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# Schools' Mission Statements, Local Education Agencies' Strategic Plans, and School Accountability

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Schools' Mission Statements, Local Education Agencies' Strategic Plans, and School

Accountability


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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

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**Abstract**

This study examined the role alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan had on their students' overall academic performance in achieving any of the seven distinctions and a *met standard* rating on the 2016–2017 Texas Education Agency's school accountability system. Data were used to determine if there was a higher rate of alignment between Title I or non-Title I schools' mission statements and LEA's strategic plan. The conceptual framework of this multiple case study was grounded in Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation, utilizing critical incident technique as an organizational tool, which called for three pieces of data: identification of objective, identification of action steps, and evaluation based on performance measures. The school mission statements were used to identify the objectives, the LEAs' strategic plans were used to identify the action steps, and the school report cards were used as the performance measures. Schools and LEAs qualified for this study if the school mission statement and the LEA's strategic plans were available on-line. The major sources of data were the content analysis of seven case schools' mission statements and the LEAs' strategic plans, and the information provided on the school report cards produced by TEA. While the study did not reveal significant new data in the research related to school mission statements, strategic plans, and school accountability systems, it did provide some insight for school leaders looking to rewrite their school mission statements to better reflect LEA strategic plans and school accountability measures.

*Key words:* mission statements, strategic plans, accountability, objective-based evaluation

**Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandparents – John and Alice Holomshek.  Two people who never wanted me to be anyone other than who I was meant to be.

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## Chapter 1

**Introduction**

At the end of World War II, a Cold War dawned pitting the democratic United States of America against the communist United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR).  These two superpowers soon began dividing the world along treaty lines – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, headed by the United States, and the Warsaw Pact, overseen by the USSR.  An arms race commenced, each superpower working furiously to out-produce and out-destroy each other.  This conflict reached its peak in 1957 when the USSR launched *Sputnik,* the first satellite, into space (Wissehr, Concannon, & Barrow, 2011).  This single event was used by President Eisenhower to convey a message of school inferiority to the public.  In response to the dire message supported by the president regarding the lack of American preparedness, an emphasis was placed on math and science education in order to not be outperformed by the USSR (Cohen, 2013).

As a result of the belief that the schools of the United States were inferior, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed in 1958.  The intent was to provide the country with a national defense infrastructure, which led to the increase in number of loans offered to students moving on to study at colleges and universities (Kessinger, 2011).  In the mid-1960s, the United States passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts, which placed an emphasis on educating the children of the poor (Kessinger, 2011).  This led to the creation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which provided the government a tool to track the academic progress of students in Grades K-12 in the United States.  This has been the only assessment that allowed a state-by-state comparison of students' academic performance in math, science, reading, writing, and other selected contents in grades 4, 8, and 12.  This nation's report

card, so to speak, provided an annual snapshot of the average student's academic performance, but it did not provide a true understanding of how well all students were performing academically (Kessinger, 2011).  In 1983, the desire for a more comprehensive school accountability system would emerge.

School accountability within the United States is a product of a series of legislative acts passed since the early 1980s (Deming & Figlio, 2016).  In 1983, President Reagan called for the formation of a committee to assess the state of education within the United States.  This study was identified as *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and highlighted how the state of education prevented the United States from operating at the same level as other industrialized nations.  *A Nation at Risk* provided the information and documentation necessary for lawmakers to begin considering extensive federal legislation in regards to education (Scott, 2011).  Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama each passed educational reforms with the goal of creating citizens that would be able to compete in a global economy (Deming & Figlio, 2016; Scott, 2011).  Through their work, legislation, such as GOALS 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 (Scott, 2011), No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), were implemented over the years.  These pieces of legislation each attempted to reform education and placed an emphasis on the overall academic performance of students educated in public institutions across the United States.  Politicians believed by legislating academic proficiency measures and common curricula, the academic performance of students would improve and schools could be held to the high standards put in place by accountability systems at both the federal and state levels (Deming & Figlio, 2016; Scott, 2011).

The pressure on schools and local education agencies (LEAs) grew over time and forced them to provide the evidence necessary to demonstrate an increase in their students' overall

academic performance in an attempt to satisfy the federal legislation. Tools that schools and

LEAs used to communicate were mission statements and strategic plans. School leaders began

publishing mission statements and the leaders of LEAs published strategic plans to communicate

to the public their overall aims and goals for students within their boundaries that were aligned

with state and federal legislative acts (Kosmutzky, 2012). Organizations used mission

statements and strategic plans to clearly state and express their overall purposes and intents.

Mission statements operated as a public relations tool, a manifesto of purpose for an

organization, and a public accountability tool (Stemler & Bebell, 2012). Strategic plans were

designed and implemented with the purpose of helping the leaders of schools and LEAs manage

their day-to-day operations with their mission statements serving as guides (Wyk & Moeng,

2014). Accountability systems in education were implemented as a way to monitor and assess a

school's effectiveness in ensuring all students were educated to the standards identified by state

and national government initiatives, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress

(Deming & Figlio, 2016; Kessinger, 2011).

This multiple case study explored the connection between a school's published mission

statement, its LEA's strategic plan, and the school's students' overall academic performance on

state school accountability measures. In addition, the study attempted to explain what

connection a school's Title I status had on alignment of its mission statement and its LEA's

strategic plan and if this alignment was an apparent component for school success on the

accountability system, as measured by students' overall academic performance. School success

for this study was based on whether the students' overall academic performance led to the school

receiving a *met standard* rating on the LEA's school accountability system from the 2016-2017

school year. In addition, the study attempted to determine if alignment influenced the number of

distinctions a school received.  This multiple case study had the potential to address a gap that exists in studies related to mission statements, strategic plans, and accountability measures by highlighting examples revealing whether devoting resources to ensuring alignment were needed for overall school and LEA success as measured by state standards.

**Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem**

In 1983, President Reagan formed a committee under the guidance of the Department of Education to determine the state of education within the United States (Deming & Figlio, 2016). The resulting report revealed the United States trailed behind other industrialized countries, and it highlighted a disconnect between the vision of schools and the education provided by K-12 institutions around the country.  Politicians demanded a system to monitor schools for academic performance.  As a result, the first form of school rankings and accountability measures emerged (Deming & Figlio, 2016).  From this work in 1983, major legislation pertaining to education emerged, including GOALS 2000: Educate America Act of 1994, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

GOALS 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 was signed into law by President Bill Clinton and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act from 1965 (Kessinger, 2011).  The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was adopted by United States politicians in 1965 and addressed the educational gaps of students in poverty-stricken areas (Kessinger, 2011).  In addition, GOALS 2000: Educate America Act required schools to implement performance standards and assessments to measure the students' abilities to meet the implemented standards.  This key legislation planted the two words – standards and accountability – into the vernacular of politicians and educators alike (Kessinger, 2011).  NCLB continued this expectation of standards and accountability and increased federal oversight on the

public schools.  NCLB sought to link high-stakes testing to school accountability and the use of

sanctions if schools did not meet criteria for adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Dee & Jacob,

2011).

The major flaw exposed in NCLB was the loss of teacher autonomy and the requirement

to use scripted curriculum, such as Read First (Dennis, 2017).  Teachers were required to teach

the scripted curriculum, and their ability to adapt instruction to meet the needs of all of their

students was removed.  A teacher's ability to teach was determined by his or her students'

performance on high-stakes testing, not on their ability to foster academic growth in their

students.  President Obama sought to implement legislation to help reduce the amount of scripted

teaching and the high-stakes testing culture that was proving to have a negative impact on

teacher performance and students' reading proficiency (Dennis, 2017).  ESSA (2015) came to

fruition and created a framework to provide a more comprehensive education for students.  In

addition, instead of teachers having to follow a published curriculum, their professional

development provided the opportunity for them to grow in their profession in order to seek out

the best research-based instruction for their students from a variety of resources.  This legislation

attempted to put the teaching back in the hands of the teachers.  But while ESSA required less

time devoted to testing in classrooms across the nation, it still maintained a component of high-

stakes testing accountability that is still found in the standardized tests required by all 50 states

(Dennis, 2017).

One tool schools used to convey adherence to identified government goals is the

publication of mission statements (Chapple, 2015; Kosmutzky, 2012).  In addition, mission

statements have been studied as a tool to predict school and student performance using

accountability measures identified by government entities or other governing boards (Genç,

2012; Perfetto, Holland, Davis, & Fedynich, 2013; Slate, Jones, Wiesman, Alexander, & Saenz, 2008). Stemler and Bebell (2012) published research that identified key themes highlighted in mission statements of high-performing schools around the United States. In addition, they uncovered data that emphasized the importance of using mission statements as a marketing tool and a guideline by which schools could be measured and held accountable.

In an attempt for schools to maintain some level of local control in the decision-making process, leaders of LEAs used strategic plans to provide direction and guidance for schools within their jurisdiction (Wyck & Moeng, 2014). Mission statements were designed to support the strategic plan of an organization; while, at the same time, strategic plans were designed to help an organization work toward its identified mission statement (Özdem, 2011). Pourrajb, Mahdinezhad, Mijandi, Basri, and Nazari (2011) determined a link existed among the organizational health of organizations, its mission statements, and its strategic plans, revealing the importance of having an alignment between mission statements and strategic plans. If no alignment existed between the two, administrators had a more difficult time achieving success as revealed by their students' academic success and teacher retention (Pourrajb et al., 2011).

This study drew upon two theories for its conceptual framework in order to identify if alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan was an apparent component for school success within the accountability framework. Tyler's model for objectives-based evaluation established the guiding principles for the conceptual framework of this study (Spaulding, 2014). In addition, the critical incident technique (CIT) was a tool that was used to organize the data of the study into usable components to integrate the conceptual framework throughout the entire study (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005). In Tyler's model for objectives-based evaluation, three components were

examined: objectives, action steps, and evaluation according to performance measures (Spaulding, 2014). Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011) applied Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation to a detailed analysis of school mission statements. They sought to determine if mission statements could be used as a reflection tool to improve school performance.

Through their research, Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation identified four reasons why mission statements should be used when identifying a school's purpose and its actions (Stemler, Bebell, & Sonnabend, 2011). First, most schools were required to have a mission statement, according to its accrediting body. Second, mission statements were public domain information, making them relatively easy for a researcher to gain access. Third, countless studies have been conducted to codify mission statements, thereby turning them into quantitative data, if needed. And lastly, they concluded that mission statements were found in the most effective schools, and they were absent from the least-effective schools. In order for Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation to be applied effectively to this researcher's study, a school's mission statement was used as its identified objective, the LEA's strategic plan was used for identified action steps, and state accountability measures were used as the performance measures to determine if the alignment between objectives and action steps was apparent.

CIT was a tool used along with Tyler's model to determine if alignment between school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans was apparent for students' satisfactory performance on the state accountability system. CIT was designed in the 1940s and 1950s by John C. Flanigan as a tool to be used in order to determine if a person possessed the skills to be an effective fighter pilot in the U.S. Army Air Forces (Bott & Tourish, 2016). The use of CIT has grown to include other industry fields, including medicine, social work, psychology, and others (Bott & Tourish, 2016). This qualitative framework was designed using five key steps:

identify the activity under investigation, develop the plan for analysis, collect the data, analyze the data, and interpret the data to report out (Vianden, 2012). It worked to identify common traits among multiple perspectives in order to determine criteria for others by which to abide by (Gremler, 2004). In this researcher's study, the rate of alignment was the activity under investigation. The content analysis provided the tool for data collection and data analysis. The interpretation of the data involved understanding how the school's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan were related and if a high rate of alignment led to an identifiable increase in a school's ability to achieve the *met standard* rating and any of the seven distinctions as identified by the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) accountability system.

By combining Tyler's model for objectives-based evaluation with the tool of CIT, this study was able to provide a unique view on the connection between a school's mission statement, its LEA's strategic plan, and the school's accountability rating based on overall student academic performance. This study used the rate of alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan to determine if a high rate of alignment was needed for a *met standard* rating. Alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan, and the descriptors of the school accountability indices and distinctions were used to see if a high rate of alignment resulted in a higher performance rating on the school accountability system, as determined by the number of distinctions awarded to the school.

**Statement of the Problem**

The literature review of mission statements and school accountability revealed a crucial piece of missing data. There have been studies conducted to identify present and absent themes of mission statements (Chapple, 2015; Kosmutzky & Krucken, 2015; Perfetto et al., 2013; Stemler, Bebell, & Sonnabend, 2012) and studies that attempted to identify correlations between

student performance and mission statements (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Leonard & Huang, 2014); however, the research was almost entirely lacking in terms of the ability to determine if a relationship existed among mission statements, strategic plans, and a school's performance on a state's accountability system based on students' overall academic performance (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Leonard & Huang, 2014).  It was not known if and how alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan determined a school's success on state accountability measures.  This study addressed whether alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan was an apparent component for overall student performance to meet criteria for a school to achieve a *met standard* rating as determined by the overall academic performance of students' as measured by the four indices - student achievement, student progress, closing the achievement gap, and postsecondary readiness. Furthermore, the study examined the influence, if any, alignment had on schools qualifying for and receiving any of the seven distinctions - academic achievement in English Language Arts/Reading, academic achievement in mathematics, academic achievement in science, academic achievement in social studies, top 25 percent student progress, top 25 percent closing performance gaps, and postsecondary readiness (2017 Accountability Manual, 2017).

In this study, the researcher's investigation addressed the missing components of mission statement and strategic plan literature.  The study attempted to identify if alignment of a school's mission statement and LEA's strategic plan had any influence on a school's ability to satisfy school accountability requirements.  Understanding if a relationship exists amid alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan is important to student success may help governing entities of LEAs understand if there is value in devoting time and resources to revising and posting mission statements for individual schools.

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**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to determine if a relationship existed between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan and if this alignment was a critical component of school success as measured by student academic performance on the 2016-2017 TEA accountability system. This study used Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation (Spaulding, 2014) and components of CIT (Bott & Tourish, 2016) to determine the influence alignment had on a school's rating as determined by the school accountability system. In this study, CIT was used to evaluate if alignment of mission statements and strategic plans was a critical success factor for the performance of Title I and non-Title I 9–12 public high schools in Texas.

Using Tyler's model as a guiding framework for the evaluation component, the study consisted of a content analysis of school mission statements and LEA strategic plans to help determine alignment and included an analysis to determine if alignment is an apparent component for school success. The content analysis was based on the research of Stemler and Bebell (2012 and Stemler et al. (2011). They developed a rubric organized around 11 themes that have been identified consistently in the mission statements of schools. The 11 themes were the following: academic achievement, social development, emotional development, civic development, physical development, vocational development, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment, challenging environment, and *integrate* into spiritual community. Open-coding was used to identify additional words that indicated the themes and allowed the researcher to code information in a variety of ways (Glaser, 2016).

**Research Questions**

Specifically, the following research questions were developed using Tyler's model and CIT as a framework:

RQ1: How do LEAs with Title I or non-Title I status align their mission statements and strategic plans with Tyler's model's criteria of organization of instruction, learning, evaluation, and feedback?

RQ2: When using the critical incident technique theory, is the alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan apparent for a *met standard* rating on the accountability system?

**Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study**

Mission statements were designed to provide vision and purpose for an organization, and strategic plans provided the framework by which an organization operated to achieve its advertised purpose (Genç, 2012; Wyk & Moeng, 2014). Mission statements allowed an insight into an organization by highlighting government affiliations, such as political parties (Kostmutsky, 2012) and cultural influences, such as a particular race like Chicano (Orozco, 2012) and cultural identities, like the Maori (Chapple, 2015). Accountability systems provided evaluation tools that used a variety of measures to determine school success as measured by political bodies (Deming & Figlio, 2016). The purpose of this study was to link a school's mission statement alignment with its LEA's strategic plan with students' overall academic performance on school accountability measures. By using the mission statement as the objective, the strategic plan as the specific action, and the school report card as the evaluation tool, Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation and CIT were used to better understand if alignment is an apparent component of school success.

The significance of the study was its capacity to add to the literature concerning the need for alignment between a school's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan and the role the alignment plays in students' overall academic performance. Strategic plans and mission statements provided insight into the goals and objectives a school and its LEA were working toward in the charge to educate (Genç, 2012; Wyk & Moeng, 2014). The evaluation tool for this study was the data acquired from TEA's 2016-2017 school report cards that indicated if a school achieved a *met standard* rating and the distinctions that were awarded as a result of a school's performance in its 40-school comparison group. The multiple case study provided a qualitative tool with which to investigate whether or not alignment was an apparent component for school and LEA success as measured by state accountability measures. The research in this study may allow leaders of schools and LEAs to determine if there is value in devoting time and resources to revising mission statements to align with the strategic plans of their LEAs.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

**Accountability**. Accountability has been defined as a tool that "seeks to hold educational institutions responsible for student outcomes using tools ranging from performance 'report cards' to explicit rewards and sanctions" (Deming & Figlio, 2016, p. 33). The accountability system used in this study was used by TEA during the 2016–2017 school year. This was the transition year between NCLB and ESSA.

**Distinctions**. There were seven distinctions schools were eligible for on the 2016–2017 TEA school accountability system. In order for a school to have had qualified for a distinction, schools must have achieved a *met standard* rating by receiving qualifying scores for their students' academic performance on the four indices. Schools were required to perform in the top

quartile of their 40-school comparison group in order to achieve any of the distinctions.  The seven distinctions were academic achievement in ELA, academic achievement in mathematics, academic achievement in science, academic achievement in social studies, top 25% student progress, top 25% closing achievement gaps, and postsecondary readiness (2017 Accountability Manual, 2017).

**Improvement required**. *Improvement required* is a rating assigned to LEAs and schools that do not meet the target scores on required indices (2017 Accountability Manual, 2017).

**Index (Indices)**. Indices measure different indicators to identify areas of strength and needed improvement.  The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has identified four indices in their accountability system: (a) student achievement, (b) student progress, (c) closing performance gaps, and (d) postsecondary readiness.  Each school has the potential of receiving a score from 0 to 100 for each index.  The minimum score needed for each index is determined by the Texas Commissioner of Education (2017 Accountability Manual, 2017).

**Local Education Agency (LEA)**. Local Education Agencies are independent school districts in Texas tasked with providing free public elementary/secondary instruction whose operations are overseen by elected school boards ("Local Education Agencies," n.d.).

**Met standard**. *Met standard* is achieved when campuses reach the index target on all four the indices of the accountability system (2017 Accountability Manual, 2017).

**Title I**. Title I is a federal funding program overseen by the U.S. Department of Education that identifies schools and LEAs with a high number or percentage of children from low-income families and provides financial resources to help all students perform at the high level required by state and federal academic measures (Title I Part a, 2015).

**Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

**Assumptions.** For purposes of this study, it was assumed that the school mission statements and the LEAs' strategic plans were written to reflect some of the ideas found in TEA's accountability system for the 2016-2017 school year. In order to support this belief, it was also assumed that all schools have current mission statements that reflected the direction and vision as determined by the school and its LEA. Additionally, it was understood that schools were working toward satisfying its mission statements through all of its actions related to instruction and curriculum, which were aligned to the initiatives identified in its LEAs' strategic plans. Furthermore, it was assumed the LEAs have strategic plans that reflect the resources dedicated to the running of individual schools that were relevant to the 2016-2017 school year.

**Limitations.** Gerring (2004) defined a case study as an "intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (p. 342). Gerring argued that case studies were not necessarily the most understood research design, but they were commonly used in the social sciences to form generalizations based on a few specific examples. Multiple case studies, in particular, suffered from the limitation of time and ability to thoroughly analyze the individual cases under review (Gerring, 2004). This study consisted of seven cases selected based on availability of a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan. This decision was made due to Gerring's (2004) observation of time being identified as a flaw in multiple case research design. Additional limitations of this study included the use of direct content analysis, the inability to determine the date the mission statements were created, and knowledge on how they were created, a lack of interviews, and researcher error.

**Delimitations.**  The delimitations of this study included the schools and LEAs selected for participation.  Each school or LEA was selected based on having online resources available.  If mission statements were not found through the school websites, the schools were not selected for the study.  If the LEA did not have an online strategic plan, it was not selected for the study.  Geographic location was also a delimitation in this study.  In addition, geographic location was considered to help narrow the list of eligible schools and LEAs.  LEAs were selected from three geographic location types in Texas: rural, suburban, and urban.  LEAs identified as other central city, independent town, non-metropolitan, and other central city suburban were not considered for the study.

Title 1 status was also a delimitation of this study.  Not all LEA types possessed an LEA that did not receive Title I funds.  While it was relatively easy to find Grades 9–12 high schools that did not receive Title I funds, it was difficult to apply the same rules to the LEAs

**Summary**

The current trend in politics related to education reform continues to revolve around designing and implementing accountability measures that provide a glimpse into the overall effectiveness of schools and LEAs.  Mission statements and strategic plans provided avenues for leaders of schools and LEAs to express their goals to the community and the public they serve.  School report cards provided an evaluation tool that can be used to determine how effective a school is at achieving the stated mission.  This study examined how effective it was to use the rate of alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan in order to predict a school's success on accountability measures, as determined by students' overall academic performance.

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study with a brief explanation of the current research that exists regarding mission statements, strategic plans, and the TEA accountability system.  The conceptual framework used to facilitate the design of the multiple case study was also introduced.  Chapter 2 provides a more detailed examination of the conceptual framework and the literature that describes the purpose of mission statements, accountability measures, and strategic plans.  Chapter 3 describes the multiple case study design and details the specific research methods and protocols of this study.  Chapter 4 presents the data of the study, including a presentation of the data collected through a direct content analysis.  Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the results as they are related to the research questions and current research and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

**Introduction**

This chapter is organized into six distinct parts: conceptual framework, review of the research literature, methodological literature review, methodological limitations, synthesis of research findings, and critique of the previous research. The conceptual framework provides an overview of theory driving the structure of the study. The following five sections provide an overview of the research pertaining to accountability and mission statements in educational institutions throughout the world. These sections work together to accurately illustrate how accountability measures and mission statements are used within educational institutions.

The research literature consists of the following topics: (a) an overview of accountability in education, (b) the purpose of mission statements, (c) mission statements related to school effectiveness, and (d) the present and absent themes of mission statements. This chapter provides an in-depth review of previous studies' structures by focusing on studies using content analysis.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study examined the alignment between Texas public high schools' mission statements and its LEAs strategic plans and how that was related to a Title I or a non-Title I high school's students' academic performance as measured by state accountability measures. The conceptual framework used for this study drew on Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation (Spaulding, 2014). In addition, CIT was used as a tool to organize the data for the objectives-based evaluation (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Butterfield et al, 2005). Objectives-based evaluation models were created to provide focus on an evaluation of an organization's ability to obtain its objectives based on measurable outcomes (Spaulding, 2014, p. 44). CIT was the tool used to help identify critical factors necessary for success (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Butterfield et al.,

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2005), which have been applied to several different fields of study, from military programs to nursing programs.

**Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation**.  Wraga (2017) conducted a historical study examining the life and work of Dr. Ralph W. Tyler.  Tyler had a career in education that spanned most of the 20th century.  He used his career to develop the groundwork for objectives-based evaluation in school settings from the 1940s to the 1960s (Spaulding, 2014), which will be referred to as Tyler's model for objectives-based evaluation for this work.  Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation consisted of three parts: (a) identify of the objective (goal), (b) develop a plan to meet the objective, and (c) collect the evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the objective and the plan (Spaulding, 2014).  Wraga (2017) analyzed Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation and concluded that this model of evaluation examined the reality of schools; how the students, teachers, and staff were functioning in the schools; and the use of evaluation tools to determine the success of the efforts.  Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation has continued to be applied in program evaluations and has found relevance in studies conducted in the use of mission statements in educational settings (Stemler et al., 2011; Stemler & Bebell, 2012).  Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation was designed to provide education leaders a means of evaluating their programs of curriculum and instruction to ensure overall objectives and goals were being met (Kridel, 2010).

Stemler et al. (2011) used Tyler's model of objective-based evaluation in their study of mission statements in education.  The use of objectives-based evaluation for mission statements provided them a way to systematically measure a variety of educational settings.  Stemler et al. (2011) sought to explore the connection using mission statements as quantifiable measures for reflection with sample schools from 10 states.  Their adaptation of Tyler's model of objectives-

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based evaluation provided a tool for determining "alignment among program objectives, implementation, and assessment" (Stemler et al., 2011, p. 385). Since mission statements have been required for a growing number of accrediting bodies, this provided a common objective with which to evaluate a school's overall adherence to a published mission statement. The evaluation component was derived from the high-stakes testing employed by the federal and state governments to determine the overall effectiveness of a publicly funded K–12 institution. The researcher's role in this type of evaluation of mission statements had been to "establish the objectives (criteria), collect the necessary data from the treatment and comparison classrooms, analyze the data, and determine if one high school model met a greater number of the objectives than the other" (Stemler et al., 2011, p. 46).

By using Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation, Stemler et al. (2011) established four primary reasons why mission statements should be used to determine if the purpose of schooling was truly being implemented in their sample schools. First, most accrediting bodies required a mission statement. Second, mission statements were public-domain information. Third, mission statements had been codified, which made them quantifiable. Lastly, well-crafted mission statements were found in the most effective schools; while mission statements were absent or not easily identifiable for the least effective schools. Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation as a conceptual framework attempted to take a mission statement and determine how it was reflected in the driving purposes behind schools as measured by student academic achievement. Employing ideas provided by Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation, this study used a conceptual framework based on the questions identified by Tyler (as cited in Lau, 2001, p. 32): (a) What educational purposes should the school seek to attain as identified by the mission statement (b) What educational experiences will the LEA strategic plan provide that are

likely to attain these purposes (c) How can we use school performance on the TEA

Accountability System to determine whether the purposes are being obtained?

**Critical incident technique.** Critical incident technique (Bott & Tourish, 2016;

Butterfield et al., 2005) was a tool also used in this multiple case study to help organize the data

for the conceptual framework. CIT was designed in the 1940s and originally used by

behaviorists. Over time it became a case study technique used in all fields of study. There were

five major steps to a CIT-based case study: (a) identify the goal of the activity being studied, (b)

plan the study and identify specificity, (c) collect the data, (d) analyze the data, and (e) interpret

and report the results (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 477). CIT was similar to Tyler's model, for

both require identification of objectives and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategy in

attaining the identified goals. A benefit highlighted with the use of the CIT framework was the

flexibility of the research design and the thick descriptions that has yielded new theory in other

fields of study (Bott & Tourish, 2016).

**Review of the Research Literature and Methodological Literature**

**Types of accountability in education.** Two types of accountability were identified as

the most common in K–12 institutions. The first type was low-risk accountability, which is the

publication of school report cards for the public (Dee & Jacob, 2010). The second type of

accountability was punitive, or consequential, accountability. This type of accountability usually

resulted in tying job assignments and teacher pay to student performance on standardized

measures (Dennis, 2017). Consequential accountability systems were a product of NCLB, which

placed an emphasis on students obtaining mastery on their state assessments. Some states

developed evaluation systems that tied teacher evaluations directly to student performance on

standardized testing, which created an issue when teachers were unable to alter lesson plans

based on student needs because districts were allocating resources to publishers who promised student growth if their programs were carried out with fidelity (Dennis, 2017). Research conducted by Dee and Jacob (2010) analyzed data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to identify and compare trends in multiple states with varying degrees of accountability policies. These researchers illustrated that schools which published a report card to document their performance on standardized testing had smaller gains in student performance on NAEP scores than schools that were part of a consequential accountability system where consequences were assigned if students failed to meet certain levels of performance on assessment.

**Purpose of mission statements in education.** King, Case, and Premo (2013) analyzed Drucker's 1974 studies to better understand the purpose of a stated mission within an organization. They concluded that Drucker's work identified a crucial first step in the success of organizational development – creation of a mission statement. A well-crafted mission statement contained four pieces of information: "who we are, what we do, what we stand for, and why we do it" (as cited in King, Case, & Premo, 2013, p. 78). This provided a framework around which all else centered within the organization. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, mission statements were revised from applying only to businesses to finding a place and purpose in education (Kosmutzky, 2012). Accreditation entities began requiring mission statements as tools to measure a school's performance toward strategic planning and goals (Barker, 2015; Chapple, 2015; Kosmutzky, 2012;).

Mission statements for educational institutions also provided a marketing tool that highlighted its unique characteristics to clearly identify the school in a manner that would appeal to stakeholders through the community the school served (Cucchiara, 2016). Leaders of

education institutions appealed to their stakeholders by identifying who the stakeholders were within their mission statements (King et al., 2013) and advertising their purpose and goals (Leonard & Huang, 2014). Leonard and Huang (2014) used the idea of purpose and determined further that mission statements defined how the institutions saw themselves and how they wanted others, including stakeholders, to view the organization.

Mission statements served as a form of advertisement for educational institutions as well. Genç's (2012) research highlighted how mission statements were the first step in formulating a strategic plan that guided actions. In addition, mission statements marketed an organization's appeal to society by providing contents and images for which they were known (Genç, 2012). By choosing to use mission statements as a form of advertising, leaders of educational organizations provided a standard by which to judge all their short-term actions that had been made to implement their long-term interests (David, David, & David, 2014).

Since mission statements provided information regarding identified purpose for stakeholders, they also served to help guide what Genç (2012) termed "non-routine decision making" (p. 20). These non-routine decisions consisted of decisions that were not part of the typical day-to-day operations of an organization. Since these decisions were identified as irregular, the mission statement provided a lens by which to examine possible solutions to the decision-making process (Genç, 2012). Mission statements could provide this structure, because they answered these questions: what they do, how it is done, why it is done, and where it is going (Bartelds, Drayer, & Wolfensberger, 2012; King et al., 2013).

Mission statements further reflected identified state political initiatives (Chapple, 2015). Chapple (2015) conducted a study of the mission statements in Japan and New Zealand primary schools. A total of 300 mission statements were reviewed. Japan contributed 150 mission

statements, and New Zealand had 150 in the study. Chapple (2015) highlighted common themes and showed how the expectations of ruling government parties could help dictate the values studied within the mission statements. The ideology of the neoliberal government was reflected in the mission statements, highlighting the empowerment of students to be more active in their learning, and to function within a globalized economy. By specifying the neoliberal ideology in their mission statements, the school leaders demonstrated their adherence to political policies and priorities regarding the overall vision and direction of a society. Government influences in mission statements were supported further by Kosmutzky's (2012) study regarding the mission statements of German universities. By identifying with political aims and ideologies, universities in Germany crafted mission statements reflecting these ideas and allowed them to find ways to obtain the support they needed in carrying out the mission of education. Kosmutzky (2012) concluded the German government was more likely to fund universities with mission statements aligned with current political policy than with universities that were not.

In addition to political influence, cultural values have been found to be reflected in mission statements. Chapple (2015) revealed this to be true regarding mission statements in New Zealand and Japan. The study measured the focus of mission statements and the main purpose of schooling in determining if a relationship existed between the two. A six-themed rubric was created based on the work of Stemler and Adler (as cited in Chapple, 2015). The six themes analyzed in identified mission statements were the following: cognitive/academic, social, emotional, civic, vocational, and physical well-being. A total of 300 primary schools were selected – 150 from Japan and 150 from New Zealand. Key words were identified and categorized according to the six themes. These quantifiable data were used to identify how the posted mission statements in Japan and New Zealand reflected each country's philosophy of

education as found in recent governmental policies, which supported the finding that school mission statements reflected political agendas (Chapple, 2015). This study attempted to show the varying degrees existing in school mission statements in different parts of the world. School leaders in New Zealand and Japan sought to find a balance between the visions of the government and their own local traditions and cultural values. Where New Zealand had more evidence to show they incorporated more political leanings, Japanese schools chose to remain true to older traditions. However, as time moves on, school leaders in New Zealand and Japan will both have to revise their mission statements to show their ability to change and adapt to the rapidly-changing world.

Chapple's (2015) study demonstrated how the mission statements of New Zealand were influenced by the Maori culture. Most mission statements studied identified the importance of a bi-cultural society, which also tied into the identified mission that students needed to be equipped to participate in a globalized economy. The mission statements of Japan focused on the whole individual. School leaders identified who their ideal student was and how their school would produce a well-rounded individual who would be concerned more with his or her place in their community than individual accolades. Schools in Japan reflected older local traditions of community and paid little attention to the concepts encouraged by the regional and national ideas of education and rights of the students to learn attributes, such as autonomy, independence, and creativity. In addition, the mission statements highlighted a growing tie to the English language and Confucian influence, which became a driving force in Japanese culture in the 17th century when it was adopted by the Tokugawa Shogunate. Chapple's (2015) study revealed the effects of the Confucian principles in Japanese culture today through a thorough analysis of school mission statements.

Al-Ani and Ismail (2015) used a mixed-methods study to analyze how mission statements aligned with the philosophy of school administrators and the goals of education as identified by the government of Oman. The first part of the study involved the coding of mission statements from 161 primary schools. The second part of the study consisted of interviewing nine principals. The analysis of the data by the researchers revealed that elementary schools in Oman incorporated Islamic ethical and moral values. Researchers concluded this was due to the religious influence of the majority of the population. This study echoed the findings of Chapple (2015) and Zandstra (2012), whose works found that school mission statements were influenced by cultural beliefs and values.

Zandstra (2012) conducted a qualitative study with content analysis to identify ways in which private schools in the United States and the Netherlands reflected a Christian identity. The study revealed that the mission statements of private schools in the United States were more likely to reference specific religious beliefs of a religious denomination than schools in the Netherlands. She concluded this was in part due to funding sources of the school. The schools in the Netherlands received some funding from the government, allowing them to take a more inclusive approach to Christian ideals in the mission statements, while schools in the United States were required to appeal to specific churches and religious beliefs to receive funding and support.

Hladchenko (2016) conducted a content-analysis study on Ukrainian university mission statements to determine how the government policies influenced the work of universities. The 46 mission statements selected for the study were divided into two cohorts – mission statements created before 2014 and mission statements created after 2014. In 2014, the Ukrainian government passed legislation known as the Revolution of Dignity in order to help Ukrainian

universities incorporate a more global ideology.  The study determined that, to obtain government funding, universities created mission statements which appealed to those approving the needed funding.

Gaztabide-Fernandez, Nicholls, and Arraiz-Matute (2016) used critical discourse analysis (CDA) when they examined the mission statements of urban high schools in Canada and the United States.  Their study focused on publicly funded schools in major urban centers that provided specialized education in the arts and employed a selective admission policy.  The mission statements identified four topics: identification of the school's philosophy of education and how the arts aligned with that philosophy, overall goal/outcome of the school, the types of students served by the school, and what is necessary from teachers and the community to provide an adequate education to those they serve.  The goal of the researchers was not to determine a word choice tally but to examine context and assumptions to determine the meaning behind the words.  They concluded that "mission statements are expressions of the culture of an organization that reflect some of its genuine priorities and values" (p. 31).

This idea was supported further by the work of Orozco (2012), whose study focused on 35 schools in six states that were segregated either Chicano or White.  Orozco (2012) defined Chicano as people of Mexican ethnicity in the United States.  Segregated schools were identified as schools with a student population of 70% or more of either Chicano or White.  Mission statements of the schools were identified and then analyzed four times using problematizing, backgrounding, connotations, and insinuations separately in each reading.  Orozco concluded that mission statements of segregated Chicano schools within the United States illustrated the expectations society had for minority students, which were not aligned to the expectation society had for White students.

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A study conducted by Kosmutzky and Krucken (2015) used CDA to identify sameness and difference within mission statements of German universities.  This study consisted of three parts: (a) discourse analysis of mission statements, (b) inventory of public use of mission statements in 2000, 2004, and 2008, and (c) a hermeneutic sequential analysis and content analysis.  The study revealed that German universities expressed similar goals within mission statements but managed to provide evidence of different specialties that leaders of individual universities used to attract students to their programs.  All the mission statements in these studies (Gaztambide-Fernandez et al., 2016; Kosmutzky & Krucken, 2015; Orozco, 2012) were examined with the intent to look beyond the surface and identify underlying social and political influences on linguistic representations found within mission statements.

Bernhard's (2016) study employed a content analysis method to examine the role diversity played in the mission statements of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I athletic departments.  Mission statements were evaluated on whether they included diversity explicitly, implicitly, as part of policy, indirectly, or no mention at all.  While the mission statements provided evidence of the core values of an organization, little was known of the day-to-day operation of the organization regarding how diversity was promoted or supported in an organization (Bernhard, 2016).

Grbic, Hafferty, and Hafferty (2013) conducted a study using text analysis and network analysis on medical school mission statements in the United States.  Not only was word choice examined, but the study began to look at how themes were used together or in isolation, providing a more complete picture of the values embedded within a medical school's mission statement.  The content analysis used in this study provided evidence to support the idea that mission statements serve as a tool to convey a vision of operation that was grounded in the

environment in which it served.  The study further revealed that common cores values existed in the majority of medical school mission statements, but differences did exist between the public and private universities, highlighting ties to local communities.

Wilson, Meyer, and McNeal (2012) conducted an objective-content analysis and a subjective-content analysis on mission statements of higher education institutions in the United States.  They examined the number of times certain words and phrases were used, then they provided a detailed look at the themes found within the mission statements.  Of the 80 public, higher-education institutions they studied, 35% made no mention of the term diversity.  Diversity was mentioned in mission statements in one of two ways—population demographics or cultural vitality.  Mission statements either mentioned the diverse community that was served or how the goal was to increase the diversity of its student population.

**School mission statements and school effectiveness.**  Leonard and Huang (2014) implemented a quantitative model to study mission statements.  They used a mathematical model that linked individual students' performance and aggregated classroom performance to the university's mission statement.  They measured student learning through final grades and performed a mathematical analysis to determine what parts of the mission statements were supported by the professors and curriculum of the campus.  Instructors noted the learning goals in their syllabi that tied to the mission statement of the school.  Student grades were aggregated at the end of the term.  Then the mathematical model was used to link aggregated student performance to weighted learning objectives that reflected mission statement ideas.  The findings reflected students' mastery of the learning objectives happened about 70% of the time. The researchers believed this indicated that curriculum, content, and/or teaching methods should be improved upon in order for the university to achieve its identified purpose articulated in the

mission statement.  This finding was supported by the work of Stemler et al. (2011) who quantified mission statements to guide targeted improvements within a school to help achieve missions and realize goals.

Craft, Slate, and Bustamante (2009) conducted a study on mission statements of exemplary and academically unacceptable schools in Texas.  They used open coding as words were identified and then summarized by theme based on the interpretations of the readers.  For the themes to be present in a mission statement, they had to emerge ten times in the readings conducted by multiple readers.  Researchers read the mission statements multiple times, and occasional checks were made to ensure coding reliability.  Instead of allowing previous research to dictate the themes, this study allowed the data to identify the themes for the researchers.  The results of this study identified 15 themes, allowing analysis to be conducted to determine what themes were most common for exemplary and academically unacceptable school in Texas.  For example, exemplary schools were more likely to identify themes of life-long learning and capitalizing on students' individual strengths than unacceptable schools.  The researchers concluded that mission statements had the potential to communicate values and influence school culture and climate.

Perfetto, Holland, Davis, and Fedynich (2013) studied mission statements of United States Department of Education (USDE) Blue Ribbon award-winning schools and TEA identified unacceptable high schools.  With the passage of NCLB, states were required to provide a way to measure school performance according to state-mandated testing.  In response to NCLB, TEA created an accountability system that ranked schools as Academically Unacceptable, Academically Acceptable, and Recognized. Schools receiving an Academically Unacceptable rating did not receive the required scores on state-created standardized

assessments.  USDE Blue Ribbons were determined using a federal evaluation system and included the most high-performing schools within the nation.  This study used 50 mission statements from unacceptable high schools and 49 USDE Blue Ribbon high schools. Perfetto et al. (2013) conducted a mixed-methods analysis to identify themes that were present in the context of mission statements of high-performing and low-performing schools in Texas.  The data were then examined through the lens of small-, medium-, and large-sized high schools. The qualitative part of the study came in the identification of themes; and the quantitative part was seen in determining frequency distributions, displaying data, and performing statistical analysis to determine significance.  The study revealed that the USDE Blue Ribbon schools had mission statements that possessed themes of academics, student learning, challenging students, providing a nurturing environment for learning, expecting excellence in student learning, and emphasizing the idea of life-long learning (Perfetto et al, 2013).  Since mission statements provided information on institutional leaders' views of their programs and how they wanted their stakeholders to see them (Leonard & Huang, 2014), a school's measurable academic performance was directly tied to its overall stated mission and purpose (Perfetto et al., 2013).

Research showed that the first step in the school improvement process was to examine the mission statement, revise as needed, and build action plans around the school mission statement (Gurley, Peters, Collins, & Fifolt, 2015).  The periodical revision of mission statements allowed for direction and vision to change as needed to reflect a change in leadership (Slate et al., 2008), a changing society (Perfetto et al., 2013), a changing accreditation rule (Hladchenko, 2016), or the changing laws of education (Kuenssberg, 2011). A study in Iran was conducted to examine the organizational health of high schools.  This was a correlational study that examined school administrator performance and organizational health.  A questionnaire was

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created to ascertain teachers' perspectives on organizational health and administrator performance. The study revealed that, when a principal and others within a school were able to identify the school purpose and function, this was viewed as a positive sign of organizational health, which led to sustainable development (Pourrajab et al., 2011).

Genç's study (2012) used school mission statements and university performance as measured by Turkish Higher Council of Universities to examine the quality of mission statements and university academic performance. Genç (2012) conducted a study presenting the relationship between quality of state universities' mission statements and organizational performance. Mission statements were analyzed for three data points – stakeholders, components, and objectives. This quantitative study found that universities mentioned students and society as primary stakeholders. In addition, industry, services, and academic objectives were the most common to be found in these mission statements. Control mechanisms seemed to be the most common stated objective of a university statement. Genç (2012) concluded that the perfect mission statement would increase school efficiency, lead to cooperation, and lead to government and community support, drawing more students to the university and leading to overall increase in academic performance. Pourrajab et al. (2011) and Genç (2012) revealed in their studies that perspective of school success came from knowing the mission statement and using it as a source with which to measure performance.

**Review of Methodological Issues**

The content analysis method has been a quantitative approach to analyze the qualitative nature of mission statement research. Robinson and Tian (2014) identified the key step in content analysis, which is developing a coding scheme based on sample data. This coding scheme, based on previous research conducted, had been modified to meet the needs of various

research studies. Most research models that employed content analysis method to codify used two or more readers (Özdem, 2011; Stemler et al., 2011; Wilson, Meyer, & McNeal, 2011). Reliability was established when the coders agreed on the content 70% of the time. Once the coding was completed, descriptive statistics were often used to interpret the words and themes used in mission statements.

There have been both advantages and disadvantages to using this type of methodology. The relative ease of understanding the model has been established through the amount of literature available regarding the method. This analysis required content only and did not necessarily call for human data, such as interviews or human input. However, it has often revealed an incomplete picture as to what occurred within an organization, business or education. The content behind the word choices was not understood, and often another layer of research was needed to ensure an accurate picture of intent.

Several studies have used the content-analysis approach when examining mission statements for schools. Genç (2012) used the content-analysis model to study mission statements of state universities in Turkey. Using the work of Bartkus et al. (as cited in Genç, 2012), the study identified four categories with which to read and interpret mission statements: (1) stakeholders, (2) components, (3) objectives, and (4) performance. This was a correlational study that attempted to present a relationship between academic performance and quality mission statements. This study revealed that mission statements were not used by stakeholders as a motivation tool to improve overall school performance.

Zandstra (2012) used content analysis to examine mission statements of Christian schools in both the United States and the Netherlands to determine if any similarities existed between countries regarding establishing Christian identities through mission statements. The two overall

categories used for content analysis were religious and non-religious.  Whether these categories

were established by previous research or revealed through word occurrence via the mission

statements identified and used for this study was not specified.  Each mission statement was read

three times, and each reading by Zandstra focused on a different type of content.  The first

reading focused on religious themes, the second looked for non-religious themes, and the third

was a check to ensure all related data had been pulled from the mission statement.  This study

found that Christian schools in the Netherlands referenced more non-religious themes than

counterparts in the United States.  Zandstra (2012) spent time explaining how this might have

been related to funding sources of the schools. The Dutch government provided some funding

for private Christian schools, while private donors and tuition financed private Christian schools

within the United States.

The studies conducted by Genç (2012) and Zandstra (2012) focused on the words used

within mission statements and did not attempt to explain why certain themes and/or word choices

were selected.  Robinson and Tian (2014) provided an explanation of the use of content analysis

in research and discussed the major limitation to this quantitative approach to a qualitative study;

the researcher can get caught up in what the data revealed and ignore the reasons certain words

were used.  The data collected and used in these studies were all available publicly online,

allowing Genç (2012) and Zandstra (2012) to obtain the information without intrusion into the

organizations.  However, these studies failed to expand beyond the use of the quantitative data.

No interviews, surveys, or questionnaires were used trying to understand how mission statements

were agreed upon or how they guided everyday operation of the schools.  These studies used pre-

existing research to help guide the selection of categories and themes used for mission statement

analysis.  Genç (2012) and Zandstra (2012) revealed that, while word choice was important in

mission statements, little was known about specific actions and plans of the schools designed to carry out the missions. Craft et al. (2009) used open coding in their research to identify other themes that might emerge through the study of mission statements.

Chapple's (2012) research on mission statements of elementary schools in New Zealand and Japan provided another example of the use of content analysis in a mission-statement study. However, where the other studies failed to look at information outside the mission statements, Chapple (2012) identified the purpose of schools in both Japan and New Zealand before examining the themes found within mission statements. Based on the findings of this study, the themes of mission statements identified in the work of Stemler et al. (2011) were narrowed down to six common themes for performing analysis. This study provided an example of how content analysis and a thorough understanding of the goals of an organization can be used to analyze mission statements to identify alignment between national expectations and local school content as evidenced by published mission statements.

Content analysis studies have also examined mission statement omissions from the perspective of people, such as customers, served by an organization. The five mission statements for the study conducted by David et al. (2014) were selected from a list of 100 manufacturing and service firms. Ten features of a mission statement were determined from previous research: customers, products or services, markets, technology, concern for survival, growth and profitability, philosophy, self-concept, concern for public image, and concern for employees. The ten features were then explained from the view of the consumers and what they might be seeking in examining a mission statement. This study attempted to identify multiple perspectives from the one mission statement itself. Examples were created to help mission

statement writers understand the marketing appeal a mission statement can have for people outside the immediate organization (David et al., 2014).

Content discourse analysis (CDA) had been a qualitative methodological tool used in other studies related to mission statements. There have been no set guidelines regarding how to conduct a CDA study; however, most guidelines related to mission statements started with a coding process. Much time and research were devoted to studying the evolution of an idea, whether the role of arts in education or the history of one minority group (Bittencourt & Willetts, 2018). Where content analysis has tended to focus on words used, CDA provided a tool to examine word usage to construct the statement. Language was treated as a social construct highlighting the inequities of society as reflected in how meaning is created by specific word usage and phrasing (Bittencourt & Willetts, 2018).

Researchers embarked on their studies to find data supporting the political and social interpretations of mission statements, thereby limiting studies using CDA. For example, Kosmutzky and Krucken (2015) examined sameness and difference within mission statements. This allowed researchers to find data that highlighted the similar themes found within mission statements while providing the opportunity for them to examine how the ideas were portrayed differently. Orozco (2012) set out with the intent to show hidden biases of segregated schools. He acknowledged that, on the surface, all the mission statements were good; but, when compared side-by-side, linguistic use was influenced by embedded racism within the society of the United States. The data and the researchers' interpretations of word choice were used to support the overall view that society influences the words chosen based on the social meaning that had been predetermined by the researchers themselves.

Another limitation to using CDA for mission-statement analysis was its focus on linguistic representations, ignoring non-linguistic representations, such as emotion and action. The words were interpreted based on the ideas, not actions, of an organization. Orozco (2012) provided insight into ways to alter mission statements as an attempt to erase the political and social biases embedded within society. However, since actions have not matched words, mission statements have historically been nothing more than a step to attaining accreditation statuses rather than targeted mission organization or function (Kuenssberg, 2011).

**Synthesis of Research Findings**

Mission statements have been tools used to help communicate the purpose of an organization by providing its vision. Craft et al. (2009) stated that "mission statements may communicate organizational values and, therefore, influence school vision and culture, as well as teaching, learning, and academic performance" (p. 7). This idea has been supported through several research studies conducted regarding mission statements in educational settings both within and outside the United States, and in all levels of education, from elementary to universities (Chapple, 2015; David, David, & David, 2014; Genç, 2012; Leonard & Huang, 2014; Orozco, 2012). Research has proved that mission statements do not necessarily indicate school performance or actions of a school; however, common themes have been identified in high-performing schools and themes lacking in low-performing schools (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Genç, 2012; Leonard & Huang, 2014; Perfetto et al., 2013).

These studies revealed that the theme of academic success/achievement was found in the most successful schools. For example, Al-Ani and Ismail (2015) found that mission statements of primary schools in Oman referenced academic achievement as a primary goal; and, since principals were voicing this in their mission statements, they were aligning their own vision of

education with that of their government.  Slate et al. (2008) argued that the focus on academic achievement provided a measurable outcome determined by an outside body, allowing researchers to ignore the actions of teachers and administrators in carrying out the stated mission and purpose of their school.  With academic achievement being so common among high-performing schools, administrators desiring to change the culture of their schools can use a mission-statement writing process to express their personal vision.  They can include stakeholders in the process to re-culture or find ways to transition a school from one method of operating to another and provide focus that is common in high-performing mission statements around the world (Craft et al., 2009).

These studies also revealed themes missing in mission statements, such as partnerships. Al-Ani and Ismail (2015) defined partnerships as a working relationship with parents and the school.  Slate et al. (2008) focused on partnerships that reflected the community where schools were located.  Either interpretation still revealed a lack of this concept in mission statements. This made schools look like they were more concerned with providing the academic expectations of a society (Özdem, 2011) rather than providing students with the tools to understand their current or future roles within the community.

Theoretically, the enormity of the charge of education cannot be confined to a few lines of text (Kosmutzky, 2012); and, as a result, not every theme can be addressed with fidelity within a stated mission or in the day-to-day operations of a school.  The absence of partnership in the research was striking, considering there were service organizations within public schools that function through partnerships with parents and the community.  Whether this is a misalignment of mission or simply an assumed part of high-performing schools was not determined; and, therefore, no explicit reference was needed within mission statements.

Mission statements served the purpose of introducing a school to its surrounding community. In order to understand this concept better, a brief explanation of social contract theory is necessary. Reid (2011) authored a paper examining the role social contract theory should play in the decision-making process of the medical profession. While this study claimed other metaphors should be considered, there was an in-depth analysis of the theory that can be applied across multiple areas of study. Social contract, as a metaphor in political and moral spheres of influence, explained how society interacts and the relationships that were formed in order to carry out obligations of different members of society. The goal of the social contract theory was to "bring awareness to privilege, to remind of responsibilities, to expand awareness of consequences, and to encourage reflection on diverse perspectives" (Reid, 2011, p. 457) to the members of a society. Therefore, social contracts have served as a guiding light when determining rights and responsibilities within a larger community.

The origins of social contract theory can be tied back to Hobbes, who believed people gave up certain rights and responsibilities in order for the government to provide an orderly and just society (as cited in Lott, 2002). Schools provide the education for people to understand their rights and responsibilities in their society. School leaders used mission statements in order to highlight the role of schools in the social contract and to provide a glimpse into the overall purpose and vision for what school leaders intended for their students and their communities. Bernhard (2016) found that mission statements can be viewed as a reflection of core values within an educational institution by which to measure any action plans published by the school.

Grbic et al. (2013) found that mission statements served as a social contract tool for educational institutions, and they highlighted the moral and ethical makeup of the larger communities they served. Chapple (2015) further supported this claim by finding that school

mission statements mimicked the local traditions and beliefs of the communities they served. The social contract theory of schools is to provide the educational foundation to maintain a society; however, not all schools operate in the same manner. To this end, Kosmutzky (2012) and Özdem (2011) expressed the idea that mission statements provided a way of highlighting unique characteristics for local communities. The overall purpose of a school was found to be the idea that schools educated for academic success; however, mission statements served as a tool to for school leaders to introduce their programs to the community, highlighting the characteristics that might separate them from other schools. Hladchenko (2016) and Zandstra (2012) concluded through their research that, without funding, schools would not exist; and, by crafting mission statements, schools created a tool to provide a glimpse of the characteristics their funders would find appealing.

**Critique of Previous Research**

Research has shown there has been a connection between what mission statements stated and how well a school performed according to state and national standards of measurement (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Genç, 2012; Leonard & Huang, 2014; Perfetto et al., 2013). These studies have relied on research questions, such as what themes occur the most often in the mission statements of high-performing and low-performing schools (Perfetto et al., 2013). School and student performance were based on standards, whether determined by government measurements (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2013), state accountability standards (Perfetto et al., 2013), or grading expectations of professors/universities (Leonard & Huang, 2014). These studies confirmed whether schools had mission statements and if certain words were more likely to indicate high-performing or low-performing status. Furthermore, these studies have not attempted to explain what a school does to carry out its stated mission. In addition to not considering specific actions

of a school, often demographic factors such as socio-economic status or gender designations were not considered.  As a result, mission statements were held isolated from a deeper analysis of schools to determine what led to certain performance distinction.  These studies provided an either/or picture that was often an incomplete snapshot of a school setting and overall mission.

Orozco (2012) and Wilson et al. (2012) conducted studies that attempted identify racial biases in mission statements regarding students at all levels who were not white.  A sample research question from one of these studies was, "What are the attitudes about and expectations for Chicana/o students as communicated in school mission statements from schools with segregated Chicana/o student populations?" (Orozco, 2012, p. 81).  The work of Orozco (2012) and Wilson et al. (2012) limited the scope of their research by focusing on mission statements only.  While mission statements do provide a glimpse of core values (Stemler et al., 2011), these studies did not examine other ways diversity was addressed by the educational institutions they served.  In addition, there was no use of student-performance data to determine if the schools were achieving its stated mission.  While mission statements do provide evidence of direction and vision (Grbic, Hafferty, & Hafferty, 2013; Orozco, 2012), by studying them in isolation, researchers limited their overall knowledge of an organization.

Supporting these claims, Bernhard (2016) and Smith, Obeng, and Sales (2015) examined mission statements of universities and the role diversity played in the wording.  Both agreed that mission statements were written to market to stakeholders, who were primarily students and the community.  However, what they failed to do was provide insight into an organization's view and support offered to the enrolled minority students.  Smith et al. (2015) found that, though universities tried to recruit minority students for athletic programs, there was little emphasis placed on diversity in the identified school mission statements.  Bernhard (2016) and Smith et al.

(2015) used a content-analysis tool to analyze mission statements. While word choice and theme identification were important to understand the undertones of a mission statement, these studies failed to examine other factors, such as the actions of the universities used to encourage diversity or the history of the mission statements that were selected. By only focusing on word choice, these studies failed to provide any premise beyond the idea of what an ideal mission statement should say when in the service of an organization.

Orozco (2012) examined mission statements in the United States to determine what they revealed about societal expectations of schools that served Chicano students. A comparison was conducted between segregated Chicano and segregated White schools. The research resulted in the creation of a framework to help schools develop mission statements similar to those of predominately white schools. Critical-race theory was used to guide the theoretical framework of this study; however, it only focused on the role race played in establishing mission statements. Critical-race theory provided researchers with the opportunity to look at the entire social narrative to identify hidden microaggressions (Huber & Solorzano, 2015). Orozco (2012) did not delve into identifying the socio-economic status of schools, which did not address the idea that racism was more common when it intersects with other undesirable traits identified in our society. In order to adequately use the critical-race theory in an examination of school mission statements, other factors should be included in the analysis to provide a more accurate view of where the microaggressions existed in mission statements of public schools.

**Summary**

The review of literature about mission statements in education revealed a gap in using them as a true evaluation tool to measure school effectiveness as measured by state accountability systems. Studies have focused on content analysis, which revealed themes and most occurring words in schools that were deemed successful and those that were not (Stemler & Bebell, 2012). A more comprehensive investigation of student performance and mission statements is needed to determine if schools are effectively living up to the mission they project to society. Mission statements are tools that are used to bring vision and focus to an organization (Berhnard, 2016; Orozco, 2012), which Bradberry and Greaves (2012) claimed is a vital tool when leaders are working toward improving upon current organizational performance. For instance, mission statements provided a tool for measuring alignment between stated goals and school performance as measured by student performance. Mission statements provided a starting point for which genuine school improvement can begin.

Chapter 2 provided a review of literature regarding the topic of mission statements in an educational setting. The literature revealed mission statements serve a variety of purposes. Mission statements are needed for accreditation (Barker, 2015; Kosmutzky, 2012) and for marketing purposes (Genç, 2012). They guide decision-making processes (Genç, 2012), convey political initiatives (Chapple, 2015), and highlight cultural influences (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Orozco, 2012). They have also been used as a source of objectives for measuring student academic performance (Pourrajab et al., 2011). Mission statements reflect hidden biases found within a society, perhaps revealing priorities of education are more obtainable by schools with fewer educational challenges (Orozco, 2012). Chapter 3 provides detail over the multiple case study qualitative methodological design used for the purposes of this study.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

**Introduction**

Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation is a conceptual framework that was designed to examine organizations through the lens of an objectives-based evaluation process (Spaulding, 2014). Originally developed in the 1940s as a tool to evaluate curriculum programs of schools, the ideas presented in Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation were a way to provide objectives-based ideologies with which to examine any facet of an educational institution. Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation consists of three parts: (a) identification of the objective (goal); (b) the plan to meet the objective; and (c) evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the objectives and the plan. Wraga (2017) analyzed Tyler's work and concluded that Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation examined what schools want to do; assessed how the students, teachers, and staff were doing it; and implemented evaluation tools to determine the extent of success. Chapter 3 includes a description of the methodology of the research, including explanations of Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation, CIT, and the questions the multiple case study addressed with a clear understanding of how schools and LEAs were selected.

The premise of objectives-based evaluation was to determine if organizations could produce the desired outcomes that were identified in objectives set by its stakeholders (Spaulding, 2014). In this study, the objectives of public schools were established through the use of mission statements. Mission statements for schools provided valuable information related to organizational structure, purpose, and expected outcomes (Barker, 2015; Chapple, 2015; King, Case, & Premo, 2013; Kosmutzky, 2012). The LEAs' strategic plans provided a guide for schools to help leaders achieve the stated mission. TEA's school accountability measures provided evidence to determine if alignment between a school's mission statement and the

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LEA's strategic plan was apparent for school success. The system of accountability, adopted by Texas and envisioned by the legislation of the United States, was created to provide a framework for monitoring schools by using pre-established standards agreed upon by governing bodies, such as school boards, parents, and other stakeholders (Deming & Figlio, 2016).

This researcher's study also examined if there were similarities between Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to mission statement and strategic plan alignment. The designation Title I first came about in 1965 with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Its initial intent was to provide additional federal funding for schools with a high percentage of low-income students. The funds were intended to supplement, not replace, other funding sources for schools (Ravitch, 2007). The program has been continued through various legislation, including NCLB and ESSA (Dennis, 2017). In its current form, Title I funds are disbursed to the LEAs, which determine how the funds should be allocated for certain schools. Federal policy required schools to have a 40% or greater low-income population in order for the funds to be used for a school-wide initiative. If the low-income population of a school fell under 40%, then the funds were to be used for programs specifically targeted to low-income students (Title I, Part A Program, 2015).

Previous studies examined mission statement and strategic plan alignment of organizations and how this alignment was necessary to ensure course and direction, which were the best reflections of the organizations' goals (Hall, DiPiro, Rowen, & McNair, 2013; Marcoux, 2013; Talsma, 2002). Furthermore, studies examined mission statement traits common in high-performing schools (David et al., 2014; Genç, 2012; Leonard & Huang, 2014; Perfetto et al., 2013); and other studies examined how the success of Title I schools could be tied to strategic planning (Desmione, Smith, & Phillips, 2013; Etheridge, 2001). However, what appeared to be

lacking in the available research was an examination of how the alignment of school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans translated into students' overall academic achievement as determined by school ratings on state accountability measures of school performance.  This study used a CIT case study tool grounded in Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation to understand what role, if any, the alignment of mission statements and strategic plans had on school success as measured by the 2016-2017 accountability system in Texas for both Title I and non-Title I schools and LEAs.  In addition, geographic location information was analyzed to determine if trends existed across the state in regards to alignment and school performance.

**Research Questions**

Two research questions were developed to organize this study.  The questions were designed to highlight the use of Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation as the conceptual framework.  In addition, the questions were formed to use CIT as the organizational tool of this study.  The data collected and analyzed for this study allowed for the two research questions to be answered.

> RQ1: How do LEAs with Title I or non-Title I status align their mission statements and strategic plans with Tyler's model's criteria of organization of instruction, learning, evaluation, and feedback?

> RQ2: When using the critical incident technique theory, is the alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan apparent for a *met standard* rating on the accountability system?

**Purpose and Design of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to use Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation to determine if there was a relationship between individual school mission statements and its LEA's strategic plan. In addition, CIT was used to examine whether alignment of school mission statements and LEA strategic plans was a critical component in order for schools to achieve a *met standard* rating on the 2016–2017 TEA accountability system as determined by student academic performance.

This researcher conducted a qualitative study, which allowed the researcher to use a variety of data sources and data analysis steps to create a more accurate representation of the phenomena of alignment between mission statements and strategic plans. Creswell (2014) defined the qualitative method as one that relies on text and image data with unique steps for data analysis that used a variety of designs. Characteristics of a qualitative methodology included the researcher acting as the primary data collector and using multiple sources of data for analysis that included both deductive and inductive reasoning (Creswell, 2014). By employing both deductive and inductive reasoning, the researcher was able to address the two research questions fully.

In addition, the researcher also understood the role emergent design played in the creation of the methodology and the study itself. The researcher was to ensure that reflection on the data resulted in a holistic account of the study (Creswell, 2014). In order to do this, there were several different types of qualitative methodologies that could be employed by the researcher. Specifically, this study used a multiple case design that blended CIT and Tyler's model for objectives-based evaluation. A multiple case study design was selected for this study since the researcher was attempting to identify how a phenomenon worked in different programs that were

not linked together (Stake, 2006). If a researcher were working to understand what happened to lead to a certain outcome, a case study design allowed for the use of program evaluation. Program evaluation has been identified as a case study type that has been used to help understand the decisions that influence an organization's performance (Spaulding, 2014). According to Yin (2014), researchers have used multiple case studies grounded in program evaluation in order to develop a more complete understanding of a phenomenon. In order for a program evaluation multiple case study to be effective, a researcher must understand that the methodology must be perfected and used for all selected cases (Yin, 2014). By using the multiple case study, Yin (2014) claimed a researcher provided a richer study and data set for the academic world.

Subsequently, CIT helped identify critical factors apparent for success (Bott & Tourish, 2016), which has been applied to several different fields of study, from military programs to nursing programs. In the 1940s and 1950s, the multiple case study was used as a scientific method to understand behavior traits that led to success in certain fields and occupations. In this post-modern world, it was used more as an investigative tool that could add to the interpretation of data to understand how things operate most effectively. There are five major steps identified for a CIT-based case study: (a) identify the goal of the activity being studied, (b) plan the study and identify specificity, (c) collect the data, (d) analyze the data, and (e) interpret and report the results (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 477). CIT was similar to Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation, which the researcher blended together to form the conceptual framework for this study. Both required identification of objectives and an evaluation of the strategy to determine whether it was effective in attaining the identified goals. However, CIT allows a researcher to isolate a single component to determine if it influences the overall performance of a person or organization. CIT and Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation were used in the creation of

the study's design and were applied to a variety of schools and LEAs to determine if having an aligned school mission statement and LEA strategic plan was an apparent feature for school success on the state accountability system.

The study examined the alignment between school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans. This portion of the study was conducted using a content analysis, based on the work of Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011). Common themes were identified between a school's mission statements and its LEA's strategic plan (see Appendix D). An additional part of the multiple case study focused on determining if aligned mission statements and strategic plans were an apparent component in determining a school's performance on a state accountability measure. The final portion of the study involved an application of Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation and CIT to determine if alignment between school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans influenced schools to achieve a *met standard* rating on the 2016-2017 school accountability system. *Met standard* was achieved when campuses reach the index target score on the indices of the accountability system (2017 Accountability Manual, 2017).

**Research Population and Sampling Method**

This multiple case study attempted to use Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation and CIT as a basis for evaluation of a school's identified goals, LEA strategic plan, and school performance on the Texas school accountability system. The study determined if alignment between a school's identified mission and its LEA's strategic plan was apparent in order for the

school to achieve a *met standard* rating on the state accountability system, which was determined by the students' overall academic performance.

Different criteria were used to ascertain a diverse representation of education in Texas. A total of seven LEAs were selected. For the urban LEAs, there were two selected. One received Title I funds and some of these Title I funds were disbursed to a Grades 9–12 high school located within the boundaries of the LEA. The second was an LEA that received Title I funds but no Title I funds were disbursed to the Grades 9–12 high schools within its boundaries. For the suburban LEAs, there were a total of three selected. One of the three was an LEA that received Title I funds and some of those Title I funds were disbursed to some or all of the Grades 9–12 high schools located within the LEA. The second of the three was an LEA that received Title I funds but no Title I funds were disbursed to the Grades 9–12 high schools within its boundaries. The third LEA did not receive Title I funds; therefore, there were no Title I funds disbursed to any school within its boundaries. For the rural LEAs, there were a total of two selected. One of the two was an LEA that received Title I funds and some of these Title I funds were disbursed to some or all of the Grades 9–12 high schools located within the LEA. The second was an LEA that received Title I funds but no Title I funds were disbursed to the Grades 9–12 high school within its boundaries.

All the LEAs that were selected for this study had to have a publicly available strategic plans, and each individual school had to have a publicly available mission statement. Each school had a state report card that was accessed from the TEA website and included information pertaining to accountability system performance. In addition, only public LEAs and public Grades 9–12 high schools were used for this study. This excluded charter and private entities.

In addition, schools that were not classified as Grades 9–12 high schools were not considered for this study.

**Instrumentation**

The researcher conducted a content analysis on the themes found in school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans. Coding is a tool that researchers use to help interpret and provide meaning to the words used in written communication (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). A content analysis, which uses coding, was used to classify large amounts of information into a manageable number of categories that might have similar meanings (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Specifically, qualitative content analysis was used in this study. Qualitative content analysis allowed the researcher to use the work performed in previous research to act as a starting point for coding; however, this study was able to expand on the theory from the original researcher (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014). The existing theory on mission statement content analysis was derived from the work of Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011), whose research coded mission statements and identified eleven themes common in education mission statements. Their research provided the basis for the rubric that was used to analyze the word choice of a mission statement, which the researcher adapted for use in this study.

**Data Collection**

This researcher used TEA's website to generate information to identify Title I and non-Title I LEAs and individual schools. Also using TEA's information, the LEAs were divided into urban, suburban, and rural. By allowing for these three different types of geographic locations, the researcher aimed to determine if patterns existed across the state, no matter the population density or economic status of the school. The selection of urban, suburban, and rural allowed the

researcher to compare and contrast alignment of school mission statements and LEA strategic plans from across the state, providing a richer set of data.

For each school selected for this study, the following data were collected to use in a final analysis to determine if an alignment of a school mission statement and an LEA strategic plan was a critical success factor: Is the school part of an urban, suburban, or rural LEA? Did the LEA receive Title I funds? Did the school receive Title I funds? What themes were found in the school mission statement? What themes were found in the LEA strategic plan? What were the sources of data identified through the LEA strategic plan that can be used to evaluate school performance? Can those data sources be found on the school report cards provided by TEA? What indices and distinctions did the school receive on the accountability system?

**Identification of Attributes**

Student academic achievement was a defining attribute of this study. Through the analysis of previous research related to the topic of mission statements and strategic plans, student academic achievement was demonstrated to be the driving force behind decisions that were being made (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Craft et al., 2009; Perfetto et al., 2013; Slate et al., 2008). Academic achievement was measured by a school's ability to achieve a specific rating as determined by government bodies (Craft et al., 2009; Perfetto et al., 2013). Academic achievement was also measured by students' ability to achieve certain scores in classes where they were enrolled (Leonard & Huang, 2014). In this study, students' academic achievement was determined by the information found on school report cards related to a school's ranking and number of distinctions obtained, as reported by TEA.

Other attributes of this study included the themes found within school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans. These themes were documented by previous research (Stemler,

Bebell, & Sonnabend, 2011) and added to the overall validity of the research in this study.  In

addition, the alignment between school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans was an

attribute.  This provided a tool by which to consistently analyze the information in order to

determine if alignment could be considered a critical success factor apparent for schools to

achieve a *met standard* rating on the school accountability measures.  In addition, the alignment

was analyzed to determine if a higher rate led to a school receiving the maximum number of

distinctions.

## Data Analysis Procedures

All the data collected for this study were found using publicly available information.  The

data were collected using school websites, publicly available LEA resources, and school report

cards. Once the data were collected, they were analyzed for trends and patterns, such as common

features of school mission statements and LEA strategic plans.  These data patterns and themes

were then compared to the measures found on the school report cards.  There were two overall

ratings that a school could have received based on its students' academic performance: *met*

*standard* or *improvement required*.  In addition, the school report cards provided data pertaining

to the distinctions that were awarded if the school was eligible to receive them.   This

information was needed in order to evaluate the extent alignment between a school mission

statement and an LEA strategic plan played in the overall rating as determined by students'

overall academic performance.

Also, themes and trends were revealed through the coding of mission statements and

strategic plans.  They were then evaluated based on rural, urban, and suburban status.  This

provided a way to understand if overall themes of education were common throughout the state.

A second feature was added based on Title I status.  Ultimately, the researcher used the data

collected to provide a detailed analysis as to whether or not alignment is apparent between a school mission statement and an LEA strategic plan in order to achieve a *met standard* rating on the 2016-2017 school accountability system.

**Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design**

This study was dependent on public documents and accountability reports that showed data consistent with LEA required sources of documentation. Texas has over 1,200 LEAs (Texas Education Agency, 2017). Each LEA operates independently of the others and is allowed a certain level of autonomy when it comes to how funds are allocated for expenditures (Vornberg, 2010). A limitation of the study was the lack of other records, such as school financial documents. While this study used LEA strategic plans as a source of data, the study did not use financial records of the LEA to ascertain how much of the Title I funds were disbursed to the schools that qualified for the funds. In addition, specific school actions were not examined outside of the mission statements.

One delimitation of this study was that it only focused on public high schools that service Grades 9–12. This excluded schools that have a larger or smaller grade range. For example, senior high schools that just serviced Grades 11–12 were not used in this study, and neither were schools that serviced Grades K-12. Charter schools and private schools were also excluded from the study. Also, while the data is disaggregated by Title I status, other demographic features that were found on the school report card from TEA, such as gender and ethnicity, were not used in the analysis performed during this study.

**Validation, Credibility, and Dependability**

**Validation and credibility.** Creswell and Miller (2000) identified nine strategies qualitative researchers could use to establish the validity and credibility of their study:

triangulation, disconfirming evidence, researcher reflexivity, member checking, prolonged engagement in the field, collaboration, the audit trail, peer debriefing, and thick, rich description. The nine strategies were guided by two perspectives – the researcher's lens and the researcher's assumptions. While Creswell and Miller (2000) acknowledged all nine strategies, they believed a researcher can establish validity by using at least two.

Triangulation and thick, rich description guided the researcher of this study. Triangulation was a procedure that allowed the researcher to use multiple sources of data in order to identify themes or categories (Creswell & Miller, 2000). By using school report cards, schools' mission statements, and LEAs' strategic plans, the researcher was able to establish the link between alignment and school performance. Using thick, rich description allowed the researcher to provide context for the LEAs and schools in order to ascertain the necessity of alignment for school success on accountability measures. One of the benefits of adapting the CIT framework for this study was that allowed for thick descriptions of each case study to be developed, leading to a better understanding of how alignment between the mission statement and strategic plan might benefit a school and its LEA (Bott & Tourish, 2016).

**Dependability**. Dependability in qualitative research was identified as the ability of other researchers to recreate and enhance the study (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). This study provided dependability by using the same process by which to analyze the data that was collected from each case study. Data for this study were collected from the TEA website (Texas Education Agency, 2017). School accountability report cards were compiled by TEA and included the measures identified by state and federal accountability measures. The school report cards used in this study were for the 2016–2017 school year. The 2016–2017 school year was considered the year of transition from NCLB to ESSA. As a result of this transition, the Texas

school accountability system in place for the 2016-2017 school year mirrored the 2015-2016 school year, which was designed around the requirements of both the federal NCLB and state legislation. The data collected from TEA were cross-referenced by the researcher with LEAs' websites and schools' websites to ensure accurate information pertaining to accountability measures and state reporting.

From the school report cards, a school's distinction, such as *met standard*, was identified, along with a listing of each distinction that was received by the campus. School expenditures based on a per pupil rate were also located on the school reports, providing a source of data that indicated more affluent schools. Other data included in this study were the collection of school mission statements and LEA strategic plans. Data aligned between the two were used in this study to ensure that alignment was measured between the two items. In addition, these data were grouped based on the LEA's Title I status as urban, suburban, or rural.

## Expected Findings

The researcher expected this study to reveal a partial alignment between school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans. It was also expected that the LEAs' strategic plans would include more information than can be aligned to the school mission statements. The researcher also expected to find that it is not apparent for alignment to exist between the school mission statement and the LEA strategic plan in order for schools to achieve the *met standard* rating on the accountability system. The researcher also expected to find a higher rate of alignment between a rural LEA's strategic plan and its high school due to the smaller school population and a lower rate of alignment between the urban LEAs' strategic plans and schools' mission statements. In addition, it was expected that the high schools receiving Title I funds received a lower accountability performance rating than high schools not receiving Title I funds.

**Ethical Issues**

According to Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2010), ethical challenges have emerged in qualitative studies due to the unpredictable nature of this type of methodology. In order to prevent ethical issues from arising, a researcher engaging in qualitative researcher has some safe-guards they should consider when designing their study. The relationship between the researcher and the participants should be considered. Previous research has led to the conclusion that boundaries become unclear in a study when there is a personal relationship of some sort between the researcher and a participant (Houghton et al., 2010). In this particular study, the researcher did not use any school or LEA that she had ties to in her data set. This prevented any assumptions from being made in regards to the reading of a mission statement or a strategic plan. Confidentiality has been identified as another ethical issue in qualitative study. When designing the study and conducting the research, the researcher should develop a process to ensure the confidentiality of all members of the study (Houghton et al., 2010). When seeking Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for this study, it was determined that approval from the schools selected for this study was not needed since their mission statements and their LEAs' strategic plans were available online. IRB approved the study with the stipulation that all identifying features be removed from the case studies.

**Conflict of Interest and Researcher's Position**

The researcher worked as an assistant principal of a Title I high school that achieved at a high level of success for low-income students, based on test scores and school accountability measures. In addition, the researcher has spent a total of 15 years in education as a teacher, consultant, and administrator; and she has had no direct role in developing a mission statement or an LEA strategic plan used in the study. The mission statements of the school where the

researcher worked during this study was established long in advance of her joining the staff; and there has been little, if any, conversation concerning how the school mission statement aligns to LEA strategic plans between the researcher and others involved in the process at her places of employment. However, the researcher has conducted extensive work in analyzing school accountability reports to understand what TEA deems a successful school.

The researcher's interest in mission statements emerged through the course work at Concordia University related to transformational leadership. The theory behind mission statements helped her develop the idea that, when written correctly, mission statements have the power to embody the beliefs and lead the direction of an organization. The hope of this researcher was that this research revealed a powerful need for schools to use the LEA's strategic plan to drive mission statement formulation, which both reflect some of the themes located within school accountability measures.

**Summary**

The accountability systems for both the state and federal levels of government provided a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of a school. The multiple case study design used for this study exemplified the current alignment of identified objectives, course of action, and evaluative measures. This allowed Tyler's model for objectives-based evaluation to be adapted to the CIT case study design to ascertain if aligned mission statements and strategic plans were needed for school performance on accountability measures. In addition, the use of a qualitative content analysis allowed the researcher to use previous work in this field to help formulate the initial rubric for theme evaluation. The qualitative content analysis also allowed the researcher to include additional words and phrases as the readings of the mission statements and strategic plans revealed them (Elo et al., 2014). The emergent case study design allowed the researcher to

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build on previous research in order to identify new theories to provide new theory related to the field of mission statements, strategic plans, and school accountability (Creswell, 2014).

Employing a qualitative case study framework for this research allowed this researcher to analyze data of accountability measures with the qualitative work of identifying common themes of mission statements and strategic plans to determine if mission statements are aligned with LEAs' strategic plans.  This allowed the researcher to determine if it were necessary for leaders of schools to work at ensuring alignment between what schools identified missions and what the leaders of LEAs were helping to produce and monitor.  Chapter 4 will present the findings and results of the study.  Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of the findings, potential for future research, and conclusions.

**Introduction**

This multiple case study began with a qualitative content analysis of school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans. This step was followed by a detailed analysis of school performance on state accountability measures. The study concluded with a comparison of the rate of alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan to determine if this was a critical factor in school success. In this chapter, a description of the selected schools and LEAs is discussed. This is followed by an analysis of common themes found within school mission statements and LEA strategic plans, highlighting how this alignment was apparent in each school's performance on the 2016–2017 TEA school accountability system. The final feature of the chapter is an analysis of how the data pertain to the research questions.

The mission statements of schools and the strategic plans provided by LEAs were presumably created to illustrate to the communities that are served how school leaders adhere to local, state, and federal plans for education (Kosmutzky, 2012). Through these declarations, a school and its operating LEA identified its focus and provided a framework for making day-to-day operating decisions (Wyk & Moeng, 2014). The idea of accountability systems emerged as a means for governing bodies at the state and federal level to ascertain the overall effectiveness of schools and LEAs (Deming & Figlio, 2016). Common themes emerged through the extensive work of Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011), which provided researchers a framework to convert the qualitative nature of a mission statement into the quantitative data needed for an impartial analysis of school goals. These common themes were repeated throughout the data in this study.

This study examined a sampling of schools mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans in order to determine if alignment existed between the two published documents. The research

questions for this study were developed using Tyler's model of objective-based evaluation (Spaulding, 2014) and CIT (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Butterfield et al., 2005) as a framework. Two questions were formulated to guide the researcher: 1) How do LEAs with Title I or non-Title I status align their mission statements and strategic plans with Tyler's model criteria of organization of instruction, learning, evaluation, and feedback; and 2) How is the alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan manifested on the 2016-2017 Texas Education Agency accountability system? Research has shown that mission statements have the power to serve as the guiding principle for which an organization is governed (Bartelds, Drayer, & Wolfensberger, 2012; Genç, 2012; King et al, 2013). The researcher sought ways to determine if schools and LEAs were operating according to the same principles, as identified by a detailed content analysis of mission statements and strategic plans. This study consisted of seven Grades 9–12 publicly-funded high schools selected based on type (rural, suburban, or urban) and Title I status. This research was conducted to determine if alignment existed between identified themes in school mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans, and used the themes and rubrics developed by the work of Stemler and Bebell (2012) and Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011). The data produced by the content analysis provided a way to evaluate alignment. Once alignment was determined, the school's performance on the accountability system was evaluated. Then Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation and CIT were used to ascertain if alignment was apparent for school success on a state-issued accountability measure.

**Description of the Sample**

The study identified seven schools that met the criteria. Each school had a publicly available mission statement, and its LEA had a publicly available strategic plan. More specifically, rural, urban, and suburban schools were selected from across Texas as identified by

TEA (2017).  Two rural Grades 9–12 schools were selected.  One received Title I funds, while

the other did not.  The LEAs received Title I funds and were able to determine how to disburse

those funds to meet the needs of the districts and schools.  Three suburban Grades 9–12 high

schools were selected.  The first suburban high school did not receive Title I funds, nor did its

LEA.  The second suburban high school did not receive Title I funds, but its LEA did.  The third

suburban high school and its LEA did receive Title I funds.  Two urban Grades 9–12 high

schools were selected.  The first urban high school did not receive Title I funds, but its LEA did.

The second urban high school and its LEA did receive Title I funds.  These details are displayed

in Table 1.

Table 1

*Schools and LEA Title 1 Status and Type*

| School | LEA | Does the school receive Title I funds? | Does the LEA receive Title I funds? | Type of LEA |
|--------|-----|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| A | 1 | N | Y | Rural |
| B | 2 | Y | Y | Rural |
| C | 3 | N | Y | Suburban |
| D | 4 | Y | N | Suburban |
| E | 5 | Y | Y | Suburban |
| F | 6 | Y | Y | Urban |
| G | 7 | N | Y | Urban |

*Note.* Data is from Texas Education Agency 's Campuses Served with Title I, Part A Funding,

Fiscal Year 2017.

Each school selected for this study had a publicly available mission statements and school report cards for the 2016-2017 school year.  The LEAs each had publicly available strategic plans.  All seven schools selected for this study were shown to have achieved a *met standard* rating on the 2016-2017 school accountability system.  However, the number of distinctions (seven total) received by each campus ranged from 0 to 6.

Table 2

*Performance on School Accountability System*

| School | LEA | School Accountability Rating | Number of distinctions awarded |
|--------|-----|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A | 1 | Met Standard | 1 |
| B | 2 | Met Standard | 4 |
| C | 3 | Met Standard | 3 |
| D | 4 | Met Standard | 0 |
| E | 5 | Met Standard | 6 |
| F | 6 | Met Standard | 4 |
| G | 7 | Met Standard | 2 |

*Note.* Data is from school report cards published by Texas Education Agency for 2016–2017 school year.

**School A and LEA 1.**  LEA 1 is a rural LEA in Texas consisting of one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school.  Total population of the LEA was classified as a 3A district and served approximately 840 students PK–12. School A is the high school within LEA 1 that was highlighted for this study.  The student population from 2016–2017 was around 250.  School A achieved a *met standard* rating on the accountability measures and was awarded one distinction for top 25% student progress.  The state average for school expenditures was $9.373.  School A had an operating expenditure of $11,817 (Texas Education Agency, 2017a).  The LEA received Title I funds, but School A received none of these funds.

The mission statement of the school contained the following themes: academic development, civic development, vocational preparation, and challenging environment. The strategic plan contained the themes of academic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, and challenging environment. Table 3 highlights the terms used to identify the themes according to the content analysis and provides a side-by-side comparison of the themes found in School A's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan.

Table 3

*School A and LEA 1 Themes, Mission Statement & Strategic Plan Wording*

| Theme | Mission Statement Wording | Strategic Plan Wording |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Development | "quality education" | "creative and collaborative problem solvers" <br> "relevant instructional practices" |
| Social Development | n/a | n/a |
| Emotional Development | n/a | "ownership and accountability of their education plan" <br> "promote emotional health" |
| Civic Development | "right tools to be successful in the future" | "leadership opportunities for individual students" |
| Physical Development | n/a | n/a |
| Vocational Preparation | "successful in the future" | "opportunities for future readiness" |
| Integrate into Local Community | n/a | "provide annual opportunities … engage in community service" |
| Integrate into Global Community | n/a | "develop collaborative partnerships" |
| Integrate into Spiritual Community | n/a | n/a |

Table 3

*School A and LEA 1 Themes, Mission Statement & Strategic Plan Wording (continued)*

| Theme | Mission Statement Wording | Strategic Plan Wording |
|---|---|---|
| Safe/Nurturing Environment | n/a | n/a |
| Challenging Environment | "quality education" | "innovative learning environment" "digital tools that engage" "teacher professional development plan" |

School A and LEA 1 had four overlapping themes: academic development, civic development, vocational preparation, and challenging environment. Three themes were present only in the strategic plan: emotional development, *integrate* into local community, and *integrate* into global community. Four themes were not present in either the mission statement or the strategic plan: social development, physical development, *integrate* into spiritual community, and safe/nurturing environment. A 72.7% alignment existed between School A's mission statement and LEA 1's strategic plan. The school accountability system for the 2017 school year highlighted the themes of academic development, emotional development, *integrate* into global community, vocational preparation, and challenging environment. The school received a *met standard* rating on the accountability system, scoring well above the target score for each index. The school also received the distinction for top 25% student progress. In order to receive the distinction, School A had to be in the first quartile of its 40-school comparison group.

**School B and LEA 2.** LEA 2 is a rural LEA in Texas consisting of one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Total population of the LEA was classified as a 3A district, serving approximately 920 students PK-12. School B is the high school within LEA 2 that was highlighted for this study. The student population from 2016-2017 was 332. School

B achieved a *Met Standard* rating on the accountability measures and was awarded four distinctions: mathematics, social studies, top 25% student progress, and top 25% closing performance gap.  The state average for school expenditures was $9.373.  School B had an operating expenditure totaling $11,839 (Texas Education Agency, 2017b).  LEA 2 and School B both received Title I funds.

The mission statement of the school contained the following themes: academic development, emotional development, civic development, and vocational preparation.  The strategic plan contained the themes of academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment.  Table 4 highlights the terms used to identify the themes according to the content analysis and provides a side-by-side comparison of the themes found in School B's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan.

Table 4

*School B and LEA 2 Themes, Mission Statement & Strategic Plan Wording*

| Theme | Mission Statement Wording | Strategic Plan Wording |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Development | "appropriate and individualized educational experiences" | "students will have the necessary skills to continue their education" <br> "develop intervention strategies" |
| Social Development | n/a | "provide Bully prevention training" |
| Emotional Development | "responsible and productive" | "provide...any other trainings that relate to student and staff safety and security needs" |
| Civic Development | "responsible and productive citizens" | "promote positive attitudes" |
| Physical Development | n/a | n/a |
| Vocational Preparation | "graduate...prepared for success" | "identify and monitor business and industry educational opportunities...implement strategies that will prepare students for those opportunities" |
| Integrate into Local Community | n/a | "foster collaboration of all stakeholders" <br> "partnership with [local colleges]" |
| Integrate into Global Community | n/a | "addressing the diverse needs and learning styles of all students" |
| Integrate into Spiritual Community | n/a | n/a |
| Safe/Nurturing Environment | "appropriate and individualized" | "employs a *[sic]* SRO...to monitor potential adverse situations and to ensure a safe learning environment" |
| Challenging Environment | "delivering appropriate and individualized educational experiences" | "provide all staff with the necessary time, resources, and professional development" <br> "delivered by highly qualified teachers" <br> "rigorous curriculum and instruction" |

School B and LEA 2 had six overlapping themes: academic development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment.  Three themes were present only in the strategic plan: social development, *integrate* into local community, and *integrate* into global community.  Two themes were not present in either the mission statement or the strategic plan: physical development and *integrate* into spiritual community.  A 72.7% alignment existed between School B's mission statement and LEA 2's strategic plan.  The school accountability system for the 2017 school year highlighted the themes of academic development, emotional development, *integrate* into global community, vocational preparation, and challenging environment.  The school received a *Met Standard* rating on the accountability system, scoring well above the target score for each index. The school also received distinctions for mathematics, social studies, top 25% student progress, and top 25% closing performance gaps.  In order to receive the distinctions, School A had to be in the first quartile of its 40-school comparison group.

**School C and LEA 3.** LEA 3 is a suburban LEA in Texas that consists of nine elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school.  Total population of the LEA was classified as a 6A district serving approximately 9,600 students PK–12. School C is the high school within LEA 3 highlighted for this study.  The student population from 2016–2017 was 2,546.  School C achieved a *Met Standard* rating on the accountability measures and was awarded three distinctions: ELA/reading, mathematics, and science. The state average for school expenditures was $9.373 (Texas Education Agency, 2017c).  School C had an operating expenditure totaling $7,264.  LEA 3 and School C both received Title I funds.

The mission statement of the school contained the following themes: academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, safe/nurturing

environment, and challenging environment.  The strategic plan contained the themes of academic

development, social development, emotional development, *integrate* into local community,

safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment.  Table 5 highlights the terms used to

identify the themes according to the content analysis and provides a side-by-side comparison of

the themes found in School C's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan.

Table 5

*School C and LEA 3 Themes, Mission Statement & Strategic Plan Wording*

| Theme | Mission Statement Wording | Strategic Plan Wording |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Development | "foster ingenuity" "educate students" | "achieve excellence" "culture of high expectations" "meaningful and innovative instruction that promotes critical thinking and problem solving" |
| Social Development | "mutual respect" | "inclusive school culture" |
| Emotional Development | "foster...compassion" | "promote positive student development" |
| Civic Development | "mutual respect" | n/a |
| Physical Development | n/a | n/a |
| Vocational Preparation | n/a | n/a |
| Integrate into Local Community | n/a | "constructive engagement of the school community" "extraordinary customers *[sic]* service to attract and retain members of our community" |
| Integrate into Global Community | n/a | n/a |
| Integrate into Spiritual Community | n/a | n/a |
| Safe/Nurturing Environment | "comfortable and safe learning environment" | "trusting relationship" "inclusive school culture" "safe and secure learning environments" |
| Challenging Environment | "rigorous...learning environment" | "innovative and challenging experiences" |

School C and LEA 3 had five themes that overlapped: academic development, social development, emotional development, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. One theme was present only in the mission statement: civic development. One theme was present only in the strategic plan: *integrate* into local community. Four themes were not present in either the mission statement or the strategic plan: physical development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into global community, and *integrate* into spiritual community. An 81.8% alignment existed between School C's mission statement and LEA 3's strategic plan. The school accountability system for the 2017 school year highlighted the themes of academic development, emotional development, *integrate* into global community, vocational preparation, and challenging environment. The school received a *met standard* rating on the accountability system, scoring slightly above the target score for each index. The school also received distinctions for ELA/reading, mathematics, and science. In order to receive the distinction, School C had to be in the first quartile of its 40-school comparison group.

**School D and LEA 4.** LEA 4 is a suburban LEA in Texas consisting of nine elementary schools, three intermediate schools, three middle schools, one early college campus, two alternative schools, and one traditional Grades 9–12 high school. Total population of LEA 4 was classified as a 6A district serving approximately 12,700 students PK–12. School D is the traditional high school within LEA 4 highlighted for this study. The student population from 2016-2017 was 4,278. School D achieved a *Met Standard* rating on the accountability measures and was awarded zero distinctions. The state average for school expenditures was $9.373 (Texas Education Agency, 2017d). School D had an operating expenditure of $7,111. LEA 4 received Title I funds, but School D did not.

The mission statement of the school contained the following themes: academic development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment.  The strategic plan contained the themes of academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. Table 6 highlights the terms used to identify the themes according to the content analysis and provides a side-by-side comparison of the themes found in School D's mission statement and LEA 4's strategic plan.

Table 6

*School D and LEA 4 Themes, Mission Statement & Strategic Plan Wording*

| Theme | Mission Statement Wording | Strategic Plan Wording |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Development | "high academic achievement" | "meet and exceed grade level expectations on...assessments" "meaningful learning experiences" |
| Social Development | n/a | "families will have multiple opportunities to participate in their child's education" |
| Emotional Development | "life long success" | "achieve lifelong success" |
| Civic Development | "contribute to society" | necessary skills to be productive citizens" |
| Physical Development | n/a | n/a |
| Vocational Preparation | "develop skills to achieve lifelong success" | "prepared for postsecondary college or career" |
| Integrate into Local Community | "contribute to society" | n/a |
| Integrate into Global Community | "productive citizens of a global society" | "contribute to a global society" |
| Integrate into Spiritual Community | n/a | n/a |
| Safe/Nurturing Environment | "supportive learning environment" | "provide a safe, nurturing, learning environment for all students" |
| Challenging Environment | "high academic expectations" | "staff will use continuous improvement tools to increase the effectiveness and efficiency" "provide professional development opportunities" |

School D and LEA 4 had seven overlapping themes: academic development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment.  One theme was present only in the mission statement: *integrate* into local community.  One theme was present only in the strategic plan: social development.  Two themes were not present in either the mission statement or the strategic plan: physical development and *integrate* into spiritual community.  An 81.8% alignment existed between School D's mission statement and LEA 4's strategic plan.  The school accountability system for the 2017 school year highlighted the themes of academic development, emotional development, *integrate* into global community, vocational preparation, and challenging environment.  The school received a *met standard* rating on the accountability system, scoring slightly above the target score for each index.  The school received zero distinctions.  In order to receive any distinction, School D had to be in the first quartile of its 40-school comparison group, which they were not.

**School E and LEA 5.**  LEA 5 is a suburban LEA in Texas that consists of four elementary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, and one traditional 9–12 high school.  Total population of LEA 5 was classified as a 5A district and served approximately 7,000 students PK-12. School E is the traditional high school within LEA 5 highlighted for this study.  The student population from 2016-2017 was 2,159.  School E achieved a *Met Standard* rating on the accountability measures and was awarded six distinctions: ELA/reading, mathematics, science, social studies, top 25% student progress, and postsecondary readiness.  The state average for school expenditures was $9,373.  School E had an operating expenditure of $9,477 (Texas Education Agency, 2017e).  LEA 5 and School E received no Title I funds.

The mission statement of the school contained the following themes: academic development, civic development, physical development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. The strategic plan contained the themes of academic development, emotional development, civic development, physical development, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. Table 7 highlights the terms used to identify the themes according to the content analysis and provides a side-by-side comparison of the themes found in School E's mission statement and LEA 5's strategic plan.

Table 7

*School E and LEA 5 Themes, Mission Statement & Strategic Plan Wording*

| Theme | Mission Statement Wording | Strategic Plan Wording |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Development | "lifelong academic" "toward excellence" | "exceptional academic program |
| Social Development | n/a | n/a |
| Emotional Development | n/a | "high standards of character and ethics are expected" "recognizes the unique potential of each student" "eager lifelong learner" |
| Civic Development | "responsible citizens" | "responsible citizenship" |
| Physical Development | "physical aspects of learning" | "physical aspects of learning" |
| Vocational Preparation | "sense of global and technological awareness" | n/a |
| Integrate into Local Community | "go forth to serve the community" | "new levels of partnership" |
| Integrate into Global Community | "go forth to serve the...world" | "ability to relate effectively amidst diverse cultures within a global economy" |
| Integrate into Spiritual Community | n/a | n/a |
| Safe/Nurturing Environment | "provide an environment which will enable students to develop" | "partner with families and community to ensure...the well-being of each student" |
| Challenging Environment | "technological awareness" | "exceptional academic program" "academic excellence" "rigorous, well-rounded education" "teachers who pursue expertise in their fields" |

School E and LEA 5 had seven overlapping themes: academic development, civic development, physical development, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. One theme was present only in the mission statement: vocational preparation. One theme was present only in the strategic plan: emotional development. Two themes were not present in either the mission statement or the strategic plan: social development and *integrate* into spiritual community. An 81.8% alignment existed between School E's mission statement and LEA 5's strategic plan. The school accountability system for the 2017 school year highlighted the themes of academic development, emotional development, *integrate* into global community, vocational preparation, and challenging environment. The school received a *met standard* rating on the accountability system, scoring slightly above the target score for each index. The school received six distinctions: ELA/reading, mathematics, science, social studies, top 25% student progress, and postsecondary readiness. In order to receive any distinction, School E had to be in the first quartile of its 40-school comparison group.

**School F and LEA 6.** LEA 6 is an urban LEA in Texas consisting of 46 elementary schools, 14 middle schools, and seven traditional 9–12 high schools. Total population of the LEA was classified as a 6A district and served approximately 67,000 students PK–12. School F, one of the traditional high schools within LEA 6, was highlighted for this study. The student population from 2016–2017 was 3,070. School F achieved a *Met Standard* rating on the accountability measures and was awarded four distinctions: mathematics, science, social studies, and top 25% closing performance gaps. The state average for school expenditures was $9,373. School F had an operating expenditure of $6,176 (Texas Education Agency, 2017f). LEA 6 received Title I funds, but School F received no Title I funds.

The mission statement of the school contained the following themes: academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment and challenging environment. The strategic plan contained the themes of academic development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. Table 8 highlights the terms used to identify the themes according to the content analysis and provides a side-by-side comparison of the themes found in School F's mission statement and LEA 6's strategic plan.

Table 8

*School F and LEA 6 Themes, Mission Statement & Strategic Plan Wording*

| Theme | Mission Statement Wording | Strategic Plan Wording |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Development | "model lifelong discovery" | "academic excellence" "appropriate learning environment" "academic growth" |
| Social Development | "adaptive" "resourceful" "empathetic" | n/a |
| Emotional Development | "lifelong discovery" "empathetic" | "lifelong learner" |
| Civic Development | "civically minded individuals" | "responsible citizenship" "responsible, productive, effective citizens" |
| Physical Development | n/a | n/a |
| Vocational Preparation | "resourceful" "skills" | "technical skills" "competitive" |
| Integrate into Local Community | "community members" | "partnerships" "community" "school community" |
| Integrate into Global Community | "adaptive" | n/a |
| Integrate into Spiritual Community | n/a | n/a |
| Safe/Nurturing Environment | "safe environment" | "safe and engaging" "foster caring, trusting relationships" "safe learning environment" "address inequalities" |
| Challenging Environment | "rigorous, genuine, unique experiences" | "team of educators" "variety of tools and resources" "academically rigorous" "empower teachers to design authentic learning experiences" |

School F and LEA 6 had seven overlapping themes: academic development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. Two themes were present only in the mission statement: social development and *integrate* into global community. Two themes were not present in either the mission statement or the strategic plan: physical development and *integrate* into spiritual community. An 81.8% alignment existed between School F's mission statement and LEA 6's strategic plan. The school accountability system for the 2017 school year highlighted the themes of academic development, emotional development, *integrate* into global community, vocational preparation, and challenging environment. The school received a *met standard* rating on the accountability system, scoring slightly above the target score for each index. The school received four distinctions: mathematics, science, social studies, and top 25% closing performance gaps. In order to receive any distinction, School F had to be in the first quartile of its 40-school comparison group.

**School G and LEA 7.** LEA 7 is an urban LEA in Texas consisting of 83 elementary schools, 19 middle schools, and 12 traditional 9–12 high schools. LEA 7 served approximately 81,900 students PK–12. School G, one of the traditional high schools within LEA 7, was the one highlighted for this study. The student population from 2016–2017 was 1,657. School G achieved a *Met Standard* rating on the accountability measures and was awarded two distinctions: mathematics and postsecondary readiness. The state average for school expenditures was $9,373. School G had an operating expenditure totaling $8,840 (Texas Education Agency, 2017g). LEA 7 and School G received Title I funds.

The mission statement of the school contained the following themes: academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, and challenging

environment. The strategic plan contained the themes of academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. Table 9 highlights the terms used to identify the themes according to the content analysis and provides a side-by-side comparison of the themes found in School G's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan.

Table 9

*School G and LEA 7 Themes, Mission Statement & Strategic Plan Wording*

| Theme | Mission Statement Wording | Strategic Plan Wording |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Development | "academic excellence" | "quality education" <br> "achieve excellence" <br> "perform at or above grade level" <br> "creativity" |
| Social Development | "respect" <br> "responsibility" | "fully participate now and in the future in the social...opportunities" |
| Emotional Development | "pride, respect, and responsibility" | "fully participate now and in the future" <br> "positive organizational culture" <br> "emotional health" |
| Civic Development | "responsibility" | "civically engaged students" |
| Physical Development | n/a | n/a |
| Vocational Preparation | n/a | "career-ready" |
| Integrate into Local Community | n/a | "community partnerships" <br> "ownership among internal and external stakeholders" |
| Integrate into Global Community | n/a | "generate, leverage, and utilize strategically all resources" |
| Integrate into Spiritual Community | n/a | n/a |
| Safe/Nurturing Environment | n/a | "safety" <br> "responsive organization" |
| Challenging Environment | "culture of excellence" | "transformative use of technology" <br> "high expectations for all students, employees, parents/guardians, and community members" <br> "high quality education" |

School G and LEA 7 had five overlapping themes: academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, and challenging environment. Four themes were present only in the strategic plan: vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, and safe/nurturing environment. Two themes were not present in either the mission statement or the strategic plan: physical development and *integrate* into spiritual community. A 63.6% alignment existed between School G's mission statement and LEA 7's strategic plan. The school accountability system for the 2017 school year highlighted the themes of academic development, emotional development, *integrate* into global community, vocational preparation, and challenging environment. The school received a *met standard* rating on the accountability system, scoring slightly above the target score for each index. The school received two distinctions: mathematics and postsecondary readiness. In order to receive any distinction, School G had to be in the first quartile of its 40-school comparison group. A summary of the results and detailed analysis follows.

**Research Methodology and Analysis**

According to current research, mission statements serve multiple functions for an organization, such as marketing tool (Cucchiara, 2016; Leonard & Huang, 2014), framework for guiding the day-to-day operations of an organization (Barteld, Drayer, & Wolfensberger, 2012; Genç, 212; King et al, 2013), and revealing alignment with political initiatives (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Chapple, 2015; Gaztabid-Fernandez et al., 2016; Hladchenko, 2016; Orozco, 2012; Zandstra, 2012;). In addition, mission statements should be fluid documents revised regularly to reflect a change in leadership (Slate et al., 2008), a changing society (Perfetto et al, 2013), and the changing requirements and laws in education (Hladchencko, 2016; Kuenssberg, 2011).

Mission statements also serve as tools for measuring the overall organizational health of an institution (Pourrajab et al., 2011).

This multiple case study used Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation (Spaulding, 2014) and the tool of CIT (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Butterfield et al, 2005) to analyze the data presented through mission statements, strategic plans, and school report cards. A content analysis was employed to identify key themes in both the mission statement and strategic plan to determine if alignment existed between the two pieces of information related to a school and its LEA. The researcher used the coding rubric of mission statements developed through the work of Stemler and Bebell (2012) and Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011). A rate of alignment was determined, and then the researcher determined if schools with a higher rate of alignment had a higher rating and a higher number of distinctions awarded to them through the accountability system. This information was then categorized based on the two research questions in order to ascertain the influence, if any, alignment had on a school's performance rating.

**Multiple case study.** A multiple case study approach was developed for this research. The qualitative method allowed the researcher to focus on a variety of designs for analyzing the data (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, a multiple case study should be used when studying phenomena to develop a better understanding of how those phenomena are reflected in different environments and circumstances. The data from a multiple case study provided a richer insight to better understand the specifics of a phenomenon (Yin, 2014). In this study, mission statements and strategic plans were used to evaluate the overall need of alignment in reporting school success on the state accountability system. In order to protect the identity of the schools and LEAs selected, no identifying features in mission statements or strategic plans were

highlighted.  The data for this study were analyzed using Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation and CIT.

The methodology for analysis was derived from Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation (Spaulding, 2014) and the CIT theory (Bott & Tourish, 2016).  Both rely on identifying the goal of an organization and then evaluating the steps taken to achieve the goal. The study was completed with an analysis performed at the end of the evaluation to see if alignment existed between goals and actions (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Wraga, 2017). Appendix A provides an overview of the data collected.  This shows the rate of alignment and the schools' performances on the school accountability measures.

The multiple case study began with identifying the schools qualified for the study. School mission statements and LEA strategic plans were collected using publicly available websites.  School report cards were collected next.  Three groups were then identified: (a) non-Title I school and non-Title I LEA; (b) non-Title I school and Title I LEA; and (c) Title I school and Title I LEA.  Mission statements and strategic plans were then codified.  From this, a rate of alignment was determined, including both themes that were and were not present in each respective mission statement and strategic plan.  The researcher attempted to codify the indices and the distinctions of the school accountability system in order to determine if schools were achieving satisfactory performance in their stated purposes (see Appendix B).  Once the research was completed, CIT was used to better understand if alignment was an apparent component of school success on state accountability measures.

**Summary of the Findings**

The following research questions guided the results analysis for this study:

**RQ1: How do LEAs with Title I or non-Title I status align their mission statements and strategic plans with Tyler's model criteria of organization of instruction, learning, evaluation, and feedback?** Tyler's model criteria of organization of instruction, learning, evaluation, and feedback has three parts: (a) identification of the objective (goal); (b) the plan to meet the objective; and (c) evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the objectives and plan. For this study, the researcher used the published mission statement of each school as the identified objective. The LEA's strategic plan was used as the plan to meet the objective. Then the school's evaluation on the TEA accountability system provided the evidence as to the effectiveness of alignment between mission statements and strategic plans.

The study revealed that all of the school mission statements were aligned with the strategic plan goals for the theme of academic achievement. The theme of academic achievement was also a theme that was repeatedly identified in descriptors of the indices and distinctions of the school accountability system (see Appendix B). With mission statements and strategic plans being 100% aligned with this theme, the researcher found that 100% of schools obtained the minimum qualifications on the school accountability system to achieve a *Met Standard* distinction. From there, it varied on what themes were found in both mission statements and strategic plans, as well as how many distinctions were earned by the individual schools.

**RQ2: When using the critical incident technique theory, is the alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan apparent for a *met standard* rating on the accountability system?** All schools achieved a *met standard* rating on the TEA

accountability system. Once a school achieved this status, it was eligible to be evaluated for distinctions in seven categories. The scores had to be in the top quartile in the comparison group of 40 schools to be awarded a distinction. In order to score in the top quartile (Q1), a school had to achieve at least 33% of the indicators used to determine distinctions (Texas Education Agency, 2017). The seven distinctions were the following: (a) academic achievement in English language arts/reading, (b) academic achievement in mathematics, (c) academic achievement in science, (d) academic achievement in social studies, (e) top 25% student progress, (f) top 25% closing performance gaps, and (g) postsecondary readiness. The first four distinctions contained the words "academic achievement." Not all schools were able to achieve all four of these distinctions, even though academic development was a theme found in all mission statements and strategic plans. School D received zero distinctions, while school E received six distinctions. The data showed that the highest frequency of alignment did not lead to anything beyond achieving *met standard* and one distinction, while school G with the lowest rate of alignment achieved *met standard* and two distinctions.

Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation for curriculum and instruction focuses on three parts: (a) identification of the objective (goal); (b) the plan to meet the objective; and (c) evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the objectives and plan. For this study, the mission statement was used as the objective, the strategic plan was utilized as the plan, and the school report card was utilized as the evidence. The data revealed that the leaders of schools aligned their mission statements to their LEA strategic plans anywhere from 63.7% to 90.9%. The two themes of academic development and challenging environment identified in the coding rubric were found in all mission statements and strategic plans, while one theme, *integrate* into spiritual community, was not found in any of the mission statements or strategic plans. All schools

achieved a *met standard* rating on the 2017 Accountability System.  A detailed analysis using components of CIT was conducted on the distinctions earned by each school.

The two outliers in this study were School D and School E.  Both schools showed 81.8% alignment between mission statements and strategic plans; however, School D received zero distinctions, while School E achieved six of the seven distinctions (ELA/reading, mathematics, science, social studies, top 25% student progress, and postsecondary readiness).  School E was excluded from receiving the distinction of top 25% closing performance gap, because its student demographics did not contain the necessary requirements.  All other schools fell somewhere between these two schools.  The average rate of alignment between mission statements and strategic plans was 79.2%, and the average number of distinctions was 2.8 out of 7.0.  Table 2 in a previous section shows an overview of the rate of alignment, the rating achieved on the accountability system, and the number of distinctions earned by all schools and LEAs used in the study.

An additional analysis was conducted by sorting the schools into three separate categories based on Title I status.  In one group were all schools receiving Title I funds.  The second group were all schools not receiving Title I funds, but LEAs did.  The third group, which consisted of only one school and one LEA, included the school that did not receive Title I funds, nor did its LEA. Tables 10–12 highlight this information.

Table 10

*Schools Receiving Title I Funds*

| School | % Alignment | Rating | # of Distinctions | Distinctions Received |
|--------|-------------|--------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| B | 72.7 | Met Standard | 4 | mathematics<br>social studies<br>top 25% student progress<br>top 25% closing performance gaps |
| C | 81.8 | Met Standard | 3 | ELA/reading<br>mathematics<br>science |
| G | 63.6 | Met Standard | 2 | mathematics<br>postsecondary readiness |

Table 11

*Schools not Receiving Title I Funds, but LEA Does*

| School | % Alignment | Rating | # of Distinctions | Distinctions Received |
|--------|-------------|--------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| A | 72.7 | Met Standard | 1 | top 25% student progress |
| D | 81.8 | Met Standard | 0 | |
| F | 81.8 | Met Standard | 4 | mathematics<br>science<br>social studies<br>top 25% closing performance gap |

Table 12

*Schools and LEAs Receiving No Title I Funds*

| School | % Alignment | Rating | # of Distinctions | Distinctions Received |
|--------|-------------|--------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| E | 72.7 | Met Standard | 6 | ELA/reading<br>mathematics<br>science<br>social studies<br>top 25% student progress<br>postsecondary readiness |

In order to fully use Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation, a detailed review of the themes found within the school mission statements and LEA strategic plans was necessary. While the themes of academic development and challenging environment were found in all the mission statements and strategic plans, there was one theme that was only found in Title I schools and LEAs. This theme was emotional development. Additionally, the theme of physical development was found only in a non-Title I schools. The detailed analysis in the next section provides this information to highlight the different criteria used in determining how the accountability system adequately measured the schools' missions and plans for achieving these missions.

**Presentation of Data and Results**

**Common themes and alignment.** The school mission statements and the LEAs' strategic plans were read and evaluated according to the rubric established by the research of Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011). The 11 possible themes found in educational mission statements are academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, physical development, vocational development, *integrate* into the local community, *integrate* into the global community, *integrate* into the spiritual community, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. Academic development and challenging environment were found in 100% of the schools' mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans. *Integrate* into spiritual community was not found in any of the mission statements or the strategic plans. Physical development was found in LEA 5's strategic plan and School E's mission statement; it was not found in any other LEA's strategic plan or school's mission statement. Civic development was found in all seven schools' mission statements and six of the LEAs' strategic plans. LEA 3 did not reference this theme in its strategic plan. This is

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an 85.7% alignment. Emotional development and safe/nurturing environment were 71.4%

aligned. These themes were not referenced in School A's or School E's mission statement but

was found in all the LEAs' strategic plans. Vocational preparation was aligned 57.1% of the

time and was more common in LEAs' strategic plans than in the schools' mission statements.

*Integrate* into local community and *integrate* into global community were aligned 28.6% of the

time, being more common in strategic plans than in mission statements.

Three themes were in agreement between each school's mission statement and its LEA's

strategic plan. These themes were academic development, *integrate* into the spiritual

community, and challenging environment. Academic development was the first theme analyzed

in mission statements and strategic plans. Words that signified this theme included statements

such as "educate students" (School C), "high academic expectations" (School D), and "academic

excellence" (School G). Words that signified this theme in the strategic plans included

statements such as "improve student achievement" (LEA 1), "critical thinking" (LEA 3), and

"meet or exceed grade level expectations" (LEA 4). Challenging environment was the second

theme found in 100% of the mission statements and 100% of the strategic plans. This theme was

identified in mission statements through phrases such as "quality education" (School A),

"rigorous…learning environment" (School C), "technological awareness" (School E), and

"culture of excellence" (School G). This theme was represented in strategic plans with phrases

such as "teacher professional development plans" (LEA 1), "rigorous curriculum and

instruction" (LEA 2), "academic excellence" (LEA 5), "empower teachers to design" (LEA 6),

and "transformative use of technology" (LEA 7). This finding was consistent with the research

showing mission statements and strategic plans are designed to "reflect some of its [*sic*] genuine

priorities and values" (Gaztabide-Fernandez et al., 2016, p. 31).

The theme of *integrate* into the spiritual community was not found in any mission statement or strategic plan.  While it was not an identified theme, the schools and its LEAs showed agreement of purpose in mission statements and strategic plans by not referencing it in documents designed to advertise the overall purpose of an institution (Cucchiara, 2016). Physical development was not identified in six out of seven mission statements or in six out of the seven strategic plans.  One school and its LEA mentioned the phrase "physical aspects of learning" (School E and LEA 5).  This highlighted that the leaders of schools and LEAs placed an emphasis on ensuring that their students understood the connection between their academic development and physical aspects of education.

The theme of civic development was 85.7% aligned between schools' mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans.  Civic development occurred in 100% of the school mission statements but was found in only 85.7% of the strategic plans.  LEA 3's strategic plan did not reference civic development.  Phrases such as "productive citizens" (School A), "contribute to society" (School D), "civically minded individuals" (School F), "responsible citizens/citizenship" (School E and LEA 6) indicated the presence of this theme.

Two themes had a 71.4% alignment rate.  These themes included emotional development and safe/nurturing environment. Emotional development occurred in 71.4% of the schools' mission statements and 100% of LEAs' strategic plans.  Words that indicated the presence of this theme in schools' mission statements included "responsible and productive" (School B), "life-long success" (School D), and "empathetic" (School F).  Words that indicated the presence of this theme in LEAs' strategic plans included "promote emotional health" (LEA 1), "promote positive student development" (LEA 3), "achieve lifelong success" (LEA 4), "high standards of character and ethics are expected" (LEA 5), and "fully participate now and in the future" (LEA

7).  The theme of safe/nurturing environment was indicated by phrases such as "valued and cared for in a safe environment" (LEA 2) and "comfortable and safe learning environment" (School C).  The terms "safe" and "safety" were mentioned a total of seven times between mission statements and strategic plans.  Only School A and its LEA 1 did not mention any terms to indicate the theme of safe/nurturing environment.

Vocational preparation had a 57.1% rate of alignment.  Phrases that indicated vocational development included "prepared for success" (School A), "develop skills to achieve lifelong success" (School D), "prepared for post-secondary college or career" (LEA 4), and "technical skills" (LEA 6).  This data highlighted the importance of leaders of schools and LEAs in considering their impact on the future of their students and not strictly focusing on the four years of schooling in Grades 9–12.  In four of the case studies, vocational preparation was found in both the school's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan: School A and LEA 1, School B and LEA 2, School D and LEA 4, and School F and LEA 6.  School E referenced it in its mission statement but its LEA (LEA 5) did not reference it in its strategic plan.  School G did not reference this theme in its mission statement, but its LEA (LEA 7) did reference it in its strategic plan.  School C and LEA 3 did not include this theme in either the mission statement or the LEA's strategic plan.

Three themes had an alignment rate of 28.6%: social development, *integrate* into local community, and *integrate* into global community.  The theme of social development was mentioned in 42.9% of the school mission statements and in only 57.1% of LEA strategic plans.  Phrases that indicated this theme included "mutual respect" (School C), "parental involvement" (LEA 3), and "respect" (School C, School G).  *Integrate* into the local community was found in 42.9% of mission statements and 85.7% of LEA strategic plans.  Phrases such as "facilitate

family and community involvement" (LEA 1), "partnerships" (LEA 3), and "go forth to serve the community" (School E) highlighted the importance some schools and some LEAs placed on being part of the local community. This theme was more often found in a strategic plan than in a school mission statement. *Integrate* into the global community was found in 42.9% of the school mission statements and 71.4% of the LEA strategic plans. Phrases such as "adaptive" (School F), "contribute to a global society" (LEA 4), "develop collaborative partnerships" (LEA 1), and "go forth and serve the…world" (School E) indicated the presence of this theme. The data revealed that both themes were more common for the LEA strategic plan than the school mission. See Appendix B for detailed analysis of themes.

**Themes and Title I.** Orozco (2012) found that schools' mission statements revealed a difference in expectations among certain groups of students, while Chapple (2015) showed how the traits of a culture could be incorporated into a mission statement to highlight a rich tradition and culture. When examining schools based on Title I status, the data focused on the differences in themes identified for schools designated Title I and those that were not designated Title I. From the seven schools selected for this study, three were classified as Title I schools receiving Title I funds from its LEAs; while four were non-Title I schools, because they either received no funds from its Title I LEAs or they did not qualify for Title I funds. Data showed that four themes were present in all three of the identified Title I schools: academic development, emotional development, civic development, and challenging environment. Two themes, social development and safe/nurturing environment, were found in two of the three Title I schools. The theme of vocational development was present in only one of the three Title I schools' mission statements. Four themes were absent altogether from Title I schools' mission statements:

physical development, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, and *integrate* into spiritual community.

The non-Title I schools had the following information. Four themes were present in all four school mission statements: academic development, civic development, vocational preparation, and challenging environment. Three themes (*integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, and safe/nurturing environment) were in three of the four school mission statements. The theme of emotional development was present in two schools' mission statements. Social development and physical development were represented in one mission statement. *integrate* into spiritual community was not found in any of the four mission statements.

The strategic plans of the LEAs had some variation of themes from the individual schools. Two themes were found in 100% of the strategic plans: academic achievement and challenging environment. *Integrate* into spiritual community was a theme that did not occur in any of the LEA strategic plans. Some themes were found more often in the strategic plans than the individual school mission statements. These themes were emotional development, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, and safe/nurturing environment.

**Themes Reflected in the School Accountability Measures.** The theme analysis of the school accountability system was necessary in order to better evaluate how alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan was reflected within the school accountability system. The reasoning for this was that a school and LEA with theme alignment with the school accountability system should have had more success in achieving not only the *met standard* rating but also a high number of distinctions. The school accountability system for 2016-2017 consisted of four indices and seven distinctions. The wording of the indices and the

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distinctions were drawn from the TEA Accountability Manual (2017) and subjected to the same content analysis as the mission statements and strategic plans.

All the indices and the distinctions had language reflecting the theme of academic achievement. Index 1 used the words "student achievement" (Appendix B), which directly ties into the theme of academic achievement. At the high school level, the state uses student scores on end-of-course (EOC) exams to measure school performance. The EOCs include, English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. Index 2 addressed the progress students in certain demographic categories made on ELA/reading and mathematics (see Appendix B). This also aligns with the theme of academic achievement. Index 2 showed the themes of emotional development and *integrate* into the global community. Index 2 highlighted the idea of students reaching their potential, and it focused on the diversity within a campus and how that might influence student performance. Index 3 reverted to looking at overall academic achievement; but, instead of a holistic view of the school's student population, it focused primarily on economically-disadvantaged students and the two lowest-performing racial/ethnic student groups. The theme identified in Index 3 is academic achievement (see Appendix B). Index 4 specifically stated that a high school diploma "provides students with the foundation necessary for success in college, the workforce, job training programs, and the military." This aligned with the themes of academic achievement, vocational development, and civic development (see Appendix B).

The seven distinctions were disaggregated into two categories: student performance on specific tests and a school's performance within its comparison group. Distinctions 1 through 4 referenced student performance in relation to ELA/reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. These four distinctions shared the same two themes of academic achievement and

challenging environment.  This was apparent in the words "outstanding achievement" and the use of data from advanced level courses (Advanced Placement, dual-credit, and International Baccalaureate) and other assessment measures, such as ACT and SAT.  These data sources were used to determine if a school received these awards from the state.

The other three distinctions were related to how a school performs compared to the other schools in its comparison groups.  Comparison groups consisted of 40 schools with similar data in the following categories: grade span, number of students, percentage of economically disadvantaged, percent of English learners, mobility rate, percentage of students participating in early college high school, and the percentage of special education students.  The schools were then placed in quartiles for three different distinctions: student progress, closing performance gaps, and postsecondary readiness.  Interestingly, regarding comparison groups, a school might not have had other schools from its LEA group; and an individual school might have appeared in multiple comparison groups across the state as determined by the distance the school is from other schools within its comparison group.  Comparison groups for individual campuses were determined based on the smallest distances value calculated for each school in the group (2017 Accountability Manual, 2017).  All three of these distinctions shared the theme of academic achievement.  However, only the postsecondary readiness distinction possessed the wording to support the themes of vocational preparation and challenging environment.

**Summary**

This study began with the need for this researcher to understand if alignment between mission statements and strategic plans was apparent for school success on a state accountability system.  Mission statements and strategic plans provided a lens by which to evaluate a school's overall effectiveness (Genç, 2012; Pourrajab et al., 2011, Perfetto et al., 2013; Bernhard, 2016).

All data from schools and LEAs used in this study referenced academic achievement. In addition, all the schools achieved the *met standard* rating on the accountability system, showing how the stated priority was met by all (David et al., 2014).

The study was adapted slightly from the expectations set forth in Chapter 3. The intent originally was to determine if alignment between mission statements and strategic plans was apparent for schools to achieve a *met standard* rating on the school accountability. With all schools achieving this standard, the researcher used a more detailed analysis in relation to the distinctions for which the schools were eligible after achieving *met standard*. The expectation was that an alignment between mission statement and strategic plan would lead to a higher success rate on the school accountability system (Hall, DiPiro, Rowen, & McNair, 2013; Marcoux, 2013; Talsma, 2002).

The data collected in this study showed a unique view of education across the state of Texas. Mission statements for schools provided a glimpse of educational institutions' view, and strategic plans provided a means to evaluate whether schools were truly working toward meeting the stated objectives as identified by their mission statements. All schools for this study had mission statements that advertised its purpose to local communities (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Genç, 2012; Leonard & Huang, 2014; Perfetto et al, 2013). Schools achieved its stated purposes of academic achievement; however, they varied campus to campus on what other objectives a school was advertising and achieving.

Chapter 5 includes a summary and discussion of the results. In addition, discussion is provided that focuses on how the results relate to the current literature of mission statements and strategic plans. An analysis of the limitations and unintended outcomes of the study is provided. Discussion of the implications of the results for practice, policy, and theory is included. Chapter

5 also includes an assessment of the quality of the research conducted for this study and

recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

**Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion and analysis of the results of the study. This chapter is organized into seven sections. The summary of results section provides an overview of the research questions and theory; it then transitions into a summary of the findings. In the discussion of the results, the researcher's interpretations of the findings are tied into the conceptual framework that was used to guide this study. The discussion of the results section explains the relationship of the research to the current body of literature and scholarship in the field. The limitations section provides an overview of the research design and a discussion on the flaws of the research design and how a deeper set of data could have been developed. In the implication of the results for practice, policy, and theory, the research discusses the practical application of the study and how it may shape current approaches to develop schools' mission statements and LEAs' strategic plans' designs. The researcher discusses the next steps for research to continue to create a well-rounded source of data for leaders as they devote time and resources to the development of mission statements and strategic plans that serve to highlight the goals and direction of an organization. The dissertation is summarized in the conclusion section, which provides an overview of the study and the key highlights that were determined by the data set collected.

**Summary of the Results**

The problem that was analyzed in this multiple case study was to determine if theme alignment between a school's mission statement and its Local Education Agency's (LEA) strategic plan was apparent in order for overall student performance to meet criteria for a school to achieve a *met standard* rating on Texas Education Agency's (TEA) school accountability

system. Stemler and Bebell (2012) explained that mission statements are tools that can be used to express the values a society holds regarding education. Through their work, common themes were identified that schools across the United States used to articulate their purpose and overall function. This current study used the publicly available school mission statements and LEA strategic plans, as well as accountability data from the 2016–2017 school year to address the two overarching research questions that drove this research. Title I status provided an additional layer of analysis to determine if socio-economic status had any bearing on rate of alignment and themes found within mission statements and strategic plans. The study provided data to support the idea that mission statements should be revised and should be designed to support the idea that schools exist to create global students with postsecondary readiness. Furthermore, this study led to the conclusion that alignment between mission statements and strategic plans was not apparent for student academic performance that equated to school success on TEA's school accountability system.

The literature revealed a gap in the research regarding a connection between the alignment of themes in a school's mission statement, its LEA's strategic plan, and student academic performance to determine a school's overall rating as determined by school accountability measures. This multiple case study was designed using a blended conceptual framework with ties to Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation (Spaulding, 2014) and the critical incident technique theory (CIT) (Bott & Tourish, 2016). By combining the two theories, the following research questions were designed to guide this study:

RQ1: How does an LEA with Title I and non-Title I status align its mission statement and strategic plan with the Tyler model's criteria of organization of instruction, learning, evaluation, and feedback?

RQ2: When using the critical incident technique theory, is the alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan apparent for a *met standard* rating on the accountability system?

Tyler's model provided a structure designed around objectives-based evaluation to identify objectives of an organization based on measurable outcomes (Spaulding, 2014). CIT provided an additional layer of analysis to determine if there were critical factors necessary for success (Bott & Tourish, 2016). Both of these theories required this researcher to identify the objectives of an organization, the steps designed to achieve the objectives, and the evaluation tool to determine overall success or failure (Bott & Tourish, 2016; Wraga, 2017). The objectives identified in this study were found in schools' mission statements. The action steps were gathered from LEAs' strategic plans; and the evaluation tool was data pulled from TEA-created 2016–2017 school report cards. The critical factor this researcher examined was to determine if there was a need to align a school's mission statement with its LEA's strategic plan for overall student performance to meet criteria for a school to achieve a *met standard* rating on the TEA accountability system along with being awarded any distinctions.

This current study was designed to help bridge the gap in the literature related to mission statements, strategic plans, and accountability measures. The current research indicated a thorough understanding that mission statements were designed to provide clarification of goals and that strategic plans provided the specific plan of action to achieve those goals (Genç, 2012; Wyk & Moeng, 2014). Accountability systems were developed in order to measure the overall effectiveness of schools and the progress that has been made in their ability to meet their stated goals and objectives (Deming & Figlio, 2016).

This multiple case study was conducted using information from seven public Grades 9–12 high schools in Texas. The population consisted of seven schools and seven LEAs. The first deciding factor in choosing qualifying schools was to identify the urban, suburban, and rural LEAs within the state of Texas, which this researcher obtained from the Texas Education Agency website (Texas Education Agency, 2017). From this list, LEAs that had no publicly available strategic plans were disqualified. LEAs were then sorted by Title I status. LEAs who received Title I funds determined how the funds were distributed within the district and could select certain schools within its boundaries to receive Title I funding. The LEAs' high schools were sorted according to its Title I status. Schools were excluded from the study if its mission statement was not publicly available on school specific websites. The goal was to have a total of nine schools in the study. Three would have received Title I funds. Three would not have received Title I funds, but its LEA would have done so. In addition, three were to receive no Title I funds, nor its LEAs. The research revealed that all but one LEA that was classified as rural, suburban, and urban did not receive Title I funds. Therefore, the study was only able to include seven case studies for this research.

The final set of data included two rural high schools; both were part of Title I LEAs, but one of the high schools did not receive Title I funds, while the other high school did. Three suburban LEAs and high schools were included. One of the suburban LEAs did not receive Title I funds, and its high school did not receive Title I funds either. One of the suburban LEAs did receive Title I funds, but did not disburse funds to the high school selected for this study. And the final suburban LEA received Title I funds and disbursed its funds to the high school that was selected for this study. Two urban high schools were selected; one received Title I funds from its LEA, while the other one did not. Both of its LEAs received Title I funds.

Data sources for this study were publicly available school mission statements, publicly available LEA strategic plans, and publicly available school report cards published by the Texas Education Agency for the 2016-2017 school year. The mission statements and the strategic plans were codified using direct content analysis, which allowed the researcher to use the work of previous research as the basis for the coding that was used on mission statements, strategic plans, and the indices and distinctions of the school accountability system (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). TEA developed four indices that provided a compressive tool to measure school success. These four indices were student achievement, student progress, closing performance gaps, and postsecondary readiness. In addition to the indices, TEA developed seven distinctions to measure a school's performance within a 40-school comparison group. In order to qualify for the distinctions, a school had to achieve a *met standard* rating with the four indices. The seven distinctions included academic achievement in ELA/Reading, academic achievement in mathematics, academic achievement in science, academic achievement in social studies, top 25% student progress, top 25% closing performance gaps, and postsecondary readiness (2017 Accountability Manual, 2017). The research of Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011) provided the identification and the rubric for the 11 themes commonly found in school mission statements. Once the mission statements and strategic plans were codified, data was analyzed to determine the overall rate of alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan.

All schools selected for this study achieved a *met standard* rating based on their students' overall academic performance. However, it was determined through all of the data collected that alignment between mission statements and strategic plans was not an apparent component in order for overall student academic performance to meet criteria for a school to achieve a *met standard* rating on school accountability measures. The presence of two themes appeared to

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indicate a school's ability to achieve the *met standard* rating on the accountability system, but the rate of alignment varied, which prevented the researcher from ascertaining what effect alignment had on a school's ability to achieve a certain performance rating.  The themes that tended to indicate a *met standard* rating were academic achievement and challenging environment.  These were found in 100% of the schools' mission statements and 100% of the LEAs' strategic plans selected for this study.  This researcher concluded that the presence of these two themes in both the mission statements and strategic plans tended to indicate a *met standard rating.*  Once schools achieved the *met standard rating,* schools became eligible to receive seven distinctions if their students' academic performance put them in the top quartile of their 40-school comparison groups.

Rates of alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan varied from 63.6% (School G) to 81.8% (School C, School D, School, E School F) served as no way to determine if schools were awarded distinctions.  School E had an 81.8% rate of alignment and received six distinctions, while School D had an 81.8% rate of alignment and received zero distinctions.  This finding demonstrated that alignment was not an indicator of a school's ability to raise student academic performance above what was necessary to qualify for a *met standard* rating in order to achieve any of the seven distinctions, which would show a top performance in a 40-school comparison group.

**Discussion of Results**

This study was prompted by the researcher's interest in mission statements in the public Grades 9–12 high schools in the state of Texas.  The current body of research identified 11 common themes that were found in educational mission statements (Stemler & Bebell, 2012; Stemler, Bebell, & Sonnabend, 2011).  These themes included academic development, social

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development, emotional development, civic development, physical development, vocational preparation, *integrate* into local community, *integrate* into global community, *integrate* into spiritual community, providing safe/nurturing environment, and providing a challenging environment. The gap that existed in the current research was the limited research conducted to determine alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan (Wyk & Moeng, 2014). The other gap in the current research revolved around the issue of mission statements, strategic plans, and school performance on the state accountability system. This research was unable to locate research that addressed the need for alignment in a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan and if that correlates to success on school accountability measures.

In order to address these gaps, the researcher embarked on a study that would examine a school's mission statement, its LEA's strategic plan, and the school's rating, as determined by overall student academic performance, on the 2016-2017 Texas education accountability system. This study was organized around the conceptual framework of Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation. CIT was the organizational tool used in data analysis. Tyler's model was organized according to an objective-based evaluation system. An objective was identified, then the steps (or actions) of an organization were evaluated based on the performance data of the identified objectives (Kleibard, 1970; Wraga, 2017). CIT blended the objectives-based evaluation model with determining if certain steps or actions were a true necessity for an organizations success as measured by performance (Bott and Tourish, 2016). Using Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation and the tool of CIT, three key pieces of data were gathered and analyzed: a school's mission statement, its LEA's strategic plan, and the school's report card for the 2016–2017 school year. The mission statement served as the identification of objectives; the strategic plan

was used as the plan to meet the objectives; and the school report card was the evidence to determine the effectiveness of the objectives and the plan. The alignment between the objectives and the plan served as part of the evidence to determine if the leaders of a school and the leaders of its LEA were working to achieve success as measured by TEA's 2017 accountability measures.

In order to analyze the data gained from the seven case studies, the researcher had to develop a way to analyze the data in a clear manner. Guiding questions were developed that provided a lens by which to analyze the data. The guiding questions used for each case study included the following: what educational purposes should the school seek to attain as identified by the mission statement, what educational experiences will the LEA strategic plan provide that are likely to attain these purposes, and how can the school's performance on the TEA Accountability System be used to determine whether the identified purposes are being obtained? Once the data for the individual case studies were organized and understood, the researcher began to draw conclusions for individual cases, and those conclusions were used to identify generalizations that might help schools and districts make decisions based on their mission statements and strategic plans. What follows is a detailed analysis of the data and the conclusions reached based on the research and how they helped to answer the two main research questions that guided the study (see Table 10, Table 11, Table 12, and Appendix A).

School G's mission statement was 63.6% aligned to the LEA's strategic plan. The themes of academic development, social development, emotional development, civic development, and challenging environment were present in the school's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan. It was interesting to note the two distinctions School G was awarded, academic achievement in mathematics and postsecondary readiness. With a theme alignment of

academic development and challenging environment, it might have been expected to find that School G was awarded all of the academic achievement distinctions for ELA/Reading, mathematics, science, and social studies, but this did not happen.  School G received the distinction for postsecondary readiness, but its mission statement did not include the theme of vocational preparation, yet it was present in the description of the distinction and the LEA's strategic plan.  Possibly, alignment of academic development and challenging environment was needed to achieve the *met standard* rating, but it did not lead to a top performance in order to receive all seven distinctions in School G's comparison group.

Schools A, B, and E had mission statements that were 72.7% aligned to their respective LEA's strategic plan. All three received a *met standard* rating, making them eligible to receive distinctions.  All three of the mission statements and strategic plans referenced academic development, civic development, and challenging environment.  However, there was not a consistent agreement on vocational preparation found within the mission statements and strategic plans.  In addition, School A received the top 25% student progress distinction.  School B received the mathematics, social studies, top 25% closing the performance gap, and top 25% student progress distinctions.  School E received the academic achievement in ELA/Reading, mathematics, science and social studies, top 25% student progress, and postsecondary readiness distinctions.  Since all schools and their LEAs had the themes of academic development and challenging environment present in mission statements and strategic plans, it would have been expected to find all schools receiving the distinctions in ELA/Reading, mathematics, science, and social studies, but only School E received all four of these, while School B received mathematics and social studies, and School A did not receive any.  The data from School A's, School B's, and School E's findings related to school performance and themes used revealed that

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alignment of themes in mission statements, strategic plans, and school accountability descriptors was not needed in order for schools to be awarded any distinctions.

Schools C, D, and F revealed to have an 81.8% alignment between their mission statements and their respective LEA's strategic plans. The schools received a *met standard* rating on the accountability system. All three of these schools aligned four themes between their mission statements and their LEAs' strategic plans. Those four themes were academic development, emotional development, safe/nurturing environment, and challenging environment. School C received three distinctions, ELA/Reading, science, and mathematics. School D did not receive any distinctions. School F received four distinctions, science, mathematics, social studies, and top 25% closing performance gaps. This particular grouping of schools provided data to make the conclusion that alignment between a mission statement and a strategic plan have no influence on school performance on a state accountability measure. This was evident by the lack of distinctions from School D. Possibly, alignment was needed to achieve the *met standard* rating, but it did not lead to a top performance on distinctions.

Alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan does not appear to have any bearing on a school's performance as measured by state accountability standards. The mission statements and strategic plans examined in this particular study showed that alignment on two themes, academic development and challenging environment, led to the minimum performance standards required for a *met standard* classification. However, schools and LEAs were not always consistent with the themes they emphasized in their respective mission statements and strategic plans. Alignment between vision and actions varied from 63.6% (School G) and 81.8% (School C, School D, School F). School E excelled in its performance, leading to six distinctions, while School D provided data to support the awarding

of the *met standard* rating but did not provide any performances to qualify them for any of the seven distinctions.

One theme not referenced was *integrate* into spiritual community. This could be related to the fact that schools are not to take a stance on any issue related to religion. In addition, this theme was not found in the indices or distinctions descriptors of the accountability system either. By omitting this theme from their mission statements and strategic plans, schools and LEAs were showing agreement to government ideas that religions/spirituality should not be incorporated into the public school system. The two research questions allowed the researcher to analyze the data in such a way to determine if alignment was a true indicator of school success on the state accountability measures.

**RQ1: How does an LEA with Title I and non-Title I status align its mission statement and strategic plan with Tyler's model criteria of instruction, learning, evaluation, and feedback?** Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation provided a framework by which an organization can evaluate its performance as measured by its overall stated purpose and goal (Lau, 2001; Wraga, 2017). The LEA's strategic plan was used as the action plan to achieve the identified purpose; and the school's report card was used as the evaluation tool by which to measure success. Mission statements and strategic plans tended to use the same themes within their texts. Academic development and challenging environment were the most commonly used themes within the mission statements and strategic plans. These two themes were found in 100% of mission statements and strategic plans. As a result of this emphasis, all seven schools used in this multiple case study were able to achieve the *met standard* rating on the TEA's school accountability system. Schools and LEAs were able to emphasis academic development to achieve the indices of student achievement and student progress. The theme of

challenging environment highlighted a school's and LEA's desire to provide academic growth

for all of their students, which was evident in all schools receiving qualifying scores for the other

two indices, closing performance gaps and postsecondary readiness.  All schools and LEAs,

regardless of its Title I status, referenced these two themes and achieved qualifying scores on all

four indices, resulting in a *met standard* rating.  This finding solidified the idea that the leaders

of all the schools and LEAs were invested in providing a strong education for all of students,

regardless of demographic differences (Orozco, 2012).

Title I schools and LEAs were more likely to include the theme of emotional

development than were non-Title I schools and LEAs (see Appendix A).  Emotional

development was used in 100% of the Title I schools' mission statements and 100% of the Title I

LEAs' strategic plans, while it only appeared in 50% of the non-Title I schools' mission

statements (School D and School F).  Emotional development did appear in the only non-Title I

LEA's strategic plan (LEA 5), but it was not in its school's mission statement (School E).

Emotional development was only found as an identified theme in Index 2 (Student Progress) of

the school's accountability system, it was not identified in the other three indices or in the seven

distinctions.  This data led the researcher to conclude that emotional development was not an

emphasis of the accountability system, proving that schools, LEAs, and the state placed a higher

emphasis on academic performance and not altruistic values of social, emotional, or spiritual

development.

Non-Title I schools referenced *integrate* into local community and *integrate* into global

community more often than Title I schools.  While these were themes not necessarily found in

the state accountability system, they could signify a school's and LEA's desire to see students

grow beyond standardized measures of state test results, attendance records, and graduation

completion rates.  By emphasizing the themes of *integrate* into local community and *integrate* into global community, the leaders of the non-Title I schools and LEAs held the belief that their role in the education of a student as one that stretches beyond the classroom and school building and one that shaped a student's overall purpose and place in the world.  Leaders of Title I schools seemed to devote more time in efforts to ensure they were producing students emotionally developed enough to be successful in their school setting, but did not necessarily examine the students' roles in their local or global communities.

The two themes that were found in all of the mission statements and strategic plans (academic development and challenging environment) provided a common tool by which to evaluate a school's success as measured by the accountability system.  These themes were echoed in the school accountability measures, providing an understanding that schools, LEAs and the state all identify that the overall purpose and function of public education in Texas was to provide academic development and a challenging environment to advance a student's academic performance.  These two themes allowed the researcher to conclude that these are apparent components in mission statements and strategic plans in order for schools to fully participate in the accountability system.  The first research question provided the researcher with a basic understanding of the components of Title I and non-Title I schools mission statements and their LEA's strategic plans.  Another layer of analysis involved examining how overall student academic performance led to a school's rating on accountability measures and if alignment was apparent for this identified success.

**RQ2: When using the critical incident technique theory, is the alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan apparent for a *met* standard rating on the accountability system?**  One of the most significant findings of this study centered on

the idea that alignment among mission statements, strategic plans, and school accountability systems was apparent for a school's minimum performance on the state accountability measures. However, what was not revealed was that alignment was an apparent component for receiving distinctions and moving beyond a basic *met standard* rating. CIT (Butterfield et al., 2005) and Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation (Spaulding, 2014; Wraga, 2017) were used in tandem in this study to evaluate the overall need for alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan as determined by the school accountability measures. What was found in this study was that alignment was not a necessity for school success. The accountability system has two parts, indices and distinctions. A school received a *met standard* rating by achieving qualifying scores on all four indices. Once a school received a *met standard* rating on the accountability system, it was then eligible to receive up to seven distinctions. These distinctions highlighted the school's performance in a 40-school comparison group. Schools received distinctions if their student performance put them in the top quartile of their 40-school comparison group. The researcher concluded that mission statements and strategic plans should reference academic achievement and challenging environment themes in order to achieve a *met standard* rating. These themes were found in all of the mission statements, the strategic plans, and they were referenced in the accountability descriptors, showing the alignment among evaluation tools, identified purpose, and specific actions to achieve the purpose. What the researcher also concluded was that alignment had no direct effect on a school's ability to achieve any of the distinctions.

The indices and the distinctions were coded using the same rubric of the mission statements and strategic plans (see Appendix C). The themes that occurred in the indices and distinction were academic development, emotional development, *integrate* into global

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community, vocational preparation, civic development, and challenging environment. Emphasis on academic development and challenging environment in the mission statements and strategic plans concluded that all schools and LEAs selected for this study made decisions to promote student academic success. This was demonstrated on the school accountability system with all schools receiving a *met standard* rating, making all schools eligible to be awarded distinctions. No school in the study received all seven distinctions. School D was awarded six of the seven, while School E was awarded zero distinctions. The discrepancies in the number of distinctions awarded provided the data to conclude that alignment was not a necessary component needed for school success on the accountability measure. Data provided in this study did not support the idea that alignment is apparent for a school's success. While the initial analysis of data provided a strong link between alignment and basic success on the accountability system, further analysis did not support the idea that alignment was apparent for schools to achieve anything beyond a *met standard* rating. There were no data presented to support the idea that alignment is apparent for schools to be awarded distinctions.

**Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature**

The data collected in this study supported current research related to mission statements, strategic plans, and accountability measures. Mission statements and strategic plans were used in the decision-making process (Chapple, 2015; Genç, 2012), which was measured with the rate of alignment. Mission statements and strategic plans highlighted cultural influences, including the social contract theory (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Grbic et al., 2013; Orozco, 2012; Reid, 2011). Mission statements were used to provide a source of objectives for measuring student academic performance (Pourrajab et al., 2011; Stemler et al., 2011).

Previous research led to the conclusion that mission statements guided the decision-making processes (Chapple, 2015; Genç, 2012). By examining the rate of alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan, the researcher was able to conclude that there was cohesion between the individual school and its LEA. The strategic plans provided the specific actions LEAs used to help schools achieve their stated mission. In addition, the research conducted in this study revealed that alignment between mission statements and strategic plans ranged from 62.3% to 81.8%. This showed how schools and LEAs shared similar goals and actions in order to achieve the goal of educating all of their students to a certain level and standard. This was further supported by noting all schools were able to produce student academic performance high enough to achieve a *met standard* rating on the school accountability system. This demonstrated how alignment between a school's mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan was one of many components needed for school success. However, this alignment was not determined to be an apparent component for schools in order to achieve any of the seven distinctions.

These findings supported the ideas provided by Genç (2012), who concluded that schools used mission statements to outline their basic components and functions, which ultimately led to Turkish universities developing an image supported by their unity and their stakeholders. Genç (2012) also concluded that there was no relationship between a university's mission statement and the school's academic performance. In addition, the research in this study supported the research of Chapple (2015), who concluded that mission statements tended to be an avenue by which to communicate expectations of both the local communities and larger government entities. School mission statements were designed in Japan and New Zealand to highlight the larger societal needs of education, thus allowing schools to make decisions that were guided in

part by government regulations and local communities. Also, Bernard's (2016) study demonstrated how mission statements were viewed as the reflection of core values and could be used to measure actions; in this current study, the reflection of core values stems from the school mission statement and the LEA's strategies led to schools achieving a *met standard* rating on the school accountability system as determined by their overall student academic performance.

Studies conducted by Reid (2011) and Grbic et al. (2013) used the social contract theory to understand how mission statements can serve to highlight the moral and ethical makeup of the larger community they serve. The schools used in this current study had mission statements that highlighted the important values of the LEA, community, and state. All schools used the theme of academic development in their mission statements, which was also found in all of the LEAs' strategic plans and in all of the descriptors of the indices and distinctions of the school accountability system. This demonstrated how the community relied on the schools and the LEAs to produce students with a certain level of education in order to be considered a productive member of society. The schools executed this belief by meeting the designation of *met standard*. Though one would have hoped for all schools to receive distinctions, by obtaining the *met standard* designation, schools did fulfill the social contract that was advertised to communities with mission statements and strategic plans.

Reid (2011) also found that the use of the social contract theory provided an idealized view of education. The idealized view of education, as described by Reid (2011), was one that treated everyone as equal and did not accept the reality of inequality when it came to power, privilege, and wealth. Schools and LEAs with a Title 1 distinction were less likely to reference the theme of *integrate* into global community, while non-Title 1 schools and LEA referenced this theme more consistently. However, on the surface, all schools and LEAs agreed that academic

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development and challenging environment were needed for students' overall academic performance for a *met standard* rating. Reid (2011) conducted research that discussed the influence of cultural norms on professions, but how sometimes those cultural norms provided an idealized view of society and tended to keep in place a system designed for equality, not equity. Grbic et al. (2013) conducted a study on medical school mission statements and found they all expressed the same overall purpose of producing medical staff that could meet the needs of the community in an ethical manner. However, a deeper analysis of the mission statements revealed subtle differences in schools based on type of institution. These small differences did not distract from the overall goal of medical schools; however, they provided evidence to support the idea that while the social contract theory was good at capturing the ideal version of an institution, it lacked the ability to showcase the differences that were influenced by demographic information.

Mission statements also highlighted cultural influences (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Orozco, 2012). This was supported in this current research study when Title I schools used different themes in mission statements than the non-Title I schools. Al-Ani and Ismail (2015) conducted a study that supported the belief that an administrator of a school works to revise the school mission statement on a regular basis to reflect the values of the community and the demands of the government. The research in this current research study supported this idea by showing how schools provided with Title I funds tended to focus on the social-emotional development of the students, while non-Title I schools focused more on the student's ability to *integrate* into the local and global communities. One could argue that Title I schools focused more on the emotional needs of students because if a student does not feel safe and secure, learning will not take place. Whereas the non-Title I schools do not have to meet the basic needs of students and

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can focus on the more altruistic ideas of the students' places in their communities and in the larger global setting.

Orozco (2012) conducted research that provided data to support the idea that students in predominantly minority schools were held to a different standard then the predominantly white counterparts. While on the surface, all mission statements emphasized the idea that all students can learn, a deeper analysis revealed a telling difference in the mission statements. Mission statements for the predominately minority schools seemed to be overall more negative with low expectations. Mission statements for the minority schools focused on challenges and how the students that would be produced would better serve their home and their places of employment, while the non-minority schools tended to focus on the view of producing students who would excel and be a part of a global society.

The data collected for this current research study confirmed some of the same findings of Orozco (2012), but from a socioeconomic perspective. Non-Title I schools tended to focus on the themes of *integrate* into local community and *integrate* into global community in mission statements. These themes were found in three of the four non-Title I school's mission statements (see Appendix A). These themes were not present in the any of the Title I schools' mission statements. However, as previous discussion revealed, academic development and challenging environment were found in all of the schools' mission statements, showing that on the surface all mission statements highlight a positive message about education, but when digging more deeply, mission statements provided a different view in going beyond a basic education (Orozco, 2012).

Mission statements have also been found to be a source of objectives for measuring student academic performance (Pourrajab et al., 2011). Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011) provided a study that revealed mission statements can be quantified to provide a scale to measure

school success, and numerous other studies have supported this idea (Al-Ani & Ismail, 2015; Craft, Slate & Bustamante, 2009; Genç, 2012; Gurley et al., 2015; Hladchenko, 2016; Perfetto et al., 2013; Slate et al., 2008). The data in this current study supported the idea that mission statements can be quantified in order to provide a way to measure school success. All schools referenced academic development and challenging environment, and all schools received a *met standard* rating. This rating verified that schools developed students enough to achieve minimum standards for state accountability measures. This objective found in mission statements and strategic plans correlated with the accountability system, which allowed this researcher to conclude that objectives can be found in mission statements and used as a tool to evaluate the overall effectiveness of goals and actions.

The theme of *integrate* into the local community, which was present if partnerships were mentioned, was not found in all of the mission statements and strategic plans. It was also not found in the descriptors of the school accountability system. These data supported the findings of Özdem (2011), who found a lack of the community involvement and partnerships extended to mission statements and strategic plans. However, this was not because there was a lack of desire for schools to produce students who were capable of functioning in their local community. It could be that the scope of education was too large to limit to a few lines of text (mission statement) and a few actions (strategic plan).

This researcher's study supported the findings of the previous research that provided data to support the idea that alignment between mission statements and strategic plans was not an apparent component for school success on accountability measures (Leonard & Huang, 2014; Perfetto et al., 2013). This study had to be approached in two parts when examining the connection between mission statement and strategic plan alignment and a school's performance

on the school accountability system.  In order to achieve the *met standard* rating, the data did show alignment tended to be more common than not. However, to move beyond the *met standard* rating, schools had to perform in the top quartile of a 40-school comparison group.  The researcher felt that since the schools and LEAs mentioned the theme of challenging environment, that distinctions should have been equally disbursed throughout the schools used in the study. However, two schools (School D and School E) with 81.8% alignment between mission statements and strategic plans proved alignment was not necessary.  School D received no distinctions, while School E achieved six distinctions.  School E was able to obtain the necessary scores for distinctions to perform in the top quartile of the identified comparison group, while Group D was unable to move beyond the minimum rating.

**Limitations**

This study used a direct content analysis and not a content discourse analysis (CDA) (Bittencourt & Willetts, 2018).  By opting to use the direct content analysis, the researcher was not able to develop a deeper understanding of why certain themes were included in mission statements and strategic plans and others were not.  If CDA had been used, the researcher might have developed an understanding for the context in which words were used.  CDA allowed language to be treated as a social construct, studying a society to reveal how meaning was created by specific word usage and phrasing (Bittencourt & Willetts, 2018).  CDA could have revealed how some themes might not have been shown through the word choices that were used. CDA might have provided a more in depth understanding of how mission statements and strategic plans were constructed to highlight important values of a given community.

In addition, the researcher was not able to determine the age of the mission statements. Some LEAs' strategic plans had specified year spans on them.  For example, LEA 4's strategic

plan spans the years of 2016 to 2021, and LEA 5's strategic plan spans the years 2016 to 2021. There was no such information attached to the schools' mission statements. Without knowing the date that mission statements were drafted, the researcher was unable to determine if perhaps the LEAs' strategic plans or the accountability system could have shaped the writing of the mission statements.

Also, the researcher was unable to determine how the mission statements and strategic plans were drafted. According to the Texas Association of School Boards website (2018), school boards were to help with setting goals of the LEAs. This led the researcher to conclude that the local school boards played an instrumental role in the passing and designing of any LEA's strategic plan. What was not easy to determine was identifying the participants who were instrumental in the writing of the schools' mission statements. While previous studies stated that the best mission statements were drafted with the involvement of stakeholders (Genç, 2012), this study could not determine that particular information for this study. All that was known for this study was the mission statements and the strategic plans were posted for public review and could be used as a tool to gauge a school's success and an LEA's goals

This study did not use interviews. The data set for the study could have been richer by including interviews from people who participated in developing the mission statement, the strategic plan, or the accountability system. Other interviews that would have contributed to a richer set of data could have included the schools' principal, the LEAs' superintendents, and possibly the Commissioner of Education for Texas. It might have also benefited this study for this researcher to interview members of the community and the teachers within the schools to determine how well known the schools' mission statements were to the public, how accessible

the LEAs' strategic plans were, and how well the accountability measures were communicated to other stakeholders.

The design of the study only relied on publicly available mission statements and strategic plans. This excluded schools and LEAs that did not have mission statements or strategic plans posted on school or LEA specific websites. In addition, only schools and LEAs in rural, suburban, and urban areas were used in this study. This excluded schools and LEAs that TEA classified as other central city, other central city suburban, independent town, non-metropolitan: fast growing, and non-metropolitan: stable. Researcher error was an additional limitation of this study as well. The researcher read each mission statement and strategic plan three times. If a theme was not identified in each reading, it was not used as a theme for that mission statement or strategic plan. This provided some consistency with the data that were collected and led the researcher to gain a better understanding of the words and phrases that qualified for each theme. The researcher used the themes developed by Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011) to identify key words and terms that were associated with each theme used in this study. Using direct content analysis, which allowed the researcher to use the work of previous researchers as a starting point for coding (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), provided a check for the researcher to ensure consistency was held throughout the reading and coding of the mission statements and strategic plans.

**Implication of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory**

The two major implications for practice that emerged through the analysis of the data for this study were that mission statements should be revised periodically and that these revisions should align with state accountability measures. The first to be discussed was the overall need for the periodic revision of mission statements (Kosmutzky, 2012). Kosmutzky's (2012)

research highlighted the need for mission statements to be revised periodically in order to reflect the latest values and actions of an organization. The researcher discovered that the TEA accountability system had changed three times—2014, 2017, and 2018—over the past five years. Throughout the iterations of the school accountability system, the overall premise of student achievement had been consistent in accountability measures (2014 Accountability Manual, 2014; 2017 Accountability Manual, 2017; 2018 Accountability Manual, 2018). In addition to student achievement, postsecondary readiness has developed into an emphasis for school accountability measures. While the researcher was unable to find data to support the idea that one accountability system was better than the other, there was research that supported the idea that the changing requirements for school performance and accountability measures should have required schools to adjust mission statements and LEAs to adjust strategic plans to better align with the changing accountability (Kosmutzky, 2012; Kosmutzky & Krucken, 2015).

A school and its LEA would have benefited from revising the school's mission statement and LEA's strategic plan when the state education accountability system changed. This would have provided a closer alignment between state education initiatives and local community goals. This alignment would have benefited schools and LEAs since mission statements and strategic plans provided a type of advertisement (Özdem, 2011) and a way to measure overall progress toward the stated goals (Genç, 2012). Though the research showed there was no relationship between the alignment of a school's mission statement, its LEA's strategic plan, and the school's accountability performance, the alignment would have provided a cohesive image for the community regarding state and local control of education. With the growing emphasis placed on postsecondary readiness (Index 4 and distinction), it would be expected to see the theme of vocational preparation referenced in mission statements and strategic plans alike. However, this

current study found that vocational preparation was in only five of the seven mission statements and five of the seven strategic plans.  This shows there was a gap between the expectation of schools held by the state accountability measures and the view schools and LEAs held of themselves in regards to preparing students for postsecondary life.

A relationship emerged between the use of the themes and overall success in schools achieving a *met standard* rating on the accountability system.  The finding in this study supported the second implication for practice which was that mission statements for schools and strategic plans for LEAs should reflect the themes of academic development and challenging environment (Chapple, 2015; Özdem, 2012; Stemler, Bebell, & Sonnabend, 2011).  Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011) conducted a study that provided data that supported the finding that mission statements were tools that can be used to shape practice and communicate core values, which Chapple (2015) and Özdem (2012) concluded should have some connection to government initiatives.  These two themes were found in all of the mission statements and strategic plans that were used in this study.  The study also revealed two themes that seem to not be needed – *physical development and integrate into spiritual community*.  Even though the theme of physical development was found in School E's mission statement and its LEA's (LEA 5) strategic plan, it was not present in any other mission statements or strategic plans, and it is not a theme that is found in the descriptor language of the indices and distinctions.  The work of Stemler et al (2011) also revealed that physical development was not a common theme found in Texas schools.  This finding showed that schools and LEAs were adapting mission statements and strategic plans to better reflect the current trend in government since neither one of these themes was referenced throughout the accountability system (Hladchenko, 2016).

In addition, *integrate* into spiritual community was not found to be present in any of the mission statements and strategic plans. The United States Supreme Court ruled that religion and schools should be held separate. Court cases such as *McCollum v. Board of Education* (1948), *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963) have limited the ability of religion to be practiced in schools through prayer, bible reading, and overall religious indoctrination. As a result, group prayer had essentially been removed from schools, reducing the influence of religious movements within the school. With this momentum of reducing religion in schools (Schwadel, 2013), it was only further supported by not finding evidence of *integrate* into spiritual community within the confines of a school's mission statement and the LEA's strategic plan. TEA further supported the separation of church and state by not including words that identified this theme in the accountability framework. None of these court cases found prayer to be a necessary feature of public education, leading the researcher to conclude that mission statements and strategic plans of schools and LEAs should not reflect ideas that have the potential to divide a community. This finding was supported by the research conducted by Stemler et al (2011) whose study revealed that *integrate* into spiritual community was found in only two schools from Texas, supporting the idea that spiritual beliefs are no longer a part of the mission of education.

There is currently no TEA mandate that schools should have a mission statement that is accessible to the public. Strategic plans were used to guide district choices, overshadowing the feature and function of a mission statement. Schools should better align mission statements to LEAs' strategic plans to ensure alignment exits between LEA initiatives and school purposes. In addition, according to the Texas Association of School Boards, there was no law found requiring

a school to publish a mission statement, however LEAs within Texas have been required to draft a strategic plan centered on clearly identifiable goals.

The Tyler model for objectives-based evaluation was a valid tool that simplified the process of determining if goals were met (Wraga, 2017). CIT provided a tool that could be adjusted to fit a variety of different fields when it comes to determining a cause/effect relationship between certain features. The theory that was supported by this study was mission statements do serve as a tool for communicating overall purpose of an organization and that strategic plans have been used as the tool by which to achieve those stated goals. Mission statements served as a public relations tool that could be used to succinctly communicate with stakeholders the values to which they could hold an organization. Schools that used mission statements have a tool that identified its purpose, while its LEAs used its strategic plans to communicate to the public its actions to achieve these goals, which were all supported by the evaluation of schools according to state accountability measures. Without these three aligning to some degree, success would not be found and the public would not possess the means to determine if schools were truly producing its stated goals.

The other theory that was supported with this study was the expectations that are held for students of different demographic backgrounds. This study examined the role of Title I status on a school's accountability performance and the themes that were found in the mission statements and strategic plans. This study supported the research of Orozco (2012) when data were found to support the idea that the expectation of the education of students in Title I communities were different from the expectations of students in non-Title I communities. Orozco's (2012) study examined how race played a role in expectations, revealing that mission statements of minority schools tended to convey a more negative message about its students than did the predominately

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white communities.  Both Orozco's (2012) research and this current study showed how on the surface, mission statements all appeared to be valid and highlighted the needs of all of its students; however, this researcher analyzed mission statements that revealed that not all expectations were equal, leading to a gap in expectations between more affluent schools and less affluent schools.  The research completed in this study supported this idea on a socio-economic status.  Title I schools tended to focus more on social emotional themes, while non-Title I schools emphasized student integration into local and global communities.  This researcher's study supported the idea that schools and LEAs should work hard to create mission statements and strategic plans that promote a true global citizen, regardless of socio-economic status.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

While this researcher attempted to identify the need for alignment between a school's mission statement and an LEA's strategic plan in evaluating a school's performance on state accountability measures, this study provided some avenues for additional research.  Another case study could be conducted to understand if and how the accountability system influenced the day-to-day operations of an LEA and schools.  This could include creating a study that includes interviews of teachers, students, community members and school leaders and evaluating the extent of their knowledge on the measures the state uses in evaluating a school's performance.  In addition, other sources of data, such as financial records, could be used to determine how financial resources were distributed in order to carry out the strategic plans and mission statements.

An additional study could be conducted as a case study that would examine the process a school used where personnel were working to rewrite the mission statement.  A researcher could evaluate what tools and measures a school uses when trying to create a new vision and mission

for the school.  Also, a more in-depth case-study of an urban LEA could be constructed to

determine if the size of the district limits the rate of alignment between a school's mission

statement and the LEA's strategic plan.  This would help determine if the scope of education is

too vast to limit to a statement and a singular plan.  It would also help to determine if an LEA's

personnel were able to design a strategic plan that addresses the needs of all of its campuses.

Other research could be conducted to determine if there were long-term effects on a

school's accountability ratings when the school's mission statement and the LEAs strategic plans

were developed alongside each other.  Most strategic plans used in this study were designed to

continue through the 2020-2021 school year.  A researcher could chart a school's progress in

obtaining the goals of the strategic plan by determining if there was an increase in a school's

performance on state accountability measures and if mission statements were revised to better

articulate the state and local initiatives.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was fill the gap that existed in the current research related to

mission statements, strategic plans, and school accountability systems.  The problem this

multiple case study attempted to address was to determine if theme alignment between a school's

mission statement and its LEA's strategic plan was apparent in order for overall student

performance to meet criteria for a school to achieve a *met standard* rating on Texas Education

Agency's (TEA) school accountability system.  The conceptual framework for this research was

based on Tyler's model of objectives-based evaluation (Spaulding, 2014) and used CIT as a data

analysis tool (Bott & Tourish, 2016).  The conceptual framework provided the structure for

objectives-based evaluation that guided this research.  Throughout this multiple case study, the

researcher used this framework to evaluate the overall effectiveness of aligned mission

statements and strategic plans on school performance. TEA's accountability measures provided the measurable outcomes.

The content analysis used for this study led to the conclusion that all mission statements and strategic plans highlighted the two themes—academic development and challenging environment. These two themes tended to indicate that a school would achieve a *met standard* rating, but the themes did not indicate a school would be awarded any of the distinctions. This led to the overall conclusion that alignment was not a critical piece of data used to achieve any rating on the accountability system. The content analysis further indicated that Title I status tended to influence the mission of schools by focusing more on social and emotional development than *integrate* into local and global communities. Orozco (2012) found similar data to support the belief that demographic factors influenced a school's mission and focus. The idealized view of educating all students was held by all of the mission statements and strategic plans examined, but this view did not take into consideration the inequalities that exist in the modern world, such as socioeconomic status, when it comes to the field of education (Reid, 2011).

While this study did not yield significant new knowledge in the field of transformational leadership, it did reveal some areas that would benefit from additional research. Additional research needs to be conducted in this field to better understand how accountability systems in education are created, what steps are taken by an LEA to develop their strategic plan, and the process for a school developing its mission statement. This researcher conducted this study under the assumptions that all school leaders worked to achieve their mission statements and were supported by the actions identified in the LEA's strategic plan. Only additional case study

research will reveal if alignment is truly an apparent component for schools to achieve

satisfactory ratings on school accountability measures.

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## Appendix A: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously-researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

**Statement of academic integrity.**

> As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

**Explanations:**

**What does "fraudulent" mean?**

"Fraudulent" work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one's own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, included another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate's final work without full and complete documentation.

**What is "unauthorized" assistance?**

"Unauthorized assistance" refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another's work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

**Statement of Original Work (Continued)**

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University–Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*.

*Amber Nicole Holomshek*

Digital Signature

Amber Nicole Holomshek

Name (Typed)

2/08/2019

Date

## Appendix B: Themes found in Mission Statements and Strategic Plans

*Theme: Academic Achievement*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | Y | Y |
| B | Rural | Y | Y |
| C | Suburban | Y | Y |
| D | Suburban | Y | Y |
| E | Suburban | Y | Y |
| F | Urban | Y | Y |
| G | Urban | Y | Y |

*Theme: Social Development*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | N | N |
| B | Rural | N | Y |
| C | Suburban | Y | Y |
| D | Suburban | N | Y |
| E | Suburban | N | N |
| F | Urban | Y | N |
| G | Urban | Y | Y |

*Theme: Emotional Development*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | N | Y |
| B | Rural | Y | Y |
| C | Suburban | Y | Y |
| D | Suburban | Y | Y |
| E | Suburban | N | Y |
| F | Urban | Y | Y |
| G | Urban | Y | Y |

*Theme: Civic Development*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | Y | Y |
| B | Rural | Y | Y |
| C | Suburban | Y | N |
| D | Suburban | Y | Y |
| E | Suburban | Y | Y |
| F | Urban | Y | Y |
| G | Urban | Y | Y |

*Theme: Physical Development*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | N | N |
| B | Rural | N | N |
| C | Suburban | N | N |
| D | Suburban | N | N |
| E | Suburban | Y | Y |
| F | Urban | N | N |
| G | Urban | N | N |

*Theme: Vocational Development*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | Y | Y |
| B | Rural | Y | Y |
| C | Suburban | N | N |
| D | Suburban | Y | Y |
| E | Suburban | Y | N |
| F | Urban | Y | Y |
| G | Urban | N | Y |

*Theme: Integrate into Local Community*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | N | Y |
| B | Rural | N | Y |
| C | Suburban | N | Y |
| D | Suburban | Y | N |
| E | Suburban | Y | Y |
| F | Urban | Y | Y |
| G | Urban | N | Y |

*Theme: Integrate into Global Community*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | N | Y |
| B | Rural | N | Y |
| C | Suburban | N | N |
| D | Suburban | Y | Y |
| E | Suburban | Y | Y |
| F | Urban | Y | N |
| G | Urban | N | Y |

*Theme: Safe/Nurturing Environment*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | N | N |
| B | Rural | Y | Y |
| C | Suburban | Y | Y |
| D | Suburban | Y | Y |
| E | Suburban | Y | Y |
| F | Urban | Y | Y |
| G | Urban | N | Y |

*Theme: Challenging Environment*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | Y | Y |
| B | Rural | N | Y |
| C | Suburban | Y | Y |
| D | Suburban | Y | Y |
| E | Suburban | Y | Y |
| F | Urban | Y | Y |
| G | Urban | Y | Y |

*Theme: Integrate into Spiritual Community*

| School | Type | Present in Mission Statement? | Present in LEA Strategic Plan? |
|--------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A | Rural | N | N |
| B | Rural | N | N |
| C | Suburban | N | N |
| D | Suburban | N | N |
| E | Suburban | N | N |
| F | Urban | N | N |
| G | Urban | N | N |

## Appendix C: Theme Identification of Indices and Distinctions

TEA publishes an accountability manual each year. The descriptor information used for this

study comes from the *2017 Accountability Manual* from TEA *(Texas Education Agency, 2017).*

| Index/ Distinction | TEA Descriptor | Theme(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Index 1 | Measures district and campus performance based on student achievement across all subjects for all students. | Academic Development |
| Index 2 | Measures student progress in ELA/reading and mathematics by student demographic categories: race/ethnicity, current and monitored English Language Learners, and special education. | Academic Development Emotional Development Integrate into global community |
| Index 3 | Emphasizes the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students and the two lowest-performing racial/ethnic student groups. The specific racial/ethnic groups are identified for each district or campus based on prior year (2016) assessment results. | Academic Development |
| Index 4 | Emphasizes the importance of earning a high school diploma that provides students with the foundation necessary for success in college, the workforce, job training programs, or the military. | Academic Development Vocational Preparation Civic Development |
| Academic Achieve-ment in ELA/ Reading | An Academic Achievement Distinction Designation (AADD) is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in ELA/reading based on outcomes of several performance indicators. **AADD ELA/Reading Indicators:** - Attendance Rate - Greater Than Expected Student Growth in ELA/Reading - English I Performance (Masters Grade Level) - English II Performance (Masters Grade Level) -AP/IB Examination Participation: ELA - AP/IB Examination Performance: ELA - SAT/ACT Participation - SAT Performance: Reading and Writing - ACT Performance: ELA - Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: ELA/Reading | Academic Development Challenging Environment |

| Index/ Distinction | TEA Descriptor | Theme(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Achievement in Mathematics | An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in mathematics based on outcomes of several performance indicators.<br>**AADD Mathematics Indicators:**<br>- Attendance Rate<br>- Greater Than Expected Student Growth in Mathematics<br>- Algebra I Performance (Masters Grade Level)<br>- AP/IB Examination Participation: Mathematics<br>- AP/IB Examination Performance: Mathematics<br>- SAT/ACT Participation<br>- SAT Performance: Mathematics<br>- ACT Performance: Mathematics<br>- Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: Mathematics | Academic Development Challenging Environment |
| Academic Achieve-ment in Science | An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in science based on outcomes of several performance indicators.<br>**AADD Science Indicators:**<br>- Attendance Rate<br>- EOC Biology Performance (Masters Grade Level)<br>- AP/IB Examination Participation: Science<br>- AP/IB Examination Performance: Science<br>- ACT Performance: Science<br>- Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: Science | Academic Development Challenging Environment |
| Academic Achieve-ment in Social Studies | An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in social studies based on outcomes of several performance indicators.<br>**AADD Social Studies Indicators:**<br>- Attendance Rate<br>- EOC U.S. History Performance (Masters Grade Level)<br>- AP/IB Examination Participation: Social Studies<br>- AP/IB Examination Performance: Social Studies<br>- Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: Social Studies | Academic Development<br><br>Challenging Environment |
| Top 25 Percent: Student Progress | A distinction designation for outstanding student progress is awarded to campuses whose Index 2 scores are ranked in the top 25 % (Q1) of campuses in their campus comparison groups. | Academic Development |

| Index/ Distinction | TEA Descriptor | Theme(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Top 25 Percent: Closing Performance Gaps | A distinction designation is awarded for outstanding performance in closing student achievement gaps to a campus whose Index 3 score is ranked in the top 25% (Q1) of campuses in its campus comparison group. | Academic Development |
| Post-secondary Readiness | Campuses receiving a *Met Standard* rating are eligible for a distinction designation for outstanding academic performance in attainment of postsecondary readiness. To earn a distinction for postsecondary readiness, an elementary or middle school's Index 4 score for the all students group must be ranked among the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group; high schools and K–12 campuses must have at least 33 percent of their indicators in the top quartile of their campus comparison groups; and districts must have at least 55 percent of all their campuses' postsecondary indicators in the top quartile. **Postsecondary Readiness Indicators for Campuses:** - Index 4 - Percent at STAAR Meets Grade Level Standard - Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rate - Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Plan Rate - College-Ready Graduates - Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: Any Subject - SAT/ACT Participation - SAT/ACT Performance - AP/IB Examination Performance: Any Subject - Career Technical Education-Coherent Sequence Graduates | Academic Development Vocational Preparation |

*Note: AP is the abbreviation for Advanced Placement. IB is the abbreviation for International Baccalaureate.*

# Appendix D: Theme Rubric

This rubric was published in a study conducted by Stemler, Bebell, and Sonnabend (2011). It was used for this study for analysis of school mission statements, LEA strategic plans, and school accountability indices and distinctions. Permission was granted by the authors to use their rubric in this study.

**Theme: Cognitive Development**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Foster cognitive development
C. Problem solving
D. Creativity
E. Effective communication
F. Critical thinking
G. Literacy
H. Acquire knowledge
I. Participate in the arts
J. Improve student achievement scores

**Theme: Social Development**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Social interaction
C. Become effective parents

**Theme: Emotional Development**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Positive attitudes
C. Ethical morality
D. Joy for learning
E. Life-long learning
F. Self-sufficient
G. Self-discipline
H. Reach potential
I. Emotional skills
J. Promote confidence
K. Spiritual development
L. Respect for others

**Theme: Civic Development**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Productive
C. Responsible
D. Public service
E. Contributing member of society

**Theme: Physical Development**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Physical development

**Theme: Vocational Preparation**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Competitive in the workforce
C. Marketable skills

**Theme: Integrate into Local Community**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Promote community
C. Community partnerships

**Theme: Integrate into Global Community**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Appreciate diversity
C. Global awareness
D. Adaptive students

**Theme: Integrate into Spiritual Community**

A. Miscellaneous
B. Religious education/environment

**Theme: Safe/Nurturing Environment**

   A. Miscellaneous
   B. Safe environment
   C. Provide nurturing environment
   D. Person-centered

**Theme: Challenging Environment**

   A. Miscellaneous
   B. Provide challenging environment
   C. Technologically advanced
   D. Provide engaging work
   E. Highly qualified faculty

## Appendix E: Permissions

SAGE publications provided a gratis reuse status for the table rubric used in Appendix D for the purpose of this dissertation. In addition, permission was granted by the authors of the work to use/reproduce their rubric in this dissertation.