interviews based on the protocol of this study. Request documentation analysis	Executive Director identifies the sample population. Collection of Documentation Evidence	Learning how this program contributes to the town's success
5. What critical incidences inspired key stakeholders to explore a school community partnership?	Conduct Interviews based on protocols for this study	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Discovering the critical events that began the program
6. What elements or activities were critical in ensuring the long-term success of the partnership?	Conduct Interviews based on protocols for this study	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Identifying the strategies that sustain this project and make it different from other partnerships
7. How did the school and community stakeholders build their capacity to implement and sustain the partnership?	Conduct Interviews based on protocol for this study	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Learning the community context of the GA Project
8. What has been put in place for this program to be sustained over time?	Observation, Conduct Interviews, and Collect Documentation (newspaper accounts, and document analysis)	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Discovering capacity strategies of the GA project
9. What are the embedded strategies that help align all members involved in this partnership?	Conduct Interviews based on protocol for this study	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Looking for the embedded strategies of this program's capacity according to the stakeholders
10. To what extent were networks established to influence the formation of the partnership?	Conduct Interviews based on protocol for this study	Executive Director identifies the sample population	Understanding the context of the case

3.4   PROCEDURES

Yin (2003) states that a "case study is but one of several ways of doing social science research" (p. 1). The purpose of the study was to examine the methods and qualities used by the Project to establish capacity. Social science research requires assessment of the case study in its natural environment—the variables cannot be manipulated. The researcher, in this context, looked at the case study in a social setting as opposed to a laboratory or other type of experimental setting. In other words, he or she attempts to understand and analyze the full context and description of the research without interference. The purpose of the case study was to give the researcher a more exploratory and descriptive focus of a context. This research strategy allowed the researcher to look at a context in its entirety and naturalistic form in learning about the developing story of the research process. Vogt (2003) states that "the advantage of the case-study method is that it allows more intensive analysis of specific empirical details" (p. 30). As the observer looked at the particular context through a naturalistic lens "the process of observing, recording, analyzing, reflecting, dialoguing, and rethinking are all essential parts of the research process as we seek to develop [the main context]" (Erlandson, 1993, p.4). In a naturalistic inquiry the context matters and the understanding of that context in its holistic form without interruption gives a true understanding of the study (Erlandson, 1993).

The purpose of this case study was to examine how the Georgia Project was able to build capacity for sustainability from its inception. This qualitative study relied on semi-structured interviews with community, business, government, and school leaders to determine how capacity was built throughout the Project. Data were also collected through a review of documents specific to the Georgia Project. A focus group was conducted with instructors from the University of Monterrey, Mexico and teachers from the Whitefield County schools who participated in a summer institute at the University of Monterrey. Morgan (1998) states that "focus groups are fundamentally a way of listening to people and learning from them" (p. 9). This process allowed the researcher to learn from the group as a collective about experiences that would be important to the research (Krueger, 1998).

The interview protocols were sent to the Executive Director of the Georgia Project to prepare the participants for the content of the interview. Interview protocols were developed for Georgia Project members, school leaders (see Appendix A), partners of higher institution (see Appendix B), and community leaders (see Appendix C). The investigator then conducted interviews based on the question sequence illustrated in Appendices A, B, and C. This allowed the interviewees to focus and articulate a clear response to questions. The contact person then established appointments and directed the researcher to where information was located. The lead investigator interviewed central office administrators, superintendents, teachers within

the school district, teachers from the postsecondary institutions partnered with the Georgia Project, community members, and local businessmen and woman.

The interviews used in this study established whether development of the school community project in Georgia aligned with the assumptions made about essential characteristics of community and school partnerships found in the literature. As stated in chapter 2, these assumptions were that school community partnerships needed the following key features in Appendix F, in order to become successful. The investigator decided that in order to get the essence of the project and to accurately collect the important keys to the Georgia Project, data would have to be collected mainly through interviews. Data collection for the interview would have to be performed in two formats: (1) with a recording device and (2) through note taking. Other data collection was done through the process of document collection. The recorded information was transcribed and analyzed for common threads and new themes based on, but not limited to, Table 2. Extra documentation, such as newspapers, files, and other information pertaining to the Georgia Project was analyzed in depth for qualities of a school and community partnership. This analysis was based on the criteria derived from the literature shown in Table 2; however, the information was not limited to the table. If there are any new or additional pieces of information, they were considered and presented in this research.

The case study was organized into two parts. It began with criteria discovered in the literature and categorized based on the Table 2 chart, followed by a section that detailed new inquiries into capacity building strategies and school-community partnerships.

4.0   FINDINGS

This chapter illustrates this study's findings concerning the Georgia Project. Subjects were interviewed at their sites, and conversations were recorded and transcribed for the investigator to discover capacity strategies implemented to sustain the Project over time. The transcriptions were color coded by the investigator and analyzed by discovering common themes in the interviews. In the analysis, the data are separated into two parts. The two sections were derived from the analysis of the transcripts. As the investigator color-coded the data, the analysis presented itself in two parts. In Part I, the conceptualization of the Georgia Project, which focus on how the project was put together, the critical incidents, and the connections that the former congressional representative solicited to help in establishing aid to the Latino students of the Whitfield County schools is presented. In Part II, the school capacity components of the project findings and the connections made among the Georgia Project teachers, the school district teachers, the students, and the community members are illustrated. The primary emphasis of Part II is to establish how the Georgia Project has built capacity on the school level.

4.1   THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE GEORGIA PROJECT

To understand the Georgia Project, one must first begin with a conversation with the founder and chairman of the Georgia Project board, Mr. Erwin Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell's interview reveals the pivotal role he played in building a solid foundation for a sustainable school community partnership. The interview began with the question: How did the Georgia Project begin and why? According to Mr. Mitchell, the project truly began in 1995. He states that "in 1995, immigrants really began to move into this region." It was considered an issue due to the change in demographics. The city administration would have to adjust in the preparation for the increase and change in population. Other concerns, such as crime and fear, were among other reasons. Mr. Mitchell, a former congressional representative and judge of this community, has lived in Dalton for 82 years and has seen the city of Dalton become the center of poultry and carpet industry. He states that he is "honored to be here" because of the growth and the stability of the economic structure of the city as well as the openness to the idea of having a diverse population. As for the schools, there have never been major problems, and the community has always supported the students in this area. Schools in the district have always worked on making the Annual Yearly Progress and passing the

Georgia standardized testing requirements. The county schools have also worked hard on improving students' academics and graduation rates. The increase of Latino students created new problems, such as learners unable to understand the instructors and teachers having difficulty in communicating with students. Secondly, the cultural competence of teachers to Latino culture presented challenges. Finally, the challenges of parental participation became a concern. Initially, there was concern that this challenge would be difficult to solve, but as time went on and a structure was put into place to assimilate the immigrants into the community (the Georgia Project), the issues were addressed and the problems averted.

According to the former U.S. Congressman, the idea of this project was sparked by his daughter, Leslie Zeller. Ms. Zeller was a paraprofessional in a school in which the Latino students from the community were unable to respond to or identify with the lessons of the school's instructors. Although the school districts had English as Second Language (ESOL) instructors, it became a challenge for the teachers of the school to culturally identify with students. Frustration not only set in with the instructors, but students were caught up in the "conflict of cultural understanding," as stated by one former instructor. In other words, teachers were not able to help, because the students did not understand what was being asked of them. The causes for this problem could be contributed to language, cultural differences, and differences in Mexican schools. For example, the teaching methods, the relationship among teachers and students, and

students integration into the American school system play a role in students overall development and understanding in learning.

In Whitfield County, there are two school systems: the first, Dalton city school where Leslie Zeller was a paraprofessional, and second, Whitfield County Schools. The project was created in the Dalton city schools; however, it continued in the Whitfield County Schools. At the time of Mr. Mitchell's first initial visits, the Dalton city schools' population of Latino students was much greater than the Whitfield County schools: Over time, this has change. As the project evolved, the Whitfield County schools continued to work with the Georgia Project to continuously aid the Latino students in the community to improve academically. As Dalton city schools changed superintendents, the program was gradually discontinued, and the Whitefield county school superintendent continued the program. Politics and a new superintendent determined that the Georgia Project would discontinue working with Dalton city schools. According to one instructor, "the Georgia Project was not liked by everyone, and some people in the central office wanted to do away with this program for various reasons." Although the reasons were not discovered in the interviews, other school district employees suggested that politics played a major role in the continuation of the program in the city schools.

As Mr. Mitchell attempted to understand the cultural and academic problems of the Latino students in the schools, he admitted, "I've enough trouble understanding

something I know absolutely nothing about." One of his major goals was to identify the problem and then determine how to approach the issue. This process would have to be strategically planned in incremental steps in order to achieve positive outcomes. Not only in the Georgia Project, but in school community partnerships in general, utilizing a step-by-step approach as an appropriate tactic. In a school community partnership, one of the first steps in learning how to help a community is to identify the needs of a particular community. Once the needs are identified, one should create strategies that can help solve the problem.

Mr. Erwin Mitchell attempted to do just that: learn about the problems the Latino students and their teachers were experiencing and plan a strategy on how these problems could be addressed. After learning about this problem from his daughter, Mr. Mitchell made multiple visits to county and city schools to learn about the problem firsthand and address this issue with the superintendent and other community leaders. The purpose was to approach the administrators and learn if there was an educational strategy that could help these Latino students. Mr. Mitchell states, "The education that I received was in law, but I don't know anything about education administration." At first, there were no set guidelines on how to approach the influx of non-English speaking Latino students. However, according to Mr. Mitchell, by exploring and learning about any issue, those involved can work to remedy the issue. There are people in various industries that can help in community approaches and aid the school

district to recognize the need for a change. As Mr. Mitchell began to identify the problem through communication with the teachers, administrators, and other school employees, he noticed that the situations in the schools were being ignored. He states "school employees came and met with me and the essence of what they were saying is 'Look, Mr. Mitchell, we're in a terrible situation, for kids, both the English speaking and the non-English speaking.' And the community is oblivious to this." According to Mr. Mitchell, this situation reminded him of the problems schools were having during integration: a group of students being ignored due to the school teachers not understanding the difference of culture nor wanting to connect in some instances.

Once Mr. Mitchell identified the problem, he decided to gather some of the most influential people in the community to help develop an action plan to strategically solve the problem in the schools. One person that he approached was the editor of the city newspaper. According to Mr. Mitchell, "I got him because he was the meanest man in town, and he looked standing up and said his peace." In other words, this gentleman stood up to opposition and believed that all students should be educated. Two other members of the team were a young Korean American from the University of Georgia and a banker who was well respected in the community. The four of them met with teachers and the correspondence began. As he attempted to work with the central office, Mr. Mitchell discovered that he was not aware that there were so many policies in education. At the time of Mr. Mitchell's inquiry, he had to adapt and

understand how K-12 schools functioned. The first school that he visited, with a population of 35% to 40% Hispanic students, was an elementary school, and he states, "It was very sad at times. You could feel the weight that was on everybody at that school, including the kids." The communication problem between teachers and Latino students became enormous. The former congressional representative suggested that the amazing discovery was the realization that there was a problem occurring in this community. He continues to suggest that the only way to get change is to bring the problems of the Hispanic students to the forefront of the community and let the school board become aware of the problem. He states, "This is where I had to get the editor of the newspaper involved. He was a well-respected man, and he communicated with the school board on the various issues in the school." As the issue was raised to the school board, according to Mr. Mitchell, the school board did not realize there was such a problem in the school.

The Hispanic children in the schools, according to Mr. Mitchell, came from various Latino parents that worked in the carpet and chemical industry which required a large labor force. After much communication with the school, the team that was assembled by Mr. Mitchell began to investigate whether other communities experienced the same problems. According to Mr. Mitchell, one of the things that he discovered is that there was no "how to" deal with the influx of immigrants in schools. One of the major surprises of this situation in the community was the fact that this

immigrant population was able to arrive in Dalton. The U.S. and Mexico border is thousands of miles or more from the state of Georgia. As Mr. Mitchell states, one of the members discovered that the influx of Hispanics were coming from Mexico and establishing themselves and integrating into the community.

When discussing with other community members and school personnel on how to solve this problem, responses were, according to Mr. Mitchell, akin to "let us just teach the students English and that should solve the problem." Nevertheless, the issue was more than just language—culture played a critical portion. As various approaches began to be considered, Mr. Mitchell contacted a chief executive officer and chairman in the carpet industry to collaborate with him in discovering solutions to help the Hispanic students in the school district. As Mr. Mitchell began to work with the CEO of this industry, they decided to look at bringing teachers from south of the border to help with the Hispanic population.

The CEO then suggested to Mr. Mitchell that he contact the University in Monterey, Mexico, which could help with this problem. Since the CEO did business in Monterey, he was very familiar with the reputation of the University and its preparation of teachers in Mexico. Thus, the two men contacted the University of Monterey for help. A few weeks later, the team members headed to the University of Monterey to meet with the director of the department of education of the University. The discussions in their meeting were about how the University of Monterey could

collaborate with the Georgia Project in helping the schools in Whitfield County. However, the University of Monterey directors, according to Mr. Mitchell, wanted to observe the situation in Dalton before deciding on a solution. The first decision that came from the group traveling to Monterey was for the Monterey instructors to travel to Dalton.

As the Georgia Project team visited the University of Monterey, the instructors of the University visited the Dalton and Whitfield County schools, and when the University instructors visited, they were surprised to see the influx of Mexicans in the community of Dalton, Georgia. Thus, the partnership began to shape itself into various components that involved the community, such as the formation of Hispanic organizations and various involvements in the business sector. However, once Mr. Mitchell was able to connect various influential sources in the community, the partnerships began to take place.

The various connections between the Project and the school district began to shape the approach of this school and community partnership. The school district and the Georgia Project made an agreement known as an "accord" to bring teachers from Mexico to assist the school in solving problems. These problems formed due to the rapid influx of large numbers if non-native English speakers in Whitfield County. The accord detailed the duties of how the University of Monterey, the Georgia Project, and the city schools of Dalton and Whitfield County would work together in various ways

to help students progress in their new surroundings. The contract also illustrated details

of the summer institute regarding how schools would send a number of teachers to the

University of Monterey for professional development in learning how to aid Hispanic

students. The University of Monterey would send bilingual teachers to the school

district. Below are listed the discoveries made in the Georgia Project concerning how

the strategies listed in Table 2 were developed in the Georgia Project.

4.2   SCHOOL CAPACITY CONNECTIONS

The connections that were discovered in the Georgia Project listed below did

have elements discovered in the literature; however, there were other elements stated in

the previous section that created pathways for the school community connections.

4.2.1   Parental Involvement

In a successful school-community partnership, parental involvement plays a

major role in establishing and sustaining good school-community relations. Based on

the interviews done for this project, Latino parental involvement in the school was less

than 1% before the Georgia Project was established and began to intervene in schools.

At first, administrators and school leaders believed that the parents did not want to be

involved, or they did not have the time to be involved with the school due to the long hours they worked in the mills. As stated earlier, the carpet industry is one of the major industries of Dalton and is responsible for a portion of the economic stability. According to one parent, "the job is difficult and takes up a lot of time; however, this is an opportunity to provide for my family in this country." This was one of the reasons for lack of participation. However, this was not the case for all Hispanic parents in the community. One Georgia Project teacher suggested that parents do not come to school meetings for various reasons. They may not have a car; they do not understand the American education system; no one has invited them to the school. One Spanish-speaking instructor reported a parent as having said, "We do not know how it works."

In other words, parents did not know what to expect from school meetings. According to one of the Project board members, the first approach decided by the Georgia Project instructors was to communicate by making phone calls directly to the parents. In their conversations, the teachers would indicate to the parents that the principal would like to meet with them to discuss how the school can help them become more involved. The parents were very interested but other problems arose as one teacher states: "They have no car. Sometimes we have to get them in our own car and give them a ride back home, because they didn't have a car."

In addition, the Latino parents, still learning how to speak English, were having difficulties with learning English. According to one Spanish teacher, "Some parents'

English is not very good. At times, they are embarrassed and scared that they can not communicate with people in English." This became a problem for many Latino parents in the area in terms of communicating with schoolteachers. Since English was not their first language, certain parents were intimidated or afraid to approach teachers, and the students were the only ones who could interpret for their parents. Although the schools attempted to do their best to incorporate and help these parents to compensate for language gaps, schools were still limited in solving this difficulty. The majority of American teachers did not speak Spanish, however; they were ESOL endorsed. The one issue with ESOL endorsement is that it does not require teachers to speak another language. ESOL certification instructs teachers on how to address a student who speaks another language. According to one former superintendent,

"As we noticed the problem, we attempted to address it by looking all over the country for situations that were similar on how to solve the problem of communication with the parents. We even went to the west coast where the Hispanic population was just as big and observed what they were doing: however, they had just as many problems as we did."

Thus, everyone called on numerous specialists in the field of education and individuals from foundations to suggest solutions for how to approach the cultural and language barrier in student performance. A suggestion was made by a CEO of the carpet industry to visit the University of Monterrey in Mexico and discover what the

instructors in the education department were accomplishing in terms of identifying with Latino students. The idea to designate teachers recruited by the University of Monterrey, Mexico as Georgia Project teachers was suggested. At the beginning of the Georgia Project, the University of Monterrey was not SACS accredited; however, it did receive its accreditation later. The University of Monterrey, Mexico is one of the few institutions in Latin America that is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), which does accreditation for universities in the southern portion of the United States. The school's reputation in working and collaborating with American institutions could aid in helping the schools on techniques and methods in helping Latin students adapt culturally to the United States educational system. During the second visit, the founders of the Georgia Project suggested an exchange between teachers by sending accredited teachers from the University of Monterrey to the U.S. and teachers from Whitfield County to Mexico to partner in learning about the culture and teaching approaches concerning the improvement of the students.

As soon as the instructors from the University of Monterrey arrived, there was an instant change in the level of parental involvement. One of the first strategies used by the newly arrived instructors was to get involved in the Hispanic events of the local community. In addition to contacting parents to inform them about local events, the Georgia Project instructors began to counsel parents and offer classes in speaking English. The Georgia Project decided to take a survey to assess, comprehend, and learn

why the parents were not getting involved. After further investigation by the Georgia Project instructors, it was discovered that the parents did not participate due to embarrassment about not speaking English. Since most of the teachers in the schools did not speak Spanish, it was impossible for parents to participate. This difficulty was largely overcome after the Georgia Project teachers arrived and began to assume the role of interpreters for both language and cultural norms. Parental participation began to rise, and parents formed organizations to help their children improve their grades. Between 1997 and 2006, parent participation in Whitfield County schools rose from 1% to 95% in those schools that had Georgia Project teachers.

4.2.2 Community Involvement

In order for there to be a functional school-community partnership, the community should be involved in improving the school's academic success. Since there has been a major influx of the Hispanic population into Dalton, the need to integrate and help the Latino community to become an integral part of the town has been an issue. The Latino community that works in the mills has brought an enormous amount of prosperity to the town. However, the performance of the students in the schools was an issue before the Georgia Project. Another issue, the fear of violence, concerned Dalton in its acceptance of the Latino students in the community. Some community members were fearful that Dalton would be known as an immigrant hub and not for its

southern hospitality. Others were concerned that it would be known as a place for immigrant criminals.

The acceptance of Latinos by the community was difficult. There were racist stereotypes. For example, Latino people were only good for doing yard work or low-end jobs, according to one community member. They were also called "spics" which is a derogatory word for Latinos. Other issues concerning the Latino community was the refusal to call Latino community members by their nationalities, such as "Mexicans" or "Guatemalans." As far as most individuals were concerned, everyone was Mexican. The term used for the Latinos in most cases was "brown people." This name was used the majority of the time by people who had difficulty identifying what country the Hispanic people were from. As one business owner framed the issue, "It was not that the Dalton community did not accept the Hispanic people; they were not prepared for the cultural differences." However, as the Georgia Project began to organize its strategy to help these newly arrived students, it began to make alliances with community members and local business to create organizations that would reflect the Latino community.

Alianza Comunitaria Latino Americana (ACLA) was created by the Georgia Project to aid the Latino community. This organization is also known as ACLA or Latin American Community Alliance. The organization is composed of members from different professions, such as physicians and local business owners. Its purpose is

to help Latinos in the community and provide resources and support for various events which will improve the relations between longtime residents and the immigrant community in Dalton. ACLA has collaborated with the Georgia Project to help students and Latino community members become comfortable and integrate them with the existing community. This group of businesses would be the leadership among the Latino community. This organization also helped with living facilities for Hispanics who moved into the community. Before the Georgia Project, there were no recognized Hispanic leaders in the community.

In addition to ACLA, the Georgia Project has collaborated with Dalton College, a two year institute within the University System of Georgia, to offer scholarships for Latino students to continue their education. These scholarships, when combined with the HOPE grants available to students who graduate from Georgia high schools with 3.0 high school averages, provide qualified Hispanic students an opportunity that might otherwise be misused because of the cost.

4.2.3 Empowerment

According to Dr. JoAnne Schick, Executive Director of the Georgia Project, the major objective of this project is to empower the Hispanic and "Anglo" communities to live and work together as a single community. This context, however, began with the city administration. The mayor and the city council of Dalton noticed that in another

community with similar problems, the government did not interfere with the influx of the Hispanic population until it became a problem. According to a Dalton city council member, the mayor and the council recognized the problem. He states, "We wanted to become proactive not reactive"—therefore, they began to build task forces to work on helping the community members to integrate and improve their situation by themselves. However, the concern was how the city would be able to approach this problem. This problem was recognized before Mr. Mitchell approached the city council; however, the city knew of the influx of the Latino community. The influx in the schools was not apparent until the approach by Mr. Mitchell and the Georgia Project members.

Erwin Mitchell approached the city council with a resolution. After careful consideration, the Dalton city council decided to participate in helping the Georgia Project. Because the CEO had business ties with the area and university in Monterrey, Mexico, the Dalton community decided to send a representative to the University of Monterrey, Mexico. Once the establishment of needs and concerns were identified and solutions for how to help this community became clear, the University of Monterrey, the city of Dalton, Dalton City schools, the Whitfield county schools, and the Georgia Project signed an accord for a partnership concerning an exchange of teachers that would help the communities in many capacities.

Once the Georgia Project teachers began to help, explain, and interpret how to work with the Latino students and parents, the school began to improve on how they

worked with the parents of the community. For example, parents who did not speak English began to take classes from the Georgia Project teachers who knew how to teach English as a foreign language.

Hispanic parents and community Anglo members began to work with ACLA to determine how to help new immigrants with questions about buying homes, finding health care, or working with teachers in the Dalton and Whitfield County schools. Mainstream teachers, who had immigrant students in their classes, often due to the presence of the Georgia Project, began to understand the culture of the English Language Learners. Consequently, they began to discover how they could help to improve the students academically. The Hispanic community thus took the initiative to reach out to the larger community.

4.2.4   Connecting School and Community

One of the first objectives of the Georgia Project was to connect the new students with the everyday activities of the schools. As the Georgia Project board members assessed to see more ways to help the community, they discovered that the more the parents attended school functions, the more comfortable parents became in participating in local school events initiated by the school. According to one principal, the schools then began to sponsor meetings that would have refreshments which

included an academic component, such as educating parents about health care and the importance of completing high school and even post secondary education.

ACLA also helped in creating local events that would help strengthen the connection between the school and the community. ACLA members would speak to various classes at schools and discuss with parents ways to prepare the children for post secondary education. Internships in local restaurants and other businesses helped promote academic achievement. One member described an occasion where members drove a van from business to business and asked Latino restaurant owners how they were helping the schools improve and if they had any children in the school that they would like to mentor. This would help in improving and motivating students to stay in school and contribute to the community.

4.2.5   Funding

The county decided to make the Georgia Project a pilot and provided it with seed money to start the exchange between the instructors and the summer institute for the American teachers. The amount which was provided to the schools via the Georgia Project was $750,000. At the request of the Georgia Project committee, this money was sent directly to the school system to help prepare and establish the program. However, according to school representatives and Georgia Project members, the money was used

to fund a different program that put the city schools and the Georgia Project members at odds. This problem did not transfer to Whitfield County because allocation was already established before the involvement of the county schools; however, the politics did cause some problems in the Dalton city schools. The Georgia Project chairman then requested that the money which was for the Project be sent to the Georgia Project for proper allocation.

As the Georgia Project continued to grow, money for additional funding was provided by federal aid and donations from other organizations. This aid would allow the program to expand into Northwest Georgia and, in 2006, into South Georgia, thanks to Congressman Bishop. Georgia Project funds provided scholarships to Latino students who decided to continue to pursue a postsecondary education and provided Abraham Baldwin and Dalton College with a Spanish speaking recruiter funded by the project to attract more Latinos to their institutions.

The partnership with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) has been one of the most fruitful ones created by the Georgia project. In 2000, the CAL began offering a series of workshops to content area teachers in middle and high schools who volunteered to teach ELL's using an approach known as Sheltered Instruction (SIOP). This educational model helps learners develop their academic English skills while learning content grade level (Short et al., 2002). The project also funded Spanish classes

for Anglo teachers, orientation for teachers, and cultural courses at the University of Monterrey.

4.2.6   Partnerships that Foster Academic Achievement

As one ACLA member suggested, the primary purpose of the Georgia Project has been to improve student learning for Hispanic students. The language and cultural barriers made it difficult to help these learners succeed. By addressing language and culture as the major obstacles, the Georgia Project provided a framework within which all the "stakeholders" could work together in a constructive manner. According to a principal, the presence of the Georgia Project helped bridge the language and cultural gap and gave mainstream teachers new insights into how best to teach language to minorities whose first language was Spanish. Although ELLs continue to struggle with testing and standardized tests and administrators and faculty have worked with ESOL instructors to improve students' abilities, most of those interviewed agreed that the Georgia Project teachers have been of vital input in helping schools make significant progress towards achieving academic goals. According to principals from middle and high schools, the Georgia Project teachers contributed to the schools achieving Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as determined by NCLB. According to one principal "If it were not for the Georgia Project instructors, we would not have made AYP." However, some school teachers contributed the success to the increasing personnel in the schools. Other

mainstream teachers attributed the success to the entire faculty that worked together to improve the Hispanic students' achievement. According to another administrator, once communities and schools focus on a goal which can lead to the improvement of students, programs can succeed.

4.2.7   Shared Responsibility

According to the focus groups made up of Georgia Project instructors, one of the most important components was shared responsibility from the community. Both groups, the exchange teachers from Mexico and the American teachers, agreed that the community has taken a proactive approach in the improvement of the schools. Although there have been obstacles in defining the responsibilities of the parents, teachers, and administrators, overall, the focus group agreed that schools have received much support from the community. Since the Georgia Project began, according to one administrator, "Latino parents have become more involved in sports, school activities, and other activities aimed at helping in the schools' success." Parents have also taken the initiative in community projects, such as parent teacher clubs that can help their children increase participation in school and homework. Once parents were able to bridge the language gap, they began to become involved in the daily school activities.

Parents of both Latino and American students have worked together in planning school functions and helping administrators and teachers in various activities in all schools.

Teachers, both in the Georgia Project as well as in the regular classroom, have worked together in promoting and improving the schools. One example is providing community nights, such as the health fair, where parents, administrators, instructors, and students participate in the promotion of health in the community. Another area in shared responsibility is collaboration in the classroom. One lead teacher suggested that it was difficult, at first, to understand the roles of the Georgia Project instructors and to give them responsibilities; however, once they were able to understand the purpose and learn how to utilize them, the situation improved.

Administrators have also been able to improve the delegation of shared responsibilities of the school community. According to one principal, the culture of "the school and the county has changed due to teachers, parents, and the community sharing responsibility of students' success compared to previous years". However, as a result of the positive changes made in student performance, administrators believe that the success of the community in helping all students in the county has become a major goal. The Georgia Project has helped to bridge the community gap and invites an accountability and academic achievement for all students.

As mention previously, the city council and the mayor have taken initiatives in sharing responsibilities with the community. They interacted not only with

the school district but with local businesses, providing information and working with the ACLA organization on what kind of services would help improve the community in housing, education, and business. The Georgia Project instructors have helped in the development of the county by not only helping in schools but translating for housing purchases, fund raisers, and other events that focus on improving the community.

4.2.8   Provisions of Family Services

The Georgia Project has not only focused on improving student achievement, but also focuses on improving the services with the help of ACLA. Since the majority of Hispanics moving into Whitfield County are from Mexico, they often have a limited amount of English. English classes have become a priority. These classes are taught by Georgia Project teachers. Participants have found that, as their English language skills improve, so have their job relations and their school involvement. In addition, the Georgia Project teachers have been able to recruit Latino businesses for ACLA, and ACLA has grown and has become very involved in the schools. As one ACLA member stated, "When we saw there were ways that we can help families in this area to improve, we decided to unite the business and discuss with owners what are some ways we can benefit families."

One former exchange teacher from the Georgia Project now provides counseling and housing assistance to Latinos in the community. She suggested that the families

that are native to Mexico need not only help with schools but aid in adjusting to life in the United States which is very different from that of Mexico. She also suggests that there are more financial opportunities for people in the States. For example, the cost of living is often a shock. According to this informant, people can work an entire month and perhaps make $1,000 in Mexico. While in the carpet mills or the poultry business in Whitfield County, they can make twice as much, even with limited or no skills in English. Her business also teaches families how to prepare their credit in order to buy houses and how to understand a mortgage, health care, and cultural and legal orientation, other than renting and owning.

4.2.9   Written Agreement

In 1997, the Georgia Project, in cooperation with Dalton City and Whitfield county schools, signed an accord with the University of Monterrey. This agreement stated the various responsibilities of each of the signatories. This agreement was called an "accord." The accord stated that the University of Monterrey recognized the need for bilingual English-Speaking teachers in Dalton and Whitfield. The University of Monterrey agreed to provide teachers and help Dalton City Schools improve the academic English skills of Latino students. The Georgia Project, a group of private individuals, businesses, and local industries, agreed to assist the University of Monterrey and the two school districts to meet the challenge. The execution of the

agreement would begin immediately, and the schools would work together to provide the best services to Latino students.

The accord was divided into four sections. The first section delineated the responsibilities of the University of Monterrey with respect to teacher recruitment. Section two described the intensive Spanish and Mexican Culture Program, which would allow 24 instructors from both school districts to study in Mexico for four weeks. Section 3 targeted parental partnership and the workplace which meant that the University of Monterrey would conduct demographic research of the county for the schools to strategically work with the Georgia Project for preparation of Georgia Project teachers. The information from the study was intended to help in developing Hispanic community leadership, adult bi-literacy, a better understanding of parents' interests, and school and industry programs that would develop Hispanics' English. And last, the partnership stipulates that the signatories would develop a bilingual education curriculum to meet the needs of the school district. The accord was signed by the Georgia Project chair, the president of the University of Monterrey, and the superintendents of Dalton City and Whitfield County, respectively.

4.2.10 Positive Attitude

The Dalton community appears to be accepting of the Hispanic population, albeit, unable to understand the cultural norms. The mutual misunderstandings have, at

times, been a source of conflict for some members of both groups. As partial explanation, long-time residents suggested that due to the anti-immigrant stance taken by the state and federal government, some people have forgotten that the United States is "the land of the free." He then added that if you go to different parts of the nation, such as New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC, people are accustomed to representing their cultures and countries. One city administrator suggested that although the relations seem to be difficult at times for the community, the city supports Latinos in the schools and believes they play a major role in the community and its development.

Although at first, the Georgia Project had a difficult task convincing the city that this program would benefit the entire community. As a result of collaboration and hard work, the relations between the two groups began to improve. Mutual districts began to fade as contact between the two communities became more frequent and more collaborative. In addition, other ongoing collaboration between ESOL teachers and the Georgia Project began to improve. Over time, the attitude of the community has become more welcoming as the interested parties came to believe that this partnership would benefit all communities.

4.3   SUMMARY

The findings were based on interviews with Whitefield County Schools, personnel, a former superintendent, Georgia Project teachers, and Georgia Project Board Members. As the interviews progressed, it became evident that Mr. Mitchell had set things in motion by creating a powerful network of community leaders to confront the problems that emerged in the Whitfield County school district in the wake of a sudden influx of Latino students. Mr. Mitchell, a former U.S. congressman, established a community group comprised of the CEO of a large carpet company in Dalton, a local newspaper editor, and a bank representative. The goal of this group was to create a plan that would integrate the Latino families into the community and facilitate the transition of these children into local schools.

Thus, the concept of the Georgia Project was born and seed money was committed by the Dalton City Council. It was not until the conceptual framework for the project and the seed money for the project were promised that this powerful community leadership group connected with the schools. Mr. Mitchell connected various individuals of influence to establish a framework of sustainability that would allow capacity to be built in aiding the Hispanic students in the Whitefield County schools. This network of influence, once created, allowed the formation of other pathways to connect the school capacity in and out of the school system.

Although the creation of the Georgia Project was sparked by the daughter of Mr. Mitchell, longevity of the program is due to the foundation of individuals brought together in the beginning. There are three reasons why the Georgia Project continues. Reason one, the program was able to recreate itself and establish networks to solve the Latino students', Whitfield County, and schools' needs. Reason two, the Georgia Project was able to continue to improve the partnership every year and show results through students' academic achievement and school improvement of success through AYP. Reason three, the Georgia Project has continued to work with ACLA, community members, parents, students, and local business for sustainability.

5.0   DISCUSSION IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE

RESEARCH

This chapter will address the analysis of the findings in the Georgia Project and discuss the implications of sustainability for a school community partnership. Finally, the chapter will have recommendations for future research and possibilities for other studies. The purpose of this study is to examine how the Georgia Project has build capacity and sustainability of a partnership for the academic development of students in this particular community

5.1   DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

The Georgia Project is a school-community partnership that has been able to establish capacity in a town out of necessity. Although this Project did not, at first, have a plan or a strategy on how to approach the influx of Hispanics in the school and community, it has been able to overcome such obstacles. Now the Georgia Project enables schools and communities that are attempting to build school-community

partnerships to consider its overall approach. The Georgia Project's success can be attributed to four major reasons. 1. The Georgia Project was established by an influential network of community and government leaders concerned with the changing demographics of the Whitfield County community and schools. 2. A network of community and government leaders initiated a plan to create a partnership with the schools to address the economic, social, and educational issues facing the community and schools as a direct result of an influx of Latinos. 3. The Georgia Project built capacity of the school and community to become more culturally competent, and a partnership was created with the University of Monterrey in Mexico for the purpose of establishing a teacher exchange program. 4. Local and global capacity building strategies and networks of influential community and business leaders continue to be central to the sustainability of the Georgia Project.

The influential connections that have been established by Erwin Mitchell, which put various members of influence in place to aid in the success of the partnership, played a major role in connecting the schools and communities. If an individual with as much influence as Mr. Mitchell had not been involved, or if such an individual did not put members who had influence over and dedication to the project together, the opportunity to build capacity effectively would not have been possible. Epstein (1995) suggests that the major components in school-community partnership that are most effective in the success of schools are connections made inside and outside the schools.

However, according to the findings in this research, the major component that opens the door for those school connections is influence made by individuals that can aide in the process of getting a community to act. Elmore (2000) suggests that schools are "organizational glues" that function in various capacities for success. Due to this glue, schools, at times, look for aid in specific areas, because the system is trained to look for aid only in particular areas. Once communities and schools begin to look at other pathways for help, then connections between external networks and internal networks can work together to establish partnerships. Lambert (2003) suggests that school improvement is based on the connections that are made towards common goals that are established in and out of schools. These connections create pathways that allow various members to work for the common good of a community thus resulting in the establishment of building long-term capacity throughout a system.

The approach of building capacity by connecting schools with complementary features illustrated in the literature is dependent on the capacity that is built in the political areas and in the spheres of influence. If the political connections were not in place, the building of school capacity would not have been effective. The network connections of various members put together by Mr. Mitchell created a pathway to establishing school connections.

In the context of organization, the city council and the Georgia Project members did pursue the problem by becoming proactive about the integration of the

Hispanic community into the Dalton area schools. However, the partnership's focus was to help the schools and the Latino population resolve, not their long-term needs, but their immediate goals. Delgado-Gaitan suggests (2001) that school and community partnerships should begin by focusing on issues that help the needs of a community immediately; however, keeping in mind of the long-term goals. This short term approach becomes a spring board for long-term achievement and allows the district as well as community programs to build on incremental success.

Although the administrators received information concerning the role of the Georgia Project, communication was not relayed in a timely manner to staff, thus the communication and the role of the school staff was not clear. In the following year of the partnership, this problem was eventually resolved through various forms of communication on the part of the school district and the Georgia Project members. The communication among central office, administrators, school staff, and Georgia Project members improved due to improved guidelines and understanding of the purpose of the partnership. Also, the project members understood what they wanted to accomplish and how they wanted to approach the issue in the coming years. The concept of Learning Communities, suggested by Sergiovanni (1994), address how school districts can create a community of purpose and understanding in which schools can function with one common goal. This purpose helps an organization, such as the Georgia Project,

develop its community in establishing foundations of success in a school community partnership.

Since the agreement between the school districts, the Georgia Project, and the University of Monterrey, the responsibilities of the school teachers as well as the ESOL department towards the Hispanic students has become a major responsibility. Although agreements are signed by superintendents and heads of other departments, transmission of what needs to be accomplished should still be clearly outlined by the leaders of the organization regardless of what school leadership communicates. An outside organization needs its own leaders to give input in a school-community partnership. As one instructor stated, "When this program came about, we were not sure what to do from the school standpoint. There was not a clear explanation to us." This caused friction within the schools, dividing the teachers into two camps: ESOL versus Georgia Project teachers. Had the school system integrated the teachers into the program first, it may have created a culture of acceptance among the instructors rather than concern that an initiative was being pushed upon the instructors without their consideration.

Although the complaints about the Project have been directed toward its approach, the Georgia Project has attempted to consider how to help the schools improve. At first, the conflict was the acceptance of the approach, in other words, the administration failing to adequately address the change with the staff in the school

district. In order for an organization to buy into a solution, they must consider that there is an issue to be resolved. Secondly, when the issue of the schools' needing to quickly adapt is addressed by an outside source, such as the Georgia Project, it can cause a feeling of resentment from certain school system members. School systems, as well as communities, should not look at help from other organizations as something which is a harmful or hindering event but should look at help with a sense of acceptance and openness to improvement for sustainability. If people are open to new ideas, then a partnership can be initiated by any party.

Partnerships do not necessarily have to be initiated by a school alone. Conners (1994) and Delgado-Gaitan (2001) suggest that communities that are empowered initiate school and community partnerships on their own. They can be initiated by a community, the federal government, and other stakeholders that may be interested in the success of the community, such as the Georgia Project. The key is to be open to solving problems and working together to resolve issues that will benefit the school and the community. As the project continues to flourish in meeting the needs of the school, the partnership has transformed to meet the needs of the community, thus improving the sustainability of the program and allowing the partnership to build capacity between the school system and other stakeholders involved. Organizations in the Latino community have begun to flourish and play major roles in the development of the community and the city. The participation, according to a city administrator, has

been healthy for the city. He suggests that the city has become accepting and more diverse in the improvement; although there are still people who have feelings of animosity towards the Latino group, this is slowly changing.

Although there is no template for establishing a school and community partnership, the key is discovering the right question to respond to in order to connect the community to the school. To connect all of the features mentioned in the literature, there should be an inquiry to discover and understand the context of the community which will therefore build a successful school-community partnership. As the Georgia Project members discovered how they could help Hispanic students integrate into the culture, the community, and the school environment, the partnership focused indirectly on how this program would be sustained in the community long-term. Programs that have developed due to the capacity that the Georgia Project has established have become a necessary part of the organization, such as a college, including a bilingual recruiter to help bring Hispanic students to their school. Another example is how instructors teach Hispanic students by considering their culture and by attempting to understand the students' approach to learning. These processes have been sustained over a long period of time, because the Georgia Project has been able to build capacity among its stakeholders.

The major component which has been learned from this school-community partnership has been the establishment of the framework that connects the

school and community. In any context of school-community partnerships, elements that allow for improvement are crucial for a school to build capacity among its participants. The schools that have developed a partnership with the Georgia Project have attempted to establish programs to sustain the long-term outcomes for success of the Latino population as well as the students in the schools.

The results in this study have shown that an effective school-community partnership which is able to create sustainability should have all of the elements described in the research. However, although the features can give a community and school a foundation, there are elements that are uncontrollable. Any program that is federally funded has stipulations, and based on the political climate, funding can be given or taken at any time. Thus, it is important for founders to establish various sources for funding as well as building partnerships to achieve the various features. For example, in the Georgia Project, although the program was initially given seed money, the Project members sought federal funding as well as foundation money to continue to fund projects, such as establishing scholarships for students to attend college. Another example in providing family services is the Project has not only trained their teachers to reach out to the community but created ACLA to help reach out to the community as well.

As the Georgia Project continued over the years, it has been able to establish community involvement. The community presently takes the initiative in

many school events, such as the participation in soccer in the community, both in school and out. The community has been able to create leagues for students that will promote participation in education as well. Students that participate must continue to do well in their classes. Mentorship programs have been created by Hispanic business owners to increase the population's interest in attending college and contributing to the community. Business owners in the community and the ACLA organizations visit the schools and speak to children about continuing their education and improving their lives.

This has also helped in empowering the community to improve itself and take its own initiatives which would sustain long-term development. Community programs that are produced by the ACLA organization have increased business participation in the community. Efforts for continued growth and plans for economic growth of the city have also been a part of the structure and organizational help of the community. The partnership has also promoted more connection between the school and the community. The community has participated in raising money for various sports in the schools. The teachers, as well as the parents, work together for a common goal in the improvement of the students in and out of the school system. Academically, this has continued to improve the scores of the students, and the schools have met their Annual Yearly Progress. High school graduation rates and the passing of the Georgia state exam, which is required for graduation, have been at an all time high. This is

attributed to the entire school and community working together for the success of the students.

This partnership has brought a shared responsibility and unity to the school system, community, and universities in the state. The community and the schools have taken responsibility toward the improvement of the students. The attitudes of the community have become so optimistic and encouraging that the community has developed alliances and two year scholarships for students through state colleges. This project has not only grown in North Georgia, but also expanded to South Georgia with the participation of various colleges and congressmen. However, an area that should be considered which is not discussed in the literature is politics. The political climate of an environment can determine in many ways how partnerships or programs receive funding even if a program collects data and illustrates success for a period of time. If there are opponents in the political arena that would not like the program to exist, this can become a difficult obstacle to overcome.

The process of getting schools and communities to buy into a partnership in the early stages without feeling threaten can be a challenge. This, according to the data, has been one of the major opponents of the Georgia Project from the beginning. As stated previously, this was a concern of many stakeholders, and once the roles were clearly outlined, the capacity building between the programs and the schools was established. However, after further analysis, the Georgia Project's approach in working with the

Whitfield county schools was exactly the same approach as in any fledgling project. Before solving the problem or implementing solutions, school-community partnership members should investigate the best approach by researching and assessing the appropriate problem. The majority of conflicts are resolved after schools and communities work together to assess and approach the problem. All members can consider what questions would be appropriate to ask when attempting to solve problems. When the members do not focus on building capacity in a community, the approach is a problem. The goal, to establish the elements discussed in the literature, becomes challenging to reach when school-community partnerships do not assess and inquire about how to develop for long-term success. According to a principal of one of the high schools in the partnership, the program's adaptation to the needs of the community has become an important component in the school's progress for success. He also suggests that if the program did not continue, the county would have to create all of the essential tools that the project has established to continue to become successful. Thus, the likelihood of establishing sustainability is based on how the partnership focuses on solving problems and how a partnership continues to evolve over a period of time.

In conclusion, external networks of influential business, government, and community leaders are essential to the sustainability of the local and global school

community partnership. School-community partnerships have a greater chance of sustainability when they emanate from external sources versus internal sources.

Although the program has contributed greatly to the Dalton community, the major themes and problems have been the integration of the program. Although a community and school partnership may have the qualities listed in the research, politics play a major role in the development of the program: the politics of central offices, school boards, administrative portions of the school, and the most important portion of politics--the makeup of the federal government. According to one member, due to the political climate of the anti-immigration in the United States, people who are accepting to other cultures and societies change. Especially, he states, "When they are not use to being surrounded around another culture." He continues by suggesting that not all Hispanics are bad people, and they do not want to commit any harm to Americans. The goal is to improve their life financially and provide for their families. In addition to politics, getting personnel to buy-in and believe a partnership will succeed and benefit the community. The overall accomplishment of the Georgia Project, in this research, has illustrated the necessary capacity building to continue to be sustained in this community, not only for the purpose of the exchange among teachers, but its continuous improvement of cultural competence, improvement of student performance, improvement of economic stability for the cities, and improvement of academic long-

term success for the Latino community and the communities that the Georgia Project serves.

5.2   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1.   A study to examine the influences of local and political issues and decisions on school-community partnerships to determine if there are any recurring issues that continuously affect the schools from a political perspective would be advantageous. The Georgia Project model has been able to utilize the social, the political, and the economic connections of the Project's founder to help with the planning, the initiation, and the maintenance of the Project. These connections were the key to providing the Georgia Project teachers with the opportunities to improve Latino students' cultural approach to American schools and academic approach in class. Due to the orientation and planning of the Georgia project, teachers from the Georgia Project, upon leaving and arriving to Whitfield County, assisted and their previous education contributed to the success of the schools. Local politics played a major role in securing funding for the Georgia Project and have continued to affect the Georgia Project. Such studies as the one recommended here, which examines political influence in K-12 schools, may provide insight regarding anticipated

political issues as participants attempt to create a joint venture between schools and communities.

2. An investigation that examines the commonalities and differences between community partnerships should be initiated to compare the mission and success of two different types of school community partnerships. The first, being one that originates with a single school or a school district and another that originates in the community as a response to conditions observed in the school or school district. The Georgia Project is a school-community partnership that originated in the community rather than within a school district. Consequently, its mission and activities were not limited by K-12 educational and administrative boundaries. As suggested in the findings, the founder of the Georgia Project was not aware of the limitations that schools encountered in creating programs to help English Language Learners or other special populations. Because the Georgia Project was not a program initiated by the school district, there were many more opportunities the Project could explore in seeking solutions to help students in the community. For example, the Georgia Project established a summer institute at the University of Monterrey in Mexico as part of a teacher exchange program. There are very few K-12 schools in the United States that have an international partnership with a foreign university, especially those partnerships that originated outside the school district. Future studies might

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explore how K-12 schools in the United States can seek outside resources to establish partnerships with international components.

3. In districts where there is an influx of non-English speakers in the community, the scope and importance of cultural competence ought to be carefully examined. In the findings, the group interviews with American teachers who attended the summer institute revealed that as a result of this training, many of the teachers exhibited a finer understanding of the cultural context of students from Mexico. This cultural experience allowed instructors to improve their knowledge base, to improve their pedagogy, and to create authentic instruction for their ESOL learners. A study that investigates the effect of cultural experiences on instructors' pedagogy in the classroom would assist in discovering methods that would improve teacher and student learning.

4. Among schools that have an influx of non-English speakers, a case study of partnerships with international institutions of higher education should be launched to enhance community understanding of the benefits such pairings could provide. The Georgia Project was able to establish an international connection with the University of Monterrey which created avenues for students, teachers, and administrators to improve their approach to global education. Partnerships created with international

institutions bring different cultural contexts. As suggested by a professor from the University of Monterrey, Mexico, the partnership with the American school district created an exchange of ideas that improved the preparation of English language teachers in Mexico, giving significant authentic experiences to instructors' understanding. This partnership also created a multicultural community allowing learners to view themselves as global citizens. Presently, the project has an exchange program for K-12 students; this exchange program expands the cultural competence of students, both in the United States and Mexico. An examination of school districts that consider working with various programs, such as the Georgia Project, would aid in opening cultural opportunities for teachers as well as students in districts with high populations of ELLs.

5. The long-term effects of the Georgia Project and its effectiveness in adapting to its environment should be studied as well. A recommendation of systematic data collection would establish how the Georgia Project helped this community and would aid in replication in similar environments. This data collection would assist foundations and other organizations in adaptive modeling, thereby contributing to research that will improve academic and cultural skills of ELLs.

6. The longitudinal effects of the Georgia Project on those students who participated in the Project over the last ten years should be carefully considered. The Georgia Project assisted in preparing students who have since received scholarships from postsecondary institutions, have completed associate degrees, and who are now planning to complete a four year degree. According to the Executive Director of the Georgia Project, 34 students received two-year scholarships. One student has completed an undergraduate degree, and another has completed a Master's degree in Education and is teaching in the Dalton school district. It is recommended that future studies analyze how this program shaped and molded participating students who have since matriculated into post-secondary education. This particular study would prove a valuable addition to our present scholarship, as well.

7. A case study that examines the Georgia Project's effectiveness in helping to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) should be undertaken as soon as practicable. The support of the Georgia Project provided the school district with the additional resources necessary to become more successful in negotiating the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Because the NCLB focuses on holding schools accountable for the improvement of English Language Learners, the Georgia Project provided specialized training to enable teachers to implement pedagogy to improve students' classroom learning. According to one administrator,

"Without the Georgia Project, we would have not made AYP." Studies focusing on the approach of the Georgia Project in meeting specific components of NCLB, such as improving the learning of English Language Learners, can assist other school districts in their understanding of how outside programs, such as the Project, can facilitate in the improvement of schools with high ELL learners, overall.

APPENDIX A

Definition of Terms

1. **Community**: All stakeholders involved in a partnership including parents, business, and schools that work towards a common goal.

2. **Partnership**: An agreement between two or more parties on the task that should be accomplished.

3. **School and Community Partnership**: A partnership among members of a community, a business, and schools for the common success of both a community and schools.

4. **Capacity Building**: The process of connecting partnerships together for the establishment and sustainability of a program.

5. **Georgia Project**: A community and school partnership established throughout the state of Georgia which provides various services for the improvement of Hispanic students in the community.

6. **Hispanic**: People from Latin American Countries.

7. **Brown People**: A term used by the community to identify Latin American people.

8. **Center for Applied Linguistics**: A private, nonprofit organization working to improve communication through better understanding of language and culture located in Washington, D.C.

9. **Sheltered Instruction**: A teaching approach promoting development of a second language while simultaneously facilitating mastery of academic content taught through that second language. This approach can be used with a first language if students lack proficiency in the language for academic purposes.

10. **Shared Responsibility**: Obligation among all stakeholders involved in a partnership.

11**. English of Speakers of Other Language (ESOL)**: Learners who are identified as still in the process of acquiring English as a second language; they may not

speak English at all or, at least, do not speak, understand, and write English with the same facility as their classmates, because they did not grow up speaking English.

12. **Empowerment**: Helping individuals or groups of people and communities to have confidence and establish self-actualization for themselves.

13. **Involvement**: Groups of people and individuals becoming a part of a process.

14. **Written Agreement**: A written contract among parties.

15. **ACLA**: Alianza Comunitaria Latino Americana, a community that has been establish by the Georgia Project consisting of business leaders of the Latino community.

APPENDIX B

Georgia Project Timeline

Georgia Project Timeline

- 1994 -1995: Leslie Zeller observes children in the Dalton Schools, becomes concerned, and reports to her father, Mr. Erwin Mitchell

- 1995: Mr. Mitchell then decides to put together a group of individuals to speak to instructors from the school (newspaper editor, bank representative, and business man).

- May, 1995: Mr. Mitchell goes to an elementary school to observe the problems indicated by Leslie Zeller.

- Fall, 1995: Mr. Mitchell meets with the school board/school district to discuss concerns in the school. The school board can not believe the situation in the city of Dalton.

- August, 1996: Mr. Mitchell approaches the chief executive officer of a local carpet mill to discuss helping Latino students in the school as well as in the community.

- August, 1996: The CEO makes initial contact with a business partner who is on the Board at the University of Monterrey—the University of Monterrey makes initial contact with the Georgia Project.

- Fall, 1996: The University of Monterrey invites the Georgia Project members to Monterrey, Mexico.

- December, 1996: Mr. Mitchell (and representatives from the Dalton schools and community) arrives and discusses the problems with the University representatives. The University of Monterrey, the Georgia Project members, and the school districts decide on a plan to help the Latino learners in the community.

- December, 1996: Mr. Mitchell invites the University of Monterrey representatives to Dalton, GA.

- January, 1997: The University of Monterrey representatives arrive and are amazed at the influx of the Latino community into Dalton.

- March, 1997: The Monterrey Accord is signed.

- May, 1997. The City of Dalton donates $750,000 to pilot the Georgia Project for a three-year period.

- June, 1997: Teachers from the schools are sent to the summer institute at the University of Monterrey.

- October, 1997: Teachers from the University of Monterrey are sent to Dalton, GA to integrate into the Dalton City schools and the Whitfield County Schools.

- Students immediately begin to make progress in schools and parents become more involved.

- November, 1997: The ACLA organization is created.

- 1999: Representatives from the offices of Senators Cleland and Coverdell visit Dalton to learn more about the Georgia Project.

- January, 2000: The national organization of Center for Applied Linguistics does a needs assessment for the Whitefield County area.

- Spring, 2000: Senators Cleland and Coverdell submit funding requests for the Georgia Project.

- September, 2001: The Center for Applied Linguistics provides professional development, known as sheltered instruction, to improve instructors' pedagogy. These workshops have been on-going since this date.

- Fall, 2001: College scholarships for Georgia Project students begins with Dalton College.

- Spring, 2002: Beginning of the student exchange program with the University of Monterrey, Mexico.

- January, 2004: Congressman Bishop from South Georgia comes to Dalton and observes success. He would like to make this project a national model and expand to the southern portion of the state.

- Fall, 2004: Georgia Project is expanded to South Georgia with the Partnership of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

- The Project's impact is continued and Latinos in schools that are involved with the Georgia Project make Annual Yearly Progress.

- Georgia Project teachers become involved in various counties in North Georgia which have the same needs.

- Latino students' performance improves.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions for School, Administrators, Teachers, and

Georgia Project Members

1. How did the Georgia Project begin?

2. Who were the major players in this event?

3. Why did this project get started?

4. What activities contributed to the town providing support for this program?

5. What were the critical incidents that influenced the start of this program?

6. What are the important elements that make this partnership unique?

7. How does the partnership affect the community?

8. What has been established for this program to be sustained over time?

9. According to the members, what are the embedded strategies that help align all members involved in this community and school partnership?

10. Is there a written agreement?

11. Who is involved in this partnership?

12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me concerning the project?

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions for Institutions of Higher Learning

1. Why did your institution become a part of this project?

2. What is the role of your institution in this project?

3. How did this partnership begin?

4. Who initiated this partnership?

5. How is this partnership beneficial to the university?

6. How long have you been a part of this partnership?

7. What have you put in place to continue this partnership?

8. Was there a written agreement with the school district?

9. Are there shared responsibilities among the school district and the institution?

10. Who is involved in this partnership?

11. Is there anything else you would like to tell me concerning the Georgia Project?

APPENDIX E

Questions for Community Members

1. What can you tell me about the Georgia Project?

2. Do you know how this program began?

3. What is the role of the community in the Georgia Project?

4. How does the school keep you involved?

5. How has the school reached out to help the outcome of the program?

6. What has the community done to help the program continue?

7. Do you know first hand how the students are performing in this program?

8. Is there a written agreement for the Georgia Project?

9. Does the community help with the funding of this program?

APPENDIX F

Consent for Audio Recording & Transcription

Local and Global Capacity Building for a Sustainable School-Community Partnership:

Implications for Policy and Practice

Sito Narcisse & University of Pittsburgh School of Education

I understand that this study involves the audio recording of my interview with the researcher. Neither my name nor any other identifying information will be associated with audiotape or the transcript. Only the researcher(s) will be permitted to listen to the tapes.

I understand that the tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of my interview may be reproduced on whole or on part of use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither my name nor any other identifying information (such as my voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study.

I further understand that immediately following the interview, I will be given the opportunity to have the tape erased.

Please check one of each pair of options.

A. _____   I consent to have my interview taped.

_____ I do <u>not</u> consent to have my interview taped.

B. _____ I consent to have my interview transcribed into written form.

_____ I do <u>not</u> consent to have my taped interview transcribed.

The above permissions are in effect until 4/15/07. On or before that date, tapes will be destroyed.

Please check the following:

C. _____ I consent to the use of the written transcription in presentation or written products resulting from the study provided that neither my name nor other identifying information will be associated with the transcripts.

_____ I do <u>not</u> consent to the use of my written transcription in presentation or written products resulting from the study.

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

I hereby agree to abide by the participant's above instructions.

_____   _____

Investigator's Signature   Date

APPENDIX G

Features for Capacity Building Map with Georgia Project Included

Table 4 Community and School Partnership Features For Capacity Building with Georgia Project

Programs	Parental Involvement	Community Involvement	Empowerment	Connecting School and Community	Funding	Partnerships that Foster Academic Achievement	Shared Responsibility	Provision of Family Services	Written Agreement	Positive Attitude
Carpentaria California Community Partnership	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Pew Charitable Trust	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Adopt-a-School		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
America's Promise	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Kellogg Foundation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Mac Donald Research Partnership		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Mall of America in Partnership School Districts		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Dade County's Satellite in Partnership with Businesses		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Georgia Project	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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