“ALGO QUE NO PUEDES MEDIR”: SCHOOLWIDE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF LATINE CAREGIVERS

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(School Psychology)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2025

Date of final oral examination: 09/04/2024

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Dedication

Este libro se lo dedico a mis padres, Candelario Cruz y Rosenda Rodríguez. Gracias a ustedes por la vida que me han dado, llena de amor y de apoyo. Me inspiran cada día a seguir echándole ganas, y no hubiera llegado a este momento de mi carrera académica sin ustedes. I also dedicate this work to my incredible sisters, Dhamar and Thaily Cruz. Your individual strengths never cease to amaze me, and I am so proud to be your big sis. Finally, I dedicate this work to my dear friend, the late Wesley Bolliger. Thank you for pushing me to expand my horizon. You would have thought this was so cool.

Acknowledgements

There is no 'I' in 'team,' and that is exactly what it took to complete this project (let us ignore the fact that there is an 'I' in 'dissertation' – two, in fact). First and foremost, thank you to my dissertation chair and advisor, Dr. Andy Garbacz. Thank you for seeing my potential as an applicant and then as a scientist-scholar-practitioner. Your support has changed the trajectory of my life. Additionally, thank you to Dr. Alyssa Ramirez Stege, whose wisdom and guidance led me to this junction of liberation psychology and family-school-community partnerships. Your heart and your leadership are inspiring to me. I would also like to extend my gratitude to each member of my dissertation committee – Dr. Quintana, Dr. Asmus, and Dr. Eklund – for their time, engagement, and excellent questions. Each of you has been instrumental in helping me develop this dissertation from the concept paper it once was, many years ago.

This project was made possible by the support I received from Centro Hispano and from the Esperanza team. To Evelyn Cruz, Rachel Rosin, Elizabeth Hall, and Dr. Karen Menendez Coller – I am so grateful to you all for helping me bring this project to life and navigate roadblocks along the way. A Maribel Zuñiga, mi colaboradora, le quiero dar las gracias por todo el esfuerzo y el tiempo que me regalo. No hubiera podido completar este proyecto sin tu ayuda. Te lo agradezco más de lo que puedo expresar con palabras.

I would be remiss if I did not mention my sincere appreciation for the support I received from family and friends. My family has given me their unwavering support across the many state lines that separate us, and it is with this support that I muster the strength to push for the finish line. Next, I extend gratitude to my partner, Calvin, who I met near the beginning of this long process. Thank you for listening to my nonsensical brainstorming when this project was but a seed of an idea and for helping me stay motivated to finish the work I started. I am also

profoundly appreciative of the incredible Lauren Knuckey, who pioneered important work on liberatory perspectives in family-school-community partnership research in her previous conference presentations and in her own dissertation project. I have learned so much from you, and I hold incalculable gratitude for the sanctuary space that is our friendship. I also thank the first friend I made in graduate school, Danya, who I met during Campus Visit Day. I'm so glad that the universe took us seriously when we proclaimed that we were a package deal for program admission. To my dear friends Gina, Maddy, Cheyenne, Yuna, and Anabell – Thank you for showing me the beauty and power of friendship. I feel so lucky that I got to meet you all.

Finally, thank you to the Society for the Study of School Psychology for seeing potential in my project proposal and for funding this work.

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Abstract

Schoolwide family engagement practices are strategies employed by schools to invite caregivers into the school community as active participants and collaborators. Although a large number of students in U.S. public schools identify as Latine, there is a gap in extant literature about the success of family engagement practices with Latine families. Within the literature that does exist, few offerings center the perspectives of Latine caregivers, instead opting for the ideas of school staff (e.g., Lowenhaupt, 2014). Critical perspectives of family engagement are beginning to emerge in the literature as a challenge to the traditional, school-centric perspectives of family engagement (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Ishimaru et al., 2019; Olivos, 2006). Critical family engagement attends to broader systems of power and privilege contextualizing family-school relationships, which are particularly relevant in considering Latine caregivers, who may face marginalization related to their racial, ethnic, immigrant, socioeconomic, or linguistic identities.

The current study used surveys, interviews, and focus groups from 13 Latine participants to examine which schoolwide family engagement practices are helpful and unhelpful for facilitating their connection to their child's middle school community. Qualitative findings from interviews and focus groups indicate that middle schools use several successful strategies for engaging Latine caregivers, including clearly written and accurately translated communications, resources offered by the school or via school-community partnerships, and acompañamiento (the understanding that someone is walking the journey alongside them). Findings also identified practices which are detrimental to family engagement, including low quality or missing translations, a lack of school events (particularly engaging, family-centered events), and inflexible opportunities for caregivers to be involved in decision-making. Qualitative themes

constructed with a liberation psychology lens revealed that systems of oppression operate in the school context by limiting the participation of Latine caregivers, particularly those who are new arrivals in the U.S. or are economically-disadvantaged, in information-gathering, community-building, and decision-making spaces. This systemic exclusion results in a majority of decisions being made by a white, privileged majority of caregivers, who make decisions that further marginalize families of color. These results go beyond a call on schools to bolster their family engagement practices for more inclusion of Latine families. Specifically, these findings are a call to action for the school community to draw awareness to inequitable power dynamics in the school community and to advocate for the destruction of these hierarchies.

Keywords: Family engagement practices, Latine families, liberation psychology, middle school

Chapter 1: Introduction

There is no shortage of motives underlying a caregiver's decision to engage with their child's school. Caregivers may stop in to volunteer with their child's classroom, to attend a parent committee meeting, or to participate in a school fundraiser. They may also visit the school to attend their child's band concert, join a school-community picnic, or access free resources (e.g., books, meals) offered by the district. In other instances, caregivers visit a school to participate in a child's disciplinary hearing, to attend an Individual Education Plan (IEP) evaluation, or to engage in parent-teacher conferences. There are myriad reasons for why a caregiver may engage with their school community, and unfortunately, there are even more reasons why they might not.

A school may be inaccessible to a caregiver for a variety of reasons. Oftentimes, a single factor such as an unwelcoming school climate or a language barrier is enough to deter a caregiver from their child's school (Baker et al., 2016). Other factors, such as unreliable transportation or a conflicting work schedule, work against a caregiver making it to the school's threshold (Turney & Kao, 2009; Williams & Sánchez, 2013). Despite these barriers, family engagement practices aim to provide spaces for caregivers to participate in the school community. Generally, schools in the U.S. employ a form of family engagement practices in efforts to invite families into the school environment. Such practices are broadly inclusive of many strategies but may involve hosting school-wide events for families and community members, offering school materials in multiple languages, and fostering a school community grounded by trust and shared values (Garbacz et al., 2016; Garbacz et al., 2018). Family engagement practices may exist as a set of practices on their own, or they may be situated within a larger school framework (e.g., PBIS). Isolated family engagement practices are exemplified by

schools that commit to a series of events or practices without contextualizing them in the context of the broader school system. On the other hand, family engagement practices embedded within a school's service-delivery framework are consistent efforts that align with the school community values and aims.

Family Engagement Over the Years

Extant literature reveals that family engagement decreases over the course of a child's time in the K-12 school system. For example, researchers found that family engagement decreases notably in just one year, from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten (Sheridan et al., 2020). Reasons for this decrease included fewer welcoming messages from teachers, fewer policy guidelines related to family engagement, and less opportunities for face-to-face communication. In a broader examination of longitudinal patterns, research has supported a decrease in both quality and quantity indicators of family engagement across elementary and middle school (Davis & Lambie, 2005; Smith et al., 2019). The majority of extant literature has focused on family engagement in early childhood and elementary school (Reinke et al., 2019). Fewer studies have sought to understand family engagement practices for youth and adolescents beyond elementary school. Addressing this gap in the literature will bolster family engagement practices for the families of older students in middle and high school

The decrease in family engagement may be tied to the shift in family engagement practices between the elementary and middle school years. For example, in comparing middle school offerings to elementary school offerings, researchers found that middle schools tend to host fewer school-wide activities for families to build relationships with school staff and with other families at the school (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). This means that families receive fewer invitations to join the school community, which can be counterproductive to efforts to

bring caregiver voice into decision-making spaces. Without sustained efforts to encourage families to be active agents in the school community, caregivers who did not become involved during their child's elementary school years are less likely to be involved with their child's middle school.

A Diversifying School Community

As school communities continue to diversify, schools must consider how to foster engagement for families from minoritized backgrounds. Currently, American K-12 public schools provide education for up to 14.1 million Latine children, about 28.5% of the school-age population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Among them, 3.7 million students are Spanish-dominant English Language Learners (ELL), making up around 7.8% of all public-school students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Research trends indicate that the Latine population is currently the largest minoritized group in the U.S., with the current number of Latines expected to increase in the coming years (Vespa et al., 2020). As the Latine student population continues to grow, many educational advocates recognize the need for Latine families to be a part of conversations about the future of education (Unidos US, 2022). Creating inclusive and welcoming schools is the first step in facilitating more equitable opportunities for family engagement.

Schools, especially those lacking financial and multilingual resources, often struggle to connect with Spanish-dominant Latine caregivers (Sanders-Smith et al., 2020). Numerous schools also neglect to address (and even create) barriers to Latine family engagement by scheduling school events at times incompatible with caregiver schedules, by devaluing the cultural knowledge of Latines, and by failing to provide a welcoming, inviting school climate (Turney & Kao, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999). As the extant literature suggests, current approaches to

family engagement are not working, as there are a number of glaring disparities in which groups respond to school-wide family engagement practices. That is, although family engagement efforts tend to reach white caregivers, when family engagement practices fail to make their schools welcoming to Latine caregivers, this engenders inequitable access to the school community.

Clearly, schools must problem solve to find another approach to family engagement practices for Latine families in the community. Beyond being beneficial for the child's academic success (Englund et al., 2004; Tran, 2014; Wilder, 2014) and social-emotional well-being (Blair et al., 2011; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014; Powell et al., 2010), family engagement is important for school decision-making. Caregiver perspectives are vital to schools' efforts to center anti-racist and culturally responsive practice and policy (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020). When caregivers with a diverse range of identities and experiences are included as collaborators, schools are better able to mee the needs of their community.

As a solution to inequitable family engagement practices, some schools have adopted culturally responsive approaches to teaching, leading, and engaging with families. Cultural responsiveness includes elements such as raising awareness of one's own biases, attending to cultural incongruency between home and school, and building an authentically caring school and classroom community (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008). When applying this paradigm to family engagement practices, a culturally responsive approach may involve including all relevant stakeholders (i.e., attending to diverse family constellations and multi-generational households), offering services in multiple languages, and expanding definitions of family engagement to include a broader lens of involvement (Lowenhaupt, 2014; Mapp & Hong, 2010).

Although culturally responsive practices are a worthy attempt to remedy inequalities in family engagement, these practices must be contextualized in the lived experiences and material conditions of families in each community. Despite the implementation of culturally responsive approaches, caregivers continue to have limited opportunities to access the school space (Sanders-Smith et al., 2020) and schools continue to fail at making fails to welcome families of all backgrounds and cultures into the community (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). Furthermore, systems-level organizational models that rely on caregiver perspectives, such as Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS; Bal et al., 2014) do not truly center families' voices when only a fraction of caregivers in the school community feel welcomed to participate. When schools fail to build sustainable connections with caregivers, they miss out on the opportunity to collaboratively make decisions about the school that are truly representative of the school community's values and ideas. Clearly, schools must reimagine how to better serve and support Latine families.

The purpose of the current study is to understand how Latine caregivers of children in middle school perceive the school's family engagement efforts. This research seeks to understand which practices these caregivers perceive as helpful and which practices they believe are unhelpful. The current study also highlights which changes Latine caregivers would like to see in their school's family engagement practices. Rather than relying on the perceptions of school staff to answer these questions as other studies have done (e.g., Lowenhaupt, 2014), the current study centers Latine caregiver perspectives by directly engaging them in interviews and focus groups. Furthermore, the current study uses the lens of liberation psychology to contextualize the findings in the historical and ongoing caregiver marginalization and resistance

to marginalization in schools. Overall, the study contributes to the educational field's growing interest in critical family engagement practices.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Over the decades, scholars and practitioners alike have developed a foundation of extant knowledge of practices in school-based family engagement. The present chapter explores this literature across the following topics: (a) theoretical orientations associated with family engagement practices, (b) definitions of family engagement practices, (c) current state of research literature concerning family engagement practices, (d) culturally responsive adaptations for use of family engagement practices with diverse school communities, and (e) consideration of family engagement practices for Latine families. Finally, this chapter will provide rationale for an exploration of current family engagement practices for Latine caregivers using a liberation psychology lens.

The literature for this section was obtained through a review of existing literature published from 2000-2024. The following databases were used for the search process: APA PsychINFO, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, the University of Washington library database, and the University of Wisconsin article database. Database searches utilized the following terms: *Family engagement* or *parent involvement* or *parent engagement* and; *schools* or *school* or *school based* and; *Latinx* or *Latino/a* or *Latino* or *Latine*. From the search results, articles and book chapters were selected for inclusion based on relevance to the following topics: Theoretical foundations of family engagement practices, definitions of family engagement in the literature, culturally responsive family engagement practices, and family engagement with Latine families. The content from included materials was selected for incorporation in the literature review based on prevalence across works accessed (i.e., a recurrent theme or finding). A review of the literature is outlined in the following sections.

Theoretical Foundations of Family Engagement Practices

Ecological Systems Theory (1977)

Ecological Systems Theory (EST; Bronfenbrenner, 1977) is one of the most prevalent theoretical foundations identified in the family engagement literature. This theoretical orientation is often evoked in conversations to emphasize the importance of family-school interactions, as EST speaks to the impact of environmental factors on the developing child (Reschley, 2020). Bronfenbrenner's model outlines five systems (contexts of environment) within its model: The microsystem, relating to actors in the individual's immediate environment, such as family, school, and peers; the mesosystem, defined as the myriad interactions between the microsystemic actors; the exosystem, referring to social structures influencing the child's meso and microsystems; the macrosystem, describing social and cultural constructs; and the chronosystem, including time, history, and the individual's developmental stage. Overall, EST highlights the importance of the systems in which the individual is imbedded and the place of those contexts within larger systems.

Family engagement scholarship primarily engages with the microsystemic and mesosystemic systems. The child, existing at the center of this ecological approach, is surrounded by many microsystemic actors, namely their teachers, their caregivers, and others they encounter in their school community every day. The mesosystem, then, is comprised of interactions between these microsystemic agents. The interactions between a child's teacher and their caregiver exemplifies one of many mesosystems present in family-school collaboration, as two microsystem-level agents are working together to support the child's personal and academic development. Continuity and congruence in the mesosystem, between the home and school, is associated with positive outcomes for students (Garbacz et al., 2016). However, the literature

examining family engagement practices with culturally and linguistically diverse families reveals frequent discontinuities between the microsystemic home and school settings (Reschly, 2020).

Although EST continues to be prevalent in existing family engagement literature and continues to appear in research, this approach has several limitations. First, the model fails to adequately capture the complex, bidirectional, mesosystemic relationships between family and school contexts (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Furthermore, the model does not account for cultural differences in family-school collaboration, as Epstein noted in the development of her own Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (1987). Finally, the model does not acknowledge the power dynamics between families and schools, which oftentimes include harmful power imbalances that hinder collaboration (Olivos, 2006). Even though Bronfenbrenner's model continues to undergird existing and emerging work on the topic of family-school- community engagement, it is vital to recognize the limitations of this theoretical lens.

Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (1987)

The Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein, 1987) recognizes the interactions between three major contexts in which a child develops: at home, at school, and in the community. The model also mapped how collaborations between actors in the home, school, and community contexts may contribute to positive youth development in schools. Epstein's model expanded Bronfenbrenner's ideas by making attending to diverse contexts, such as differences in family structure. Furthermore, Epstein's work accounted for overlap and interaction between various contexts for child development in a way that Bronfenbrenner's model (1977) did not. Bronfenbrenner's EST looked at each context (i.e., system) in isolation and only examined family-school-community interactions in the mesosystem. In contrast, the

Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the home, school, and community environments as well as associated positive child outcomes. Collaboration is the focus of this theoretical framework rather than simply being a small part.

Although Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence is a widely used framework for understanding family-school-community partnerships, there are a number of critiques of this theory. One criticism highlights the theory's assumption that families and schools have equal power and resources, which is seldom the case in practice (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Furthermore, the model heavily emphasizes the relationship between the home and school, which neglects to acknowledge the influence and contributions of the broader community. Regardless, Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres remains a useful framework for understanding family-school-community partnerships and has been adapted and modified by other scholars to better address these limitations.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model (1995)

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of the Parental Involvement Process is another popular approach to studying family engagement. This model examines an even broader picture of family engagement, following the course of family engagement from the motivators that ignite caregivers' desires to become involved all the way to the positive student outcomes associated with family engagement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model outlines six levels of parent involvement, listed below in Table 1.

Table 1

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's Six Levels of Parent Involvement

Level	Description	Example A	Example B
1	Motivators of Parent Involvement	Consistent invitations from school	Family access to community social capital
2	Parent Involvement Behaviors	Activities at home and in the community	Attending activities at school
3	Learning Mechanisms Engaged by Parents	Modeling	Reinforcement
4	Student Perceptions of Learning Mechanisms Engaged by Parents	Encouragement	Reinforcement
5	Student Attributes Supported by Parent Engagement	Intrinsic motivation to learn	Knowledge of self-regulatory strategies
6	Student Learning and Achievement	Academic performance gains (Wilder et al., 2014)	Positive mental health outcomes (Stormshak et al., 2010)

Note. This table displays information adapted from Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995.

The first level describes motivators of parent involvement. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) categorize the motivators into three categories: Personal, contextual, and life context. Personal motivators are oftentimes personal values and skills that caregivers possess. Contextual factors may include invitations to participate from the school, from specific teachers, from the student, or from other stakeholders. The quantity and quality of these invitations is taken into consideration when evaluating their effectiveness for motivating caregivers to be involved. Finally, life context factors are the tangible and intangible factors that make it possible for a parent to want to participate. Some life context motivators relate to the material conditions of the family. That is, a work schedule that is flexible enough to allow for access to the school for meetings and events would be considered a family life context motivator.

Level two describes parent involvement behaviors. This level is broadly inclusive of diverse forms of engagement, rather than focusing explicitly on school-based involvement. The

model identifies school-based activities such as parent-teacher communications at the school and caregiver participation in volunteer opportunities. The second level also includes home-based engagement (Whitaker, 2018), such as positive parenting behaviors, promoting the value of learning, or reading with a child. This level promotes an expanded definition of family engagement by identifying home-based involvement in place of the narrow

The third and fourth levels of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model explain the use and reaction to learning mechanisms engaged by caregivers. These learning mechanisms include encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction. Parent involvement is most impactful when caregivers use these learning mechanisms successfully to get involved with the school in novel, purposeful, and consistent ways (Whitaker, 2019). Level five of the model examines the impact of parent involvement on several student learning attributes, those being the skills that make academic achievement happen. The identified attributes are self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation to learn, self-regulatory skills, and social self-efficacy for connecting with teachers. Finally, level six of the model examines the impact of parent involvement activities (level two) on student achievement outcomes. The six levels of this model are all related to one another and are necessary components of the parent involvement process.

Overall, the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of the Parental Involvement Process is often utilized to guide conversations and understandings of parent involvement by looking at the concept as a process rather than a product. This model is prevalent in the literature about family engagement practices. For example, Walker (2016) created parent engagement program for Latine caregivers that built upon the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model.

One shortfall of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model (1997) is that the term “parent involvement” evokes a narrow definition which does not attend to diverse family constellations

(Mapp & Hong, 2010). Furthermore, this suggests a more active, participatory, and far-reaching relationship between the home and school. Finally, this model centers school-centric attitudes about family-school collaboration, which overlooks broader systems of power and privilege between the home and school (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Ishimaru et al., 2019). However, despite this model's shortcomings, it remains a comprehensive and multi-dimensional perspective on the home-school relationship.

For the purposes of the present research, the scope of the literature review will primarily focus on the level one contextual factors of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) Model of the Parental Involvement Process. Specifically, the literature review will explore how the school generates positive contextual factors to invite parents to become involved in their child's education and school-related experiences. The process of schools creating these school-based contextual factors will be referred to as "family engagement practices."

Family Engagement in the Literature

From Parent Involvement to Family Engagement

Much of the earlier literature in family engagement studies focused on parent involvement. During the education reforms of the 1960s, school leaders tasked with the challenge of student underachievement pushed for parent involvement, believing that the root issue of underperformance was in the home (Ishimaru et al., 2016). Schools viewed caregivers from a deficit perspective rather than attending to the ways in which the school actively failed caregivers and their students. In addition to deficit-based origins, the term *parent involvement* evoked a narrow and traditional definition of how parents are involved in their school communities, such as activities wherein parents are physically present in the building (Baker et al., 2016). Discussions of caregiver activities often draw upon Epstein's (1995) typology of

parent involvement activities, which is inclusive of activities in the home, school, and community contexts to which the child pertains. Epstein's framework defines six types of parent involvement. The framework is summarized below in Table 2.

Table 2

Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement

Number	Type of Involvement	Example A	Example B
1	Parenting	Family assistance program for nutrition, health, etc.	Information dissemination about child-rearing practices
2	Communication	Annual teacher-parent conferences	Clear procedural information for parents
3	Volunteering	School-based volunteer programs (e.g., PTO)	Surveys to identify parent talents and availability
4	Learning at Home	Summer learning activities to try at home	Structured conversations between parents and students about curriculum
5	Decision Making	Participation in advisory committees or councils	Parent representatives
6	Collaborating with Community	School-community partnerships for varied service delivery	Information dissemination to caregivers about community programs

Note. This table displays information adapted from Epstein (1995)

Although some may use "parent involvement" and "family engagement" interchangeably, the two terms evoke quite different meanings. "Parent involvement" suggests a more school-centric approach, which places disproportionate value on the needs of the school. In contrast, "family engagement" suggests a more inclusive approach which centers the perspectives, strengths, and values of families in addition to those of the school. In addition to attending to diverse family constellations, "family engagement" suggests a more active, participatory, and far-reaching relationship between the home and school (Mapp & Hong, 2010).

Discussions around the concept and terminology of "family engagement" have challenged scholars to attend to broader systems of power and privilege surrounding family-school relationships (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Ishimaru et al., 2019). For example, scholars have recognized that the term "family engagement practices" indicates that educators are responsible for inviting school participation for caregivers who have been historically pushed out of school decision-making spaces by inherent power structures and teacher-knows-best ideology (Wilson, 2019). On the other hand, the term family engagement identifies the myriad ways that caregivers support the educational endeavors of the child across a variety of contexts. Some forms of family engagement may be visible to the school, like attending a community barbecue. Other forms of family engagement may be centered in the home, such as encouraging the student's perseverance (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020).

The present paper will use "family engagement" to identify the continuum of ways in which a family may interact with their school community. Usage of "parent involvement" or other terms will align with how researchers in previous literature adopted the terms.

Family Engagement Practices

Family engagement practices are strategies and initiatives employed by the school and school community partners to promote family engagement. Such practices may look different between school sites even within the same district. However, in some manner, most schools in the U.S. use family engagement practices to invite families into the school environment. Such practices but may include ideas-centered approaches (e.g., emphasizing mutual trust and shared values between caregivers and school staff) or school-wide event approaches (e.g., community barbecue; Garbacz et al., 2016; Garbacz et al., 2018).

Although family engagement practices may exist outside of a broader school framework, much of the literature has explored this topic within a PBIS framework, which provides a structured approach for schools addressing family engagement practices (Garbacz & Weist, 2019). In a much broader view, PBIS presents a three-tiered framework to provide a continuum of support and preventative practices focused on positive social behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The three tiers are: Universal (Tier 1), Targeted (Tier 2), and Intensive (Tier 3). Universal supports are schoolwide practices that benefit all students in the school. Tier 1 may include components such as a school-wide set of values, universal screening, and clearly defined behavioral expectations across different settings. The continuum of support offered by PBIS was designed to target the needs of all students. Family engagement practices fall in the category of universal supports, meaning that family engagement practices are meant to target all families in the school community. Although family engagement practices also exist at the Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels (e.g., family-school partnerships to support a child's behavior plan), the scope of the present paper will focus on universal family engagement.

Unfortunately, family engagement practices face a minefield of barriers to successful implementation at the universal level. Christenson (2004) identifies two major categories of barriers to caregiver involvement in the schools, (a) structural barriers and (b) psychological/attitudinal barriers. Structural barriers may include logistical challenges which inhibit a caregiver's ability to even make it through the door of the school, such as lack of transportation, conflicting work hours, and lack of communication between the school and home (Baker et al., 2016; Garbacz et al., 2018). Latine caregivers face additional structural barriers related to the linguistic accessibility of the school environment (Turney & Kao, 2009). Structural barriers also encapsulate a school's lack of resources necessary for family engagement practices,

such as time, funding, or staff (Garbacz et al., 2018). Moving forward, psychological/attitudinal barriers are another detrimental factor for family engagement. Psychological barriers include lack of parent trust in school, unwelcoming school climate, and negative staff attitudes about caregiver's dedication to their student's education (Mapp & Hong, 2010; Santiago et al., 2016). For Latine families, racist staff beliefs about caregivers' values and willingness to engage pose an additional attitudinal barrier (Valencia & Black, 2002).

If left unresolved, challenges to family engagement can result in the exclusion of key partners in a child's education. Challenges to family engagement also pose a threat to the myriad positive outcomes of family engagement in the school community. Family engagement, in its numerous forms, is associated with benefits for academic performance (Barajas-Gonzalez et al., 2024; Wilder et al., 2014), social-emotional learning (Eagle et al., 2020), and mental health (Stormshak et al., 2010). Although most studies on the impacts of family engagement in education use correlational research to identify a relationship between family engagement and the described outcomes, a small number of studies have used quasi-experimental methods to investigate the relationship between caregiver involvement in education and positive child outcomes (Garbacz et al., 2017). In a broader examination of the family engagement literature, most randomized studies investigating the effects of caregiver engagement on positive youth outcomes have investigated this causal relationship in the context of random assignment to a social behavioral intervention. Clearly, family engagement in education is an important part of a child's education; thus, it is important to understand barriers and facilitators for family engagement in schools.

In a survey of barriers and facilitators to family engagement in schools, Garbacz and colleagues (2018) identified several facilitators for family engagement. The first facilitator was

the development of a definition for family engagement that is inclusive of the diverse ways in which families support their young learners. This strategy can contradict a common psychological barrier to involvement, unclear procedures for scaffolding to family-school collaboration from their existing involvement activities (Baker et al., 2016). The second facilitator is to use district-level support to create clear roles and responsibilities for family engagement. Defined expectations can mitigate the impacts of psychological barriers to family engagement, such as a lack of knowledge or confidence in how to become involved with the school. The third facilitator is proactive, positive family outreach efforts, which can heal the unwelcoming school environment that is often a barrier to family involvement (Turney & Kao, 2009). The fourth facilitator is using existing school systems as a foundation for the implementation of family engagement practices. Embedding family engagement practices in existing systems prevents inconsistent efforts that are often unhelpful in welcoming families to the school community (Garbacz et al., 2016). Finally, the fifth facilitator is dedication to building and strengthening relationships between families and personnel (Sheridan et al., 2012). This facilitating factor can overcome many of the psychological barriers, such as lack of parent trust in school (Santiago et al., 2016), negative teacher perceptions of caregivers' efforts to partner (Mapp & Hong, 2010), and caregivers' feelings of not belonging in the school community (Baker et al., 2016).

Although there is value in understanding and implementing individual facilitators for family engagement in schools, scholars and practitioners alike have recognized the necessity to supplement this knowledge with a systematic, organized approach to family engagement practices. To this end, Garbacz and colleagues (2016) proposed a framework for family engagement within schoolwide PBIS. This cohesive framework centers (a) universal planning

and problem solving and (b) practices across systems as the primary components in this two-pronged approach to family engagement practices at the universal level. Universal planning and problem solving refers to practices that precede the establishment of activities across the home and school context. This component includes the meaningful engagement of families on PBIS leadership teams, the identification of cultural and contextual factors, and the use of a data-based problem-solving model. The second component, practices across systems, builds upon the first component. Whereas the element of universal planning and problem solving focused on building relationships with families in the school community, the component of cross-contextual practices aims to use those relationships with caregivers to collaboratively approach the implementation process. This component is exemplified in practices such as extending school PBIS practices to the home environment, improving the school climate for caregivers, engaging families as partners in changemaking, and enhancing family-school communication. Overall, this framework provides a much-needed guide for universal-tier family engagement practices. However, in their limitations, the authors outline the need for future research that (a) examines extant family engagement practices in schools, (b) identifies family-engagement practices aligned with valued child outcomes, and (c) pilots the presented framework for tier-one family engagement practices to evaluate feasibility and impact on student outcomes.

Also recognizing the need for a practice framework for school-based family engagement, Ball and colleagues (2020) developed a framework using the voices of family engagement professionals. This grounded approach generated the Family Engagement Practice Framework, an organized guide of helpful concepts, values, dispositions, and practice strategies for successful family engagement work. In this framework, practice strategies are inseparable from the guiding paradigms of trauma-informed approach and strengths-based perspective when

working with families. The practice strategies themselves include (a) immediate and continuous support to families, (b) good rapport, (c) trust, and (d) empowerment of families. These strategies are bolstered in effectiveness by a practitioner's mindset of commitment to families, optimism, and nonjudgement. Although this framework was shaped in a grounded approach by the voices of family engagement practitioners, the authors address in their limitations that the voices of caregivers were left out of the development of this framework and identify a need for this step moving forward. Furthermore, this framework identifies strategies that align with school-based service delivery, which is generally associated with targeted- and individualized-tier approaches. Despite the obvious merits of this framework, it is not well-suited for family engagement practices at the universal level, given that this framework was designed in the context of Tier 2 and Tier 3 service-delivery to families. Furthermore, this framework identifies practices for engaging families in services, rather than in the larger school community.

Overall, the literature is insufficient for identifying effective family engagement practices used by schools to reach all families in the school community. Although the literature does address the facilitators which make schools more accessible to families (Garbacz et al., 2018), few studies offer insights about the practices themselves. When examining the Tier 1 strategies, it is imperative to reflect on how minoritized families are continuously left out due to various structural barriers. Latine caregivers face a unique set of barriers due to their intersecting identities. Many Latine caregivers are deterred from being present at their child's school due to a perceived unwelcoming environment, unfamiliarity with the school system, and worries that they will not be understood (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007; Qin & Han, 2014). Furthermore, Latine caregivers are more likely to report the negative impact of language barriers to family engagement (Turney & Kao, 2009). Although many schools employ the services of translators,

interpretive services often come with shortfalls (Nahari et al., 2017). For example, interpreters are rarely present during informal school functions, such as during child pick-up or other occasions during which a parent would stop into the school. Instead, interpreters are generally active in schools when they are contracted for services such as conferences and individual school-family meetings at Tier 2 and Tier 3 (Cruz & Garbacz, 2022). Therefore, Spanish-dominant Latine caregivers are generally already in touch with the school before they have access to interpretive services. Translators are seldom part of the family engagement process, thereby leaving Latine caregivers out of the picture. Overall, research shows that schools are not doing enough with their family engagement practices to attend to the intersecting social identities of Latine caregivers as linguistically, racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse (Olivos & Mendoza, 2010).

Culturally Responsive Family Engagement

To set the stage for family engagement practices with minoritized caregivers, many schools have first adopted a culturally responsive attitude by taking a strengths-based approach to working with families (Ball et al., 2020). One conceptualization of the various strengths that exist within families considers those strengths as *cultural capital.* Tara Yosso (2005), who conceptualized the idea of cultural capital, examined the myriad resources which surround people of color but are not readily accepted by schools using a deficit lens. Such resources include culturally unique talents, values, and lived experiences; they generally fall into one of the six categories of cultural capital: Linguistic, aspirational, resistant, navigational, social, or familial. The sum of an individual's various forms of cultural capital is their cultural wealth. In this assets-based perspective, students from minoritized groups are more than just passive actors in a community setting. Rather, they are active members who possess strengths, ideas, and values

that they can contribute to the spaces around them. Although this perspective is a well-known facilitator for family engagement in schools (Ball et al., 2020; Garbacz et al., 2018), adopting a strengths-based attitude is more of the wind up than it is the pitch. It sets a school on the path for success in family engagement endeavors, but this foundation is futile without effective practices.

To this end, schools have adopted culturally responsive caregiver engagement practices across a variety of mediums. For example, some schools have hired bilingual liaisons and community brokers to build relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse families in the school community. Bilingual liaisons are employed by their school to encourage parent engagement and foster family-school collaboration (Miller et al., 2014). Similarly, a cultural broker is an agent who shares a racial/ethnic and linguistic identity with some families in the school community and is employed by schools to assist with the transfer of cultural knowledge for informing awareness and practice in the schools (Ishimaru et al., 2016; Yohani, 2013). Bilingual liaisons and brokers have similar goals and capacities, though they have the additional objective of setting the stage for two-way, collaborative relationships between caregivers and school staff. Liaisons can leverage their shared cultural wealth with to overcome common barriers to engagement. In schools already working with bilingual liaisons, immigrant families have been able to work with the liaisons to resolve common challenges to school engagement, such as unfamiliarity with the U.S. school system (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). This example of exposing hidden curriculum for immigrant families is just one of myriad ways in which bilingual liaisons can facilitate parent involvement. Ultimately, bilingual liaisons serve as a connection between the school and culturally and linguistically diverse caregivers, who will feel more comfortable and empowered in the school environment (Wong-Villacres et al., 2019; Yohani, 2013). This sense of belonging opens the space to an influx of cultural wealth and

caregiver knowledge that can inform classroom curricula (Protacio et al., 2020), administrative decision-making (Carruba-Rogel et al., 2019), and other opportunities for making change in the school community. However, these types of authentic power-sharing programs and supports are not very prevalent across schools/districts in the U.S. (Olivos, 2006).

Some schools in the U.S. have adopted a culturally responsive model which builds upon PBIS systems already in place. The Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS) framework is theoretically grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, and the researchers who created the model aimed to create continuity between the microsystemic home and school settings (Reschly, 2020). CRPBIS also encourages the mesosystemic interactions between the home and school to build a set of continuous cultural values between the two microsystemic contexts. CRPBIS programs push educators to consistently and meaningfully engage in the examination, understanding, and correction of their own personal biases before they manifest in inequitable discipline practices (Leverson et al., 2021). Holistically, CRPBIS is an approach which clearly intends to create continuity between the home and school settings using an objective, behaviorist definition of culture (Sugai et al., 2002).

In their approach to CRPBIS, Bal and colleagues (2014; 2016) use the power of learning labs to supports caregiver involvement in the design process for the framework. Learning labs are unique in that they highlight the voices of nondominant caregivers in the problem-solving processes in school environments (Bal et al., 2014). The welcoming of underrepresented caregiver voices in schools ensures that diverse home values are also reflected in the school climate, thus giving every student the chance to experience the home-school continuity that is integral to equitable behavioral outcomes. In one case study, the implementation of learning labs

successfully strengthened the family-school-community bond with culturally and linguistically diverse families (Bal et al., 2016).

Although learning labs and other elements associated with CRPBIS programs have shown some promise, they rely on the involvement of caregivers from diverse roots to represent the perspectives of all families in the school community. The shortfall of this approach is that it assumes family engagement practices are already in place and adequate to support parent involvement in committees. Unfortunately, the opportunity to participate in learning labs or similar committees does not adequately address the various barriers that hinder caregiver efforts to participate in the first place. More broadly, the structure of CRPBIS imbeds an element of diverse caregiver involvement to inform culturally responsive practice, though the model does not outline specific family engagement practices that would be helpful for connecting the school with historically marginalized groups. Moreover, scholars have argued that culturally responsive family engagement practices are missing critical conversations of power and privilege.

In a move to deepen the work of culturally responsive family engagement practices, researchers have investigated family engagement practices with minoritized caregivers using a critical lens. Specifically, scholars in the field emphasize that family engagement typologies in existing literature have centered around the school agenda (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Ishimaru et al., 2019). In other words, earlier literature has lacked a power-sharing vision for family engagement in which schools center the values, perspectives, ideas, and needs of minoritized caregivers just as much as they do their own. Critical perspectives of school policy and practice are not novel developments in the field, as many caregivers have understood and acknowledged racist and classist power dynamics in schools (Doucet, 2011; Marchand et al., 2019; McCarthy Foubert, 2022). However, because of inequitable power hierarchies that worked

to silence to voices of disenfranchised groups in the school community, critical discussions were missing from the literature until recently.

In a review of the literature, Bertrand and Rodela (2018) saliently differentiate culturally responsive family engagement models from the more critical empowerment and community organizing models. Specifically, culturally responsive engagement models continue to center the goals and values of the school, focusing on the agenda of the institution with a nod to parent input. In the literature about culturally responsive parent engagement, parent leadership is limited in capacity. That is, parents are regarded as cultural experts, but leadership opportunities are provided in conventional spaces or are mediated by administrators (Ishimaru, 2013). In contrast, literature centered on empowerment and community organizing models of parent engagement identify capacity building and grassroots organization as essential elements for parent participation in collective leadership spaces with other caregivers and community organizers (Ishimaru, 2017, as cited in Bertrand & Rodela, 2018). Empowerment and community organization models center the values, experiences, and perspectives of caregivers and community members in a shared agenda that transcends the power hierarchies of school-centric models of engagement. Overall, Bertrand & Rodela (2018) distinguish between the family engagement approaches in the literature while emphasizing the need for future literature to move beyond culturally responsive family engagement to critical and empowering family engagement approaches.

Extant literature on critical family engagement identifies a number of important elements regarding the intersection of the topic with discussions of power and privilege. First, many scholars of critical family engagement argue that caregivers hold vast amounts of knowledge that go unrecognized by the school (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020; Brown et al., 2022; Ishimaru et

al., 2018). Next, many minoritized caregivers recognize the presence and impact of racist and classist oppressions that continue to pervade U.S. schools (McCarthy Foubert, 2022). In fact, some caregivers actively resist the institutional oppression by creating distance between themselves and the school (Doucet, 2011). Furthermore, school-centric family engagement agendas continue to exist in U.S. schools of all age levels. School-centric family engagement agendas are those which utilize unidirectional communication, individualist values, deficit perspectives, and traditional definitions of family engagement (Ishimaru, 2019). Sometimes, like in the case study highlighted in Ishimaru (2018), caregiver and community leaders were able to leverage conventional family engagement structures to generate change.

Although many family engagement frameworks are prevalent in the literature, few of those frameworks are rooted in critical epistemology. That is, most family engagement frameworks do not weave conversations about race, power, and privilege throughout the examinations and recommendations for family engagement practices. One notable exception is the Culturally Sustaining Indigenous Family Engagement (CSIFE), developed collaboratively by researchers and American Indian families residing in the urban Midwest (Garcia, 2014; Garcia, 2018). In this framework, educators and families understand and acknowledge the historic role of educational settings in facilitating cultural erasure for U.S. Indigenous communities in the U.S. Furthermore, the framework centers conversations about the ongoing ways that schools perpetuate colonialism for Indigenous students and families. For example, school communities using this framework challenge family engagement practices that center the norms and values of white Americans. The CSIFE Framework integrates six major concepts, outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Culturally Sustaining Indigenous Family Engagement (CSIFE) Framework

Number	Concept	Example
1	Critical dialogues	Sharing stories that highlight the strength and beauty of Indigenous communities
2	Recognition of past and ongoing impacts of colonialism	Conversations to address the assimilation and harm of American Indian boarding schools and how that legacy lives on today
3	Conceptualizes family engagement using Indigenous concepts	The Diné envision relationships between people in a concept known as *k'é* (Kulago, 2012; Lee, 2016; Shirley, 2017, as cited in Garcia, 2018).
4	Embraces diverse family dynamics	Some family constellations may include two moms or two dads that hold the Indigenous identity of two-spirit.
5	Empowers caregivers and community members to become change agents	Educators may partner with Indigenous caregivers to collectively resist a discriminatory school policy
6	Engages family for self-education, self-determination, and sovereignty	Respecting Indigenous sovereignty in schools by engaging and sharing power with families and community members

Note. This table displays information adapted from Garcia (2018).

Unfortunately, there is research to practice gap; although many scholarly articles discuss critical family engagement, few researchers have undertaken the work of documenting the existence of or bringing to life critical family engagement in applied settings. Although critical approaches to family engagement would be valuable for application with the Latine community, only a fraction of the literature explores Latine family engagement from a critical perspective. The following section examines extant literature about family engagement practices with Latines.

Family Engagement Practices with Latine Caregivers

Despite the large and growing number of Latine caregivers in communities around the U.S., there is a gap in the extant literature about family engagement practices for the Latine

community. This dearth could be explained by existing practices in schools which have yet to be explored in research. That is, schools may already utilize culturally specific family engagement practices with Latine caregivers, and research literature simply has yet to capture those approaches. Generally, studies investigating family-engagement practices either examine existing practices in a school or they investigate the effects of alterations to family engagement practices in schools, sometimes referred to as interventions. Some studies focus on family engagement with Latine families as it already exists in schools. For example, in their study of Latine caregiver activism in an elementary school, Paredes Scribner & Fernández (2017) examined the advocacy and activism of an existing Latina caregiver group in response to anti-immigrant legislation. Walker (2016) describes a parent education intervention designed to increase Latine caregiver engagement at an elementary school. In Walker's study, the research team designed and implemented an intervention to alter Latine caregiver engagement at the school rather than studying existing structures. In another example, Auerbach and Collier (2012) implemented the Families Promoting Success (FPS) program at four Latine-dominant elementary schools. The purpose of the intervention was to present literacy curriculum for caregiver implementation at home and to impose high-stake pressures for involvement. A pitfall of both implementation studies is that they focused on school-centered agendas for family engagement with limited caregiver voice guiding the discussions.

In general, family extant literature concerning family engagement practices with Latine caregivers has focused on a school-centered agenda of family engagement, rather than considering the perspectives and ideas of Latine caregivers. In fact, much of the literature has examined the point of view of teachers and administrators rather than Latine caregivers themselves. Lowenhaupt (2014) followed this model in her exploration of how schools use

family engagement practices to influence access and participation for Latine caregivers. Data for this study were collected from survey responses of principals and teachers in the state of Wisconsin. From this survey, several key themes were identified on the topic of family engagement practices.

The first theme regarded access to the school community and was explored in a series of questions about the availability of translated materials, interpreters at events, and interpreters integrated within daily school functions (i.e., answering a parent phone call). Results indicated generally positive but significantly varied responses regarding availability of access resources for Latine caregivers in schools. That is, the degree to which schools provided resources to help Latine families access the school community varied with the setting, with communities of growing Latine populations reporting more frequent use of access-related resources than schools with different growth trends. The second theme of family engagement that researchers identified in this study was participation as a dimension of family engagement. Lowenhaupt defined participation in a traditional sense, highlighting activities such as parent-teacher conferences, attendance at parent-organization meetings, or attending school events. The data reflected that, under a traditional definition of involvement, Latine caregivers tend to participate in their school communities less than their white counterparts. The author aligned a discussion of participation with previous literature, stating that narrow definitions of parent engagement lead towards tendencies of underestimating a parent's involvement in their child's education (Mapp & Hong, 2010).

To capture a more inclusive picture of family engagement, Lowenhaupt (2014) discussed the family engagement practices which participants cited as being helpful in working with Latine caregivers. First, personal and direct communications with Spanish-speaking staff were helpful

in ensuring an accessible school environment. Specifically, it was helpful to have at least one Spanish-speaking staff member regularly available to answer the phone for Spanish-speaking caregivers or to interpret as soon as a family entered the building at any time (i.e., pick-up, drop-off). Responses also reflected the importance of availability of Spanish attendance messages with voicemail to facilitate easier communication with the school. Another highlighted strategy for Latine family engagement was simultaneous translation equipment, which allowed Spanish-speakers to participate in schoolwide meetings. Regarding the second theme of participation, specific family engagement strategies included provision of English-language classes for Spanish-dominant caregivers as well as special events for Latine families to ask questions or raise concerns.

Although this study is one of very few to highlight specific family engagement practices for Latine families, the lack of caregiver voice in the research literature around family engagement practices is problematic for several reasons. First, teachers and administrative staff may not necessarily know which strategies were most well-received by families. When engaging in qualitative research, it is important for researchers to purposefully seek participants who are well-positioned to answer the research question (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Although teachers and administrative staff identified effective family engagement practices used with Latine families, staff may not always know which strategies are most helpful or impactful for caregivers. Researchers must connect with caregivers in order to understand perceptions of family engagement strategies. Furthermore, approaching family engagement practices solely by attending to the perspectives of teachers and administrators reproduces the inherent power hierarchy which subjugates Latine caregivers to a position of subordinance, in which they are

disempowered to make decisions and take a changemaker position (Baquedano-López et al., 2013).

Unfortunately, the bulk of extant literature fails to critically reflect upon typical family engagement practices which enforce a status quo that is not beneficial for Latine families. Discussions of power hierarchies and caregiver resistance are somewhat absent in the literature, despite the fact that it is well-documented that current practices do not adequately support the involvement of Latines in the school community. Instead, current family engagement practices benefit white caregivers who can already utilize racial, linguistic, and capital privilege to access the school community space. Current practices accept systemic oppression and marginalization of Latines as unchangeable reality, failing to challenge the system by questioning inequitable school practices. This perspective perpetuates trauma and creates barriers to schools repairing harm with Latine families.

Although the literature highlights a movement of family engagement scholarship to include a culturally responsive approach, cultural responsiveness is a far inferior substitute for cultural centering. In addition to using a critical lens when examining family engagement practices for Latine caregivers, using a culturally congruent lens is correspondingly important. For this reason, Latine family engagement practices should be considered using a liberation psychology perspective, which provides both a critical and culturally responsive approach.

Liberation psychology is a theoretical orientation developed in Latin America to address three major issues of Western social psychology: (a) the irrelevance of Western social psychology in the context of Latin America, (b) the over-generalization of classic social psychology experiments conducted in analogous settings, (c) the omission of bias and moral elements in Western psychology's 'neutrality' (Burton & Kagan, 2004). Liberationists pointed

out that Western social psychology ignored the oppression and systemic inequalities facing the people of Latin America and around the world. A core idea of liberation psychology is *conscientization* (critical consciousness), a term which refers to the process of developing critical awareness and initiating action to resist oppressive systems (French et al., 2020). The perspective of this theory is systemic, focusing on how the life circumstances and material conditions of a person contribute to their actions and outcomes. Resistance is with the aim of changing oppressive practices and structures is a key part of critical consciousness and, more broadly, liberation psychology. Without resistance, there is no liberation. An important characteristic the liberationist approach is a social orientation - that which considers the impact of historical influences and material conditions on the oppressed people's mental health and well-being (Martín-Baró, 1986).

Liberation psychology is gaining traction in the U.S. as a guiding theoretical orientation in clinical and community spaces (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2019). Although most schools have yet to embrace this theoretical perspective, liberation psychology can advance current efforts to apply a critical perspective to family engagement practices. For Latine caregivers, liberation psychology is especially relevant as the theoretical approach was developed in Latin America and is therefore more specific and culturally congruent than other theoretical orientations. Liberation psychology offers the benefit of providing a critical perspective as well as a culturally congruent approach. Table 4 outlines the clear overlap between critical perspectives that have been used in previous examinations of family engagement and a liberation psychology perspective:

Table 4

Liberation Psychology Applied to Critical Family Engagement Literature

Title	Citation	Contribution	Liberation Psychology Element
"Darles el lugar": A Place for Nondominant Family Knowing in Educational Equity	Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020	1. Caregivers recognize inequitable school practices and structures 2. Schools have been and continue to be oppressive environments that work to silence minoritized families 3. Minoritized caregiver perspectives are valuable for finding solutions that deviate from dominant norms and assumptions	1. Critical reflection 2. Historical memory 3. Collectivism for problem solving
Community Design Circles: Co-designing Justice and Wellbeing in Family-Community-Research Partnerships	Ishimaru, 2018	1. Building from family definitions of wellbeing and justice 2. Disrupting normative, asymmetrical dynamics 3. Building capacity for social dreaming and changemaking	1. Collectivism 2. Challenging inequitable power dynamics 3. Critical Consciousness
Families in the Driver's Seat: Catalyzing Familial Transformative Agency for Equitable Collaboration	Ishimaru et al., 2019	1. Identifying and engaging with historical contradictions 2. Developing collective understanding for purpose and agency 3. Modeling possibilities for collective voice and influence 4. Enacting collective voice and influence	1. Historical memory 2. Collectivism 3. Radical hope 4. Resistance
Integrating Race, Racism, and Critical	Marchand et al., 2019	1. Critical consciousness 2. Critical reflection	1. Critical consciousness

Consciousness in Black Parents' Engagement with Schools		3. Critical action	2. Historical memory and critical consciousness 3. Resistance
Organizational Politics of Parental Engagement: The Intersections of School Reform, Anti-Immigration Policies, and Latinx Parent Organizing	Paredes Scribner & Fernández, 2017	1. Caregiver critical consciousness in response to hostile immigration policies 2. Attending to power imbalances between parents and school staff	1. Critical consciousness 2. Challenging inequitable power dynamics
Toward an Integrated, Systemic, and Sustainable Model of Transformational Family Engagement: The Case of the Kentucky Statewide Family Engagement Center	Perry & Geller, 2021	1. Breaking through historical barriers that fail to acknowledge role of families in and outside of school 2. Collective experience to face challenges 3. Family-driven work to deepen racial equity and social justice	1. Historical memory; critical consciousness; resistance 2. Collectivism 3. Resistance
Beyond the Bake Sale: A Community-Based Relational Approach to Parent Engagement in School	Warren et al., 2009	1. An emphasis on relationship building among parents and between parents and educators 2. A focus on the leadership development of parents 3. An effort to bridge the gap in culture and power between parents and educators	1. Collectivism 2. Disrupting traditional power hierarchies 3. Power-sharing

Evidently, the theoretical lens of liberation psychology aligns well with other critical perspectives that are prevalent in family engagement literature. In fact, liberationist principles are already present in the literature about Latine family engagement, albeit without explicit

association to liberation psychology. In examining the literature, several key themes emerge. The first is problematization, the critical analysis of life circumstances and material conditions (Torres Rivera, 2020). In the family engagement literature, problematization involves caregiver recognition of existing barriers to family engagement. For example, Barajas-López and Ishimaru (2020) illustrate how Latine caregivers engage in problematization by recognizing inequitable practices and structures in their children's schools.

Another key theme is critical consciousness, *conscientization*, which encompasses the process of action and change in response to historical and current oppressive life circumstances. Critical consciousness therefore entails recognition of oppressive factors and resistance to those forces (Torres Rivera, 2020). Latine caregivers engaging in *conscientization* engage in recognition and resistance in a number of ways. For instance, Paredes Scribner & Fernández (2017) highlight critical consciousness in a group of Latine caregivers who engaged in activism and resistance against anti-immigration policies impacting their school community. Other organizations have committed to creating spaces for minoritized caregiver critical consciousness; in action, inviting critical conscious may include supporting family-driven services by uplifting the voices and priorities of minoritized caregivers (Perry & Geller, 2021). Furthermore, the resistance component of critical conscious could take several forms. Olivos (2006) applies Solórzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) four forms of resistance in schools to caregiver engagement.

The four forms of resistance in schools are situated along two axes: Critique of social oppression and motivation by social justice on the four-quadrant chart (Solórzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001). Olivos (2006) applies this typology to caregiver resistance. In the ranges of low social justice motivation and low critique of social oppression lies reactionary behavior. For

caregivers in schools, Olivos describes that reactionary behavior is motivated by caregivers' desire to make school staff uncomfortable or to simply act out "for the hell of it." This may include nitpicking on issues of irrelevance rather that directing efforts towards social justice-oriented critiques of school practices and systems. Next, self-defeating resistance embodies a critique of social justice oppression while not being motivated by social justice. Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) characterize this category of behavior as a form of escape from the oppressive structure without a desire to make change, thereby contributing to a person's own subordination. Olivos (2006) contextualizes this type of resistance in family engagement by explaining that caregivers may refuse to participate in school meetings, school-community events, or other school-centric involvement opportunities which represent oppressive conditions for the caregiver. Absence and refusal become a form of resistance for caregivers, even if this form of resistance deprives the caregiver of an opportunity to make meaningful change in the school. Unfortunately, this form of resistance may also contribute to the negative perceptions of Latine caregivers' willingness to be involved, such as the perspectives explored in Valencia and Black's (2002) review of the literature about the myth that Mexican American caregivers don't value education. The third type of resistance, conforming, is characterized by minimal critiques of social oppression and high motivation for social-justice goals. In school communities, caregivers engaging in conforming resistance may critique other caregivers for their lack of involvement, offer "band-aid" solutions for issues of systemic oppression and marginalization, or participate in structured, school-centric parent engagement activities without questioning inequitable school-family power hierarchies. Finally, Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) identify transformative resistance as a type which is both high in critique of social oppression and motivation by social justice. In the context of school communities, transformational

resistance goes beyond low-impact, school-centric roles. Rather, caregivers engaging in transformative resistance work to improve the condition of the school community by recognizing and collectively challenging school practices which are disempowering to the children and families of the school community. Out of Solórzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) resistance typologies, transformative resistance is the one best-aligned with critical consciousness, as it encompasses the two crucial elements: Critical awareness of oppressive structures and activist resistance to promote change.

A final theme that emerges in the family engagement literature is the need for Latine children, caretakers, and community members to heal from the historical and active trauma that they collectively experience. In their exploration of Salvadoran caregivers' experiences in U.S. urban schools, Colón et al. (2020) found four major themes: (a) communication, (b) understanding, (c) counseling, and (d) information. Broadly, the themes spoke to the need for schools to enhance bidirectional communication with the caregivers in order to promote understanding between school staff and families and to distribute important information about resources for families. The findings also reflected a need for children and caregivers to access counseling services. Although the authors identified individualized counseling services rather than community healing, schools can become sites for collective healing. In fact, Castrellón et al. (2021) conceptualize school-based community healing, which they argue is critical for bringing communities together. The authors highlight the case example of La Junta Collective, a Los Angeles-based organization comprised of teachers, students, families, and community members fighting for collective healing spaces in schools.

Although community healing practices have yet to reach the implementation stage in U.S. public schools, the push for community healing practices continues to grow. In the subject area

of family engagement practices, community healing fits into discussions about how schools can build more authentic connections with caregivers. Many caregivers have a ruptured relationship with the school due to previous difficult experiences, exclusionary child discipline, and other relevant factors. Furthermore, many Latine caregivers hold intersecting racial, national, linguistic, and class identities which converge to create inequitable conditions for caregiver engagement in schools (Olivos & Mendoza, 2010). Therefore, limited caregiver engagement in the school community can be understood as a consequence of unrecognized social inequities at school. To remediate the inequities and create family engagement practices which are informed by the voices of Latines, it is important to understand which practices Latine caregivers find most helpful.

To better situate explorations of family engagement practices with Latine caregivers, Liberation Psychology offers a culturally congruent theoretical perspective which fits in with other critical epistemologies used in family engagement studies. Despite the advantage of liberation psychology over other theoretical perspectives, rarely do scholars explore family engagement practices under the lens of liberation psychology. Scholars are working to expand the understanding of applications of liberation psychology in schools more broadly. For example, Cervantes and colleagues (2021) explored the utility of *testimonios* in schools as an exercise of reflection, critique, and censure of oppressive structures contributing to injustice. The authors based their work on previous research from the Latina Feminist Group (2001), bringing this method of cathartic processing, healing, and change-making to the school setting for use with Latine high school students. The authors emphasized the ways in which Liberation Psychology and testimonios work in tandem to create a drive for change: The former problematizes the

distorted, oppressive reality and the latter verbalizes the oppressive mechanisms while calling for action.

Cervantes and colleagues (2021) explored the experience of high school students using a liberation psychology lens, and the same theoretical perspective would be helpful for understanding the experience of caregivers, too. Unfortunately, the literature seldom investigates family engagement practices with a liberation psychology lens. Although Carruba-Rogel et al. (2019) explore Latine caregiver activism and conscientización in schools, these explorations are not situated in a liberation psychology theoretical lens. Clearly, the application of a liberation psychology lens to family engagement has not yet occurred in such a way that sustains family engagement practices for Latine caregivers, though this application has important implications. Table 5 provides a summary of the needs of family engagement that may be addressed by a liberationist approach.

Table 5

A Liberationist Approach to Fulfill Needs of Family Engagement

Needs of Family Engagement	Liberationist Approach
Centering Latine culture in family engagement practices	Liberation Psychology was developed in Latin America, thereby taking approaches using this lens beyond culturally responsive practices to those which are culturally centering (Burton & Kagan, 2004).
Disrupting inequitable power dynamics to engage Latine caregivers as changemakers in the school community	Liberationist approaches emphasize problem identification and community activism to promote changemaking (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2019).
Repairing harm with families by promoting a space for community processing and healing	Testimonios offer cathartic processing as a source of healing for participants (Cervantes et al., 2021; Latina Feminist Group, 2001).

Cultural congruence in critical epistemology	Liberation psychology is a critical epistemology developed by Latine scholars in in Latin America

Methodology Utilized in Previous Latine Family Engagement Research

Qualitative Approaches

Qualitative research methods are oftentimes applied when researchers seek to understand how people interpret their experiences, attribute value to lived experiences, and construct their worlds (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Throughout this chapter's review of the literature concerning family engagement practices, studies using a qualitative approach most frequently emerged. Qualitative research is characterized by numerous approaches, and the data collection methods differed between studies. For example, many studies of family engagement relied on interviews or focus groups to collect data (e.g., Morales-Alexander, 2020). However, in many cases, researchers used a variety of data collection approaches, including ethnographic approaches, document/artifact collection, surveys, observations, and field notes. For example, Ishimaru (2013) collected data from interviews, observations, and document analysis for her study on principals empowering Latine caregivers to challenge the status quo. Similarly, there was broad variety in the data analysis approaches used in studies. Even though some researchers opted for the inductive grounded theory approach (e.g., Auerbach & Collier, 2012), other researchers utilized thematic analysis (e.g., Ishimaru et al., 2019).

Mixed-Method Approaches

Mixed-method approaches bring together quantitative and qualitative approaches to draw conclusions based on the combined strengths of both types of data (Creswell, 2015). Mixed-method research is generally centered on one of three primary designs: convergent, explanatory

sequential, and exploratory sequential (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In a convergent design, qualitative and quantitative data are simultaneously collected and interpreted. However, in explanatory sequential designs, quantitative data are collected first, and qualitative data are subsequently collected to explain the results with more depth and detail. Finally, in an exploratory mixed methods research design, qualitative data are collected first and are subsequently followed by quantitative measures.

Few studies in the literature review used mixed methods to explore family engagement practices. Lowenhaupt (2014) exemplified a convergent mixed methods approach for researching family engagement practices with Latine caregivers, as their data were collected from one survey with both quantitative and qualitative items. Rangel et al. (2020) also utilized a convergent mixed methods approach in their research study about school-based parent networks in Latine communities. Overall, mixed methods were not as prevalent in the literature as qualitative approaches.

Participatory Approaches

Participatory approaches are encouraged in qualitative research, as they address power inequities between researchers and participants to ensure that the research will provide benefit to the community (Hess et al., 2021). For research related to family engagement in schools, Dyrness (2010) wrote, “Participatory research is one way to help parents and teachers analyze and embrace critique as a necessary step toward the goal of creating more just educational practices and outcomes” (p. 37). Participatory approaches are well suited for research with a critical epistemological approach, as they engage oppressed communities in the disruption and interrogation of extant power dynamics.

Participatory approaches to the study of family engagement practices rarely appeared in the literature review process. However, Ishimaru et al. (2018) highlighted that community-engaged research involving families, communities, educators, and researchers are vital to the mission of collective and equitable changemaking in education.

Summary of the Literature

A review of extant literature reveals that family engagement practices were not developed in a way that works for Latine families, as evidenced by the existence of numerous barriers to family engagement in schools (Garbacz et al., 2018; Turney & Kao, 2009). As the literature shows, current family engagement practices fail to adequately (a) challenge existing power hierarchies between caregivers and school staff, (b) center the Latine culture, or (c) meaningfully invite families into the school space. Although a culturally responsive approach has been implemented to remedy several disparities, culturally responsive frameworks such as CRPBIS often lack actionable steps and concrete practices related to family engagement efforts (Bal et al., 2014). Furthermore, culturally responsive family engagement practices are not interchangeable with critical family engagement practices, which initiate important discussions about power, privilege, and change in schools. Family engagement practices with a liberationist framework invite Latine caregivers to share their voices and call for change in a culturally centering way that goes beyond just cultural responsiveness.

Family engagement identifies a diverse range of activities that students and caregivers engage in in the home, the school, and on the bridge between those two spaces. Family engagement practices are strategies and initiatives employed by the school and school community partners to promote family engagement. Although earlier literature investigated family engagement practices from a school-centric lens that minimized the voices of caregivers

in the school community, the field of family engagement research has shifted to focus on more critical approaches to family engagement (Bertrand & Rodela, 2018). Although the subject of critical family engagement is still an emerging topic of study, the importance of this field cannot be emphasized enough. Demographic changes indicate that centering the culture of the myriad Latine families is long overdue. Liberation psychology, a theoretical orientation falling withing critical epistemology, is a culturally centering way to engage with the mission of making family engagement practices more successful, helpful, and meaningful for Latine caregivers.

Present Study

The goal of the present study was to explore school-based culturally congruent family engagement practices from the perspective of Latine caregivers. In the current study, the term "family engagement practices" aligned with Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's description of school-based, level-one contextual factors for motivating caregivers to become involved in their child's education. To achieve this aim, the researcher collected data from Latine caregivers of middle school youth via qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus groups. A community consultant was a part of this process to ensure that community perspectives and values are accurately represented throughout the research process. The aim of the present study was to understand the perspectives of Latine caregivers regarding their middle school's family engagement practices. The researcher chose middle schools as sites for this research, as the literature demonstrates that family engagement practices diminish in quantity and quality over time starting in early elementary school (Davis & Lambie, 2005; Smith et al., 2019). The specific research questions (RQ) are as follows:

RQ 1: Which aspects of School-wide Family Engagement Practices in middle school do Latine caregivers perceive as being helpful for facilitating their connection with the school?

RQ 2: Which aspects of School-wide Family Engagement Practices in middle school do Latine caregivers perceive as being unhelpful or detrimental to facilitating their connection with the school?

RQ 3: What changes to School-wide Family Engagement Practices would Latine caregivers want to see at their middle school? What would be the aim of these changes? How do caregivers view their agency to make these changes?

Chapter 3: Method

This chapter includes the following methodological elements: (a) community-engaged research design, (b) the mixed-method approach, (c) participants and recruitment, (d) measures, (e) data collection, (d) data analysis, and (f) credibility measures.

Community-Engaged Research Design

The method for the present project was carefully selected based on the aim of the study, which was to explore caregiver perspectives of existing family engagement practices and to understand those perspectives with a liberation psychology theoretical lens. The tenets of liberation psychology were incorporated across aspects of the study's methods, including the study design and plan for data analysis. As was described in the previous chapter, a key concept in liberation psychology is power shared in community (Torres Rivera, 2020). Specifically, liberation psychology seeks to identify, examine, and dismantle oppressive power hierarchies that exist to perpetuate the concentration of power in the control of one small group of people. In accordance with this theoretical orientation, the present study sought to reduce power hierarchies that commonly exist between the researcher and the research participants by incorporating a community-engaged research design.

The aim of community-engaged research includes three main goals: (a) dismantle traditional power hierarchies, (b) distribute decision-making power to the community, and (c) hold community partners accountable for upholding ethical research standards (Warren et al., 2016). Several authors have produced guidelines for research based on principles of community-engaged research. Specifically, Cruz and Bakken (2020) developed a robust set of community-engaged research principles with the aim of providing guidance for the development, evaluation, and adaptation of research initiatives. The principles were reviewed by racially and ethnically

diverse leaders, researchers, funders, and advocates familiar with community-engaged research. The guiding principles are divided into four major themes related to establishing a successful research partnership: (a) building and maintaining sustainable relationships between the researcher and the community, (b) collaborating effectively, (c) acknowledging and reducing power imbalances, and (d) engaging the community in research processes and methods.

Building and Maintaining Sustainable Relationships

In the present study, the researcher cultivated and sustained relationships with the school communities involved. The development of an authentic relationship between the researcher and the community is a vital first step to beginning a dialogue about how the community's needs, goals, and values will be centered in the research. Cruz and Bakken (2020) suggest active learning experiences and direct interaction as the primary vehicles for researchers learning with the community. The researcher built the dissertation study on a foundation of existing relationships with community members involved the Esperanza Program, a university-community training partnership between the University of Wisconsin and Centro Hispano of Dane County. These relationships were developed and maintained through attendance at community events, and direct communication with Centro teams, and collaboration with Centro Hispano team members on projects. The researcher and the Centro Hispano community held an ongoing discussion regarding how the organization's family partnering practices and advocacy work could benefit from the results of the research study.

Additionally, a fundamental aspect of building authentic and sustainable relationships is acknowledging and attending to researcher positionality relative to members of the community on a variety of social identity axes (e.g., race, class, gender; Milner, 2007). Accordingly, the researcher engaged in ongoing reflection about their social identities and how they intersected

with the social identities of collaborators and participants. The researcher upheld principles of reciprocity and mutual expertise to ensure that the results of the research study accurately represented the participants' agenda for social change (Warren et al., 2016).

Collaborating Effectively

Building from sustainable relationships, effective collaboration between the researcher and the community was a critical aspect of the dissertation study. The collaborative efforts that undergird community-engaged research transform the work into a form of advocacy for the community, wherein the researcher works with communities to advocate for change (Warren et al., 2018). The researcher committed to effective collaboration by including participants in conversations about how the community could benefit from the research. Although the study did not provide direct benefit to the participants, the results of the study were shared with a participating school district to inform family engagement practices. The dissemination of results and recommendations to school teams appeared important to many research participants. Some asked whether results would be disseminated, while others expressed the value of the research study. For example, one participant stated, "A lo mejor no va a tener solución al día siguiente o luego, luego, pero son investigaciones que ustedes hacen y que valen oro porque ojalá muchos otros se interesaran en participar porque es importante que nosotros como papás, participemos esté en este tipo de cosas [*Perhaps you won't have a solution the very next day or soon after, but they're research studies that you all do and that are worth gold, because hopefully many others participate, because it is important that we, as parents, participate in these kinds of things*]."

Acknowledging and Reducing Power Imbalances

To prepare for this dissertation project, the researcher first attempted to acknowledge and reduce power imbalances by centering the perspectives of community partners (e.g., school

district, Centro Hispano) in early discussions to shape the project. Specifically, the researcher met with middle school family engagement staff and the Centro Hispano Family Connections Lead to learn more about existing needs for Latine families regarding family engagement practices. Before beginning participant recruitment, the researcher attempted to reduce power imbalances by partnering with a consultant from the community for collaboration on the project. A Centro Hispano staff person identified a community member who was as a good fit for the role, given their involvement with both Centro Hispano and her child's middle school.

Following the example of Warren et al. (2016), the researcher consulted with the community partner throughout the following steps of the research process: (a) recruitment, (b) formulation of the research plan, (c) data analysis, and (d) dissemination of findings. The role of the community consultant originally included checking materials for bias and providing feedback about the acceptability of these materials to the researcher. However, the responsibilities of the role were later expanded to include brainstorming solutions to recruitment challenges, facilitating community buy-in, co-facilitating focus groups, and helping with the integration of focus group findings. These additions to the community consultant role blossomed from conversations between the consultant and the researcher and were supported by grant funds to compensate the community consultant for additional hours dedicated to the project.

Overall, the researcher prioritized recruiting a community consultant before starting participant recruitment so that the priorities and perspectives of the community were accurately represented throughout the research process. The involvement of a community consultant also helped the researcher reduce bias related to their positionality as a U.S. born, bilingual Mexican American individual in academia with no children.

Engaging the Community in Research Activities

Finally, the researcher engaged the community in research processes of the dissertation study. First, the community consultant played a vital role as a representative of the community throughout the research process. No individual can accurately represent the desires and perspectives of their whole community, but only one individual was selected for the role of a community consultant to increase the feasibility of the study. The community consultant's role and responsibilities are described further in the following subsection. To further engage the community in research activities, the researcher and community consultant conducted member check focus groups during which participants gathered to offer feedback about the accuracy of themes created from interviews. These focus groups provided a space for participants to indicate whether the interview findings accurately represented their perspectives in response to the research questions.

Community Consultant

The community consultant participated as a collaborator in the development and analysis of the research project to ensure that the perspectives of Latine caregivers of middle school students in the community were considered at each step of the project. In selecting only one community consultant, the researcher identified a limitation. Due to the unique experiences generated by one's existence at unique crossroads of intersecting systems of oppression, no single individual can speak for an entire community. However, the perspective of a Latine caregiver of a middle school student provides more insight into the experiences of caregivers in the community compared to the insight available from solely the researcher's perspective.

The researcher used purposive sampling to recruit a community consultant. Specifically, the researcher communicated with a Centro Hispano staff person to identify an individual who

could be a candidate for the role. Based on the study's research questions and the responsibilities of the community consultant, the researcher identified the following inclusion criteria for prospective consultants: Latine-identifying, caregiver of a student in middle school, first- or second-generation immigrant, and bilingual (Spanish and English). There were no specific criteria related to the consultant's background experience, as knowledge-related criteria could have excluded caregivers who were a part of the school community, and such exclusivity does not align with the values of community-engaged research. The community consultant was not enrolled as a participant in the research study. The selected community consultant identified as a Mexican mother of one child in middle school and children in elementary and middle school. She identified as a first-generation immigrant from a low-income household, and she primarily spoke Spanish. The consultant did not have previous experience in research-oriented roles.

The community consultant completed CIRTification, a human subject research training offered in English and Spanish. University of Wisconsin-Madison mandates human subjects training for all researchers and research affiliates working with participants. The community consultant engaged in a researcher-led overview of liberation psychology to better understand the theoretical framework for the study. Finally, before beginning the responsibilities of their role, the community consultant and researcher reviewed and signed a contract which outlined the roles and responsibilities of each party.

The responsibilities of the community consultant role included reviewing participant recruitment materials, brainstorming solutions to recruitment challenges, facilitating community buy-in, co-facilitating focus groups, and assisting with the integration of focus group themes. Participant-facing materials reviewed by the community consultant included (a) recruitment materials, (b) screening survey, (c) semi-structured interview protocol, and (d) follow-up focus

group protocol. The community consultant also provided feedback on recruitment strategies and helped brainstorm solutions for barriers that emerged during the recruitment process. In total, the community consultant contributed an estimated 20 hours to this research project. The hourly responsibilities are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Community Consultant Activities

Activity	Hourly Estimate
CIRTification Program	6 hours
Review of study materials	2 hours
Providing feedback on recruitment methods	3 hours
Meetings to plan focus group	4 hours
Co-facilitating focus groups	3 hours
Meeting to discuss member check feedback	2 hours
Estimated Total Hours	**20**

The community consultant received a stipend of $500 for their participation. Moving forward, the community consultant will be credited accordingly in publications resulting from the completion of the dissertation and will be listed as a co-author for all conference presentations resulting from this project.

Disagreements. All feedback from the community consultant was considered respectfully and with transparency. The researcher had planned to consult with the dissertation committee in the event of a disagreement between the researcher and the community consultant, though this was not necessary, as there were no disagreements between the researcher and the community consultant.

Mixed-Method Approach

Mixed-method approaches merge quantitative and qualitative approaches to draw conclusions based on the combined strengths of both types of data (Creswell, 2015). For the present study, the researcher used a convergent mixed methods research design. Convergent mixed-methods designs compare or validate quantitative and qualitative responses (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the present study, the primary source of data was the qualitative data. The quantitative data was used to anchor the qualitative findings regarding which family engagement practices Latine caregivers observed in their child's middle school.

Overview of the Present Study

In the present dissertation study, the researcher engaged Latine caregivers as changemakers for family engagement practices in their school community. The researcher collected data from Latine caregivers of middle school students via semi-structured interviews, a family engagement rating scale, and focus groups. A community consultant participated in a collaborative partnership in the research study to ensure that community perspectives and values were accurately represented throughout the research process. Overall, the study aimed to understand the experiences of Latine caregivers as recipients of their middle school's family engagement practices through the lens of liberation psychology. Middle schools were chosen as sites for the study, because the literature indicates that, although family engagement continue to be important through a child's school age years, family engagement practices diminish in quantity and quality starting in early elementary school (Davis & Lambie, 2005; Smith et al., 2019).

Participants

To answer Research Questions 1-3, the researcher recruited 13 Latine caregivers of middle school students to participate in the study. This number of participants was chosen to align with recommendations in the literature for reaching the point of saturation. Saturation in qualitative approaches occurs when interviews or focus groups no longer generate new themes (Hennik et al., 2017). Some researchers suggest that most themes can be discovered after five to six interviews (Francis et al., 2010; Morgan et al., 2002). Coenen et al. (2012) found that eight interviews were needed to reach saturation for deductive analysis and 13 interviews were needed to reach saturation for inductive analysis.

Participants each completed one individual interview to generate qualitative data that was used to answer research questions one through three. Then, participants attended one focus group session co-facilitated by the researcher and community consultant. The researcher and community consultant hosted two focus group sessions at Centro Hispano of Dane County and one session in a private space at a local library. Participants attended just one session that worked best with their availability, and they had the option to attend by Zoom. Six participants attended the first session at Centro Hispano, four participants attended the next session at Centro Hispano, and two participants attended the last session at a local public library. Out of the 13 participants, 12 completed a focus group. One participant withdrew from the study at the start of their elected focus group. The researcher attempted to contact this caregiver a minimum of three times using various methods (i.e., texts and phone calls) but was unsuccessful. This participant's interview responses and FES-2 survey data were included in the research study.

All participating caregivers self-identified as Latine (varying national origin, see Table 6 below) and had at least one child enrolled in a middle school in county in state within the Midwest region of the U.S. All participants spoke Spanish.

Table 7

Participant Demographics

Participant [a]	School Code [a]	Family Role	Language preference	National Origin
Lirio	Pino Verde	Mother	Spanish	Mexico
Dalia	Cedro Alto	Mother	Spanish	Mexico
Tulipán	Caoba Roja	Mother	Spanish	Mexico
Orquídea	Cedro Alto	Mother	Spanish	Mexico
Plumeria	Olmo Grande	Mother	Spanish	Venezuela
Rosa	Pino Verde	Mother	Spanish	Nicaragua
Girasol	Caoba Roja	Mother	Spanish	Mexico
Peonía	Cedro Alto	Mother	Spanish	Mexico
Amapola	Cedro Alto	Mother	Spanish	Mexico
Caléndula	Cedro Alto	Mother	Spanish	Venezuela
Violeta	Ahuehuete Viejo	Mother	English/Spanish	N/A [b]
Iris	Olmo Grande	Mother	Spanish	Mexico
Gardenia	Jacaranda Azul	Mother	Spanish	Colombia

[a] Pseudonym
[b] This participant elected not to disclose their national origin

Participating caregivers were welcomed to bring other caregivers in the household, such as a spouse, partner, or family member, though all completed the interview alone. All interviews and focus groups were conducted in Spanish.

Recruitment

The researcher recruited participants by posting physical flyers in public libraries and community centers within the county. After obtaining approval from one participating school district to conduct recruitment activities, the researcher communicated with the principals of four middle schools in the district with the highest percentages of Latine students (according to state data). Principals from two middle schools agreed to the recruitment activities, and school staff at

these sites distributed physical flyers to all sixth-grade students. Additionally, the researcher partnered with Centro Hispano of Dane County to distribute informational postcards to caregivers of middle school youth enrolled in Centro after-school programs. This collaborative effort resulted in the inclusion of participants from one additional school district.

The study's community consultant distributed physical flyers and photos of the flyers to caregivers in their network. Snowball sampling was also used in the research study. Snowball sampling is a method by which study participants recruit other participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). At the end of their interviews, participating caregivers were asked to share information about the study with other caregivers in their networks.

Setting

The study was conducted in one county in a Wisconsin. This setting was ideal for leveraging existing relationships between the University of Wisconsin-Madison School Psychology program, Centro Hispano, and two school districts in the county. Additionally, this setting was chosen to align with the mission of community-engaged research. A principle of community-engaged research is that the researcher cultivates a sustaining relationship with the community of interest before, during, and after the research project. In order to cultivate a sustaining and reciprocal relationship with the Latine caregivers of the community, participating middle schools, and Centro Hispano of Dane County, the researcher decided to situate the study in communities where they or partner entities had existing relationships.

Wisconsin is home to families with a wide range of ancestral origins. Table 7 depicts a comparison between the demographics of middle schools represented in the current study and averages from national demographic data of public-school students in the U.S. This table

represents a compilation of data retrieved from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2022) and the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), respectively.

Table 8

School Enrollment Demographics: Sample and National

Population	White	Black/African American	Latine	Asian	American Indigenous	ELL
General U.S. Population	47.9%	14.9%	26.7%	5%	1.1%	10.6%
Pino Verde	32.9%	24.2%	27.7%	6.7	0.5%	26.4%
Cedro Alto	40.1%	13%	35.8%	4.7%	0%	32.9%
Olmo Grande	26.3%	16.4%	40.9%	5.9%	0.2%	30.3%
Caoba Roja	12.1%	28.1%	49.6%	3.5%	0%	41.8%
Ahuehuete Viejo	66.7%	5.3%	8.7%	12.7%	0.3%	5.0%
Jacaranda Azul	61.8%	4.6%	11.2%	13.4%	0.3%	8.6%

The setting of the interviews differed according to participant needs. Participants could choose to partake in interviews virtually by Zoom, by phone, in person at Centro Hispano, or in the participant's home. Eight out of 13 interview participants completed their interview by phone, and four participants completed their interview on Zoom. One participant completed their interview in person at Centro Hispano. Table 8 details the format selected by each participant for their interview.

Table 9

Participation Format

Participant ID	Interview Format	Focus Group Format
Lirio	Phone	In Person (Group 1)
Dalia	Zoom	In Person (Group 1)
Tulipán	Phone	In Person (Group 1)
Orquídea	Phone	In Person (Group 2)
Plumeria	Zoom	In Person (Group 1)
Rosa	Phone	Zoom (Group 1)
Girasol	Phone	In Person (Group 3)
Peonía	Phone	N/A[a]
Amapola	Phone	In Person (Group 3)
Caléndula	In Person	In Person (Group 2)
Violeta	Zoom	In Person (Group 1)
Iris	Phone	Zoom (Group 2)
Gardenia	Zoom	In Person (Group 2)

[a] Participant withdrew from the study

Table 8 also identifies the format of participant attendance for focus group sessions. Participants were required to attend only one focus group session. Focus groups were offered in a hybrid format. Ten out of twelve participants elected to join a focus group session in person, where food and childcare was offered to make the focus group accessible to caregivers. Two joined by Zoom.

The risk to validity due to varying interview/focus group attendance formats was discussed with dissertation committee members. Although the variety in format for interview and focus group attendance posed a risk to the validity of results, this risk was outweighed by the benefit of increased access accessibility for participants during interviews and focus groups.

Measures

Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher developed the semi-structured interview protocol in accordance with guidelines from Kallio et al. (2016). The first step included identifying the prerequisites for using

semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are suitable for exploring participants' perceptions on complex and sensitive topics (Barriball & While, 1994). The aim of the present study was to explore caregivers' perceptions of their school's family engagement practices, which can be a complex and emotionally sensitive topic, given that schools have systematically excluded Latine caregivers in the past (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Semi-structured interviews are also appropriate when participants are not accustomed to discussing the topic (Åstedt-Kurki & Heikkinen, 1994). Oftentimes, caregivers are not accustomed to the solicitation of their feedback regarding school practices (Godfrey et al., 2023). The second phase included the retrieval and use of previous knowledge. The authors specified that extensive literature reviews serve to fulfill this second phase, and the researcher conducted an extensive literature review on the topic of family engagement practices in U.S. public schools in the previous chapter. The third phase of development was the creation of the preliminary semi-structure interview guide. The authors specified that a semi-structure interview guide should present two levels of questions: main themes and follow-up questions (Kallio et al., 2016). Main themes are directly related to the research questions and become more in-depth throughout the interview. Follow-up questions are utilized to make the main themes clearer for participants (Turner, 2014). Oftentimes, follow-up questions are spontaneous to allow for increased flexibility in the interview. A semi-structured interview protocol, provided in English and in Spanish, is available in Appendixes B and C. The document includes questions that are designed to be follow-up or probing questions. These probing questions were occasionally employed to further explore significant ideas or concerns related to the research questions. The penultimate phase of interview development was pilot testing the semi-structured interview guide. For this phase, the

researcher individually piloted the protocol. The community consultant separately provided feedback about the clarity, accessibility, and relevance of questions on the interview protocol.

To minimize researcher and instrumentation bias in the study and better understand bias and researcher influence, the researcher piloted the interview protocol by engaging in reflective practices that follow recommendations from Chenail (2011). Chenail's technique of "interviewing the investigator" is helpful in assessing researcher biases when the investigator has a connection with or is a member of the population of interest. In this technique, the interviewer plays the role of an interviewee. In the present project, the researcher completed this process by asking themselves the question and reflecting on their responses. As a result, the researcher was able to affirm that all protocol questions were open-ended and clear. One change the researcher made to the content was adding a brief contextualizing statement at the beginning of the interview questions to address the quantitative measure participants had completed prior to the interview. The purpose of this statement was to remind the participant of examples of family engagement practices used by schools prior to being asked about their perception of these practices.

Focus Groups

The researcher and community consultant co-facilitated focus groups using a semi-structured protocol developed in accordance with the previously described guidelines from Kallio et al. (2016). The community consultant was approved by the University of Wisconsin - Madison Institutional Review Board (IRB) to participate in this activity. The primary purpose of the focus group was to conduct member checks, wherein the primary investigator presented the final themes and theme definitions for feedback in focus groups comprised of participants who completed an interview. Participants had the opportunity to share their impressions of the

generated themes, provide feedback about their accuracy, and share additional thoughts. The questions and prompts developed for the focus groups were reviewed by the community consultant for feedback before use in interviews and focus groups. A focus group protocol was developed in English and Spanish, although only the Spanish one was used.

Family Engagement Survey - Version 2

The Family Engagement Survey–Version 2 (FES–2; Gaumer Erickson et al., 2022) is a tool used to survey caregiver's perspectives regarding their school's family engagement practices across the following domains: (a) welcoming environment (e.g., "School staff [principals, teachers, counselors, office staff] are welcoming to my family"); (b) effective communication (e.g., "I can easily find information about my child's progress [assessments, assignments, attendance]"); (c) supporting student learning (e.g., "School staff communicate with me in my preferred language using words that are easy to understand"); (d) sharing power and advocacy (e.g., "School staff consider me an important partner in making decisions that are in the best interest of my child"); and (e) community involvement (e.g., "The school helps families connect with needed community resources and supports"). The tool was created for the purpose of evaluating caregiver engagement in the school community, and it is available in 11 languages (including Spanish and English, the languages used in the present study). The survey is comprised of 20 Likert-type questions that rank level of agreement with each statement. The survey uses five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

During the development of the FES-2, developers tested the measure for reliability using Chronbach's coefficient alpha. The FES-2 was found to be reliable across 20 items with $\alpha = .973$ based on a sample of 4,159 K-12 caregiver responses. The developers also assessed the substantive validity by soliciting feedback on the FES-2 from Kansas school and district

administration, Kansas Technical Assistance and Support Network (TASN) providers, Kansas state leaders, and national leaders. These individuals unanimously agreed that the questions on the FES-2 would solicit information about the success of the five areas of family engagement. Thus, the measure has acceptable substantive validity. To assess structural validity, national experts in family engagement reviewed the FES-2 for acceptability. The FES-2 was found to be structurally valid. Finally, the developers specified that the FES-2 is a population measure intended for distribution to all caregivers in a school community. Because the measure is not intended for use as a sampling measure, the results from the survey's use in the present study are not generalizable outside of the participant group. This limitation aligns with the present study, as this research does not seek to make generalizable claims. In the present study, the results of this survey were used to contextualize participant perspectives regarding their school's use of family engagement practices.

The 20-item FES-2 was used to provide another measure of which family engagement practices a caregiver has noticed or experienced in their child's school. In the present study, this tool generated population means across the five domains of the survey, which were then compared to the qualitative data generated during the collection process. Overall, the FES-2 provided a broad view of existing family engagement practices at the schools of participants.

Procedure

Study Approval

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Institutional Review Board deemed the study exempt. This rating was maintained throughout each update provided to the IRB, following modifications to materials, funding, and procedures. The external research committee from a local school district also granted approval for recruitment in four district middle schools,

although final approval for recruitment activities rested with each school's principal. Participants from two middle schools in another district also participated through recruitment from Centro Hispano.

Consent

The researcher provided information about the study, risks, and benefits for participants on a consent form at the beginning of the screening and information survey. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions about study activities and other information on the consent form during an initial scheduling phone call with the researcher.

Screening and Information Survey

Prospective participants completed a screening survey administered on Qualtrics. The screening survey collected information about the caregiver's contact information; racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities; chosen interview and focus group format (in person, Zoom, or phone); preferred language for research activities; and the middle school community to which they pertain. A full list of the screening survey items is in Appendix A. Information from this survey was used to contact the caregiver for participation in a semi-structured interview. The researcher called participants to review the information on the consent form, answer questions about study activities, and schedule a time for the interview. The screening and information survey also included one short-response question to inform the interviewer of which topics they may want to emphasize or investigate more deeply.

The researcher screened survey respondents into the study if they met the following inclusion criteria: (a) Identify as Latine or have national origins in a Latin American country, (b) have a child who attends a middle school in the specified Midwest county, and (c) speak English or Spanish. Prospective participants who did not meet these criteria, did not provide sufficient

contact information, or did not respond to three or more contact attempts were not included as participants in the study.

Data Collection

Family Engagement Survey–Version 2. Prior to the interview, the researcher asked each caregiver to complete the FES-2. The survey was distributed via Qualtrics. Caregivers had access to the survey in their language of choice: English or Spanish. One participant completed the FES-2 in English, and 12 completed the survey in Spanish.

Semi-structured Interview. Interviews were conducted by phone, by Zoom, or in-person at Centro Hispano. Participants chose the format of their participation according to their availability and preference. Table 8 (above) lists the format of each interview. Offering a range of interview formats made the interview as accessible as possible for participants.

Focus Groups. The researcher and the community consultant co-facilitated focus group sessions. Focus groups were hosted in a hybrid format, and participants had the opportunity to attend in person or by Zoom. Out of three focus groups, two were hosted at Centro Hispano and one was hosted in a private room at the local public library branch. Each participant attended only one focus group. Given that the primary language of all participants was Spanish, the focus groups were hosted in Spanish.

Transcription. All in-person focus group sessions and interviews were recorded using a handheld device. For teleconference interviews, the Zoom recording feature was used to record audio. Audio recordings for phone interviews were obtained by conducting the call on speaker and recording the call with the handheld device. All audio recordings were uploaded to a Box folder and were only accessible by the researcher and the principal investigator.

All recordings were transcribed. Three and a half interviews were manually transcribed by the researcher. The transcription company CaptionSync was hired to transcribe all remaining interviews and focus group sessions. All transcripts were in Spanish. All transcripts were cross-checked with audio recordings to ensure accuracy prior to use in data analysis.

Participant Compensation. Participants were compensated for their participation in the study. For participation in the hour-long focus group, the researcher gave participants a $50 gift card. After participation in the focus group, caregivers received an additional $50 gift card. During the focus groups, the researcher offered food to participants. Free childcare was also available to all focus group participants to reduce barriers to attending the focus group.

Data Analysis

Mixed Methods Approach

The present study used a mixed methods approach to data analysis, wherein qualitative and quantitative data analyses were used to generate findings from data from interviews, focus groups, and the FES-2. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to generate a set of themes from the qualitative data (i.e., interview and focus group transcripts). The researcher used Microsoft Excel to general descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, median, range, standard deviation) from quantitative data.

Following recommendations from Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the researcher prepared a joint display table to bring together the qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher used a triangulation protocol developed by Farmer et al. (2006) to guide the mixed method analysis. The first step of this protocol was sorting the data. The researcher reviewed quantitative results from the FES-2 and qualitative themes from the interviews and focus groups separately, then used the eight qualitative domains developed during thematic as anchor points

for the analysis of convergence between the FES-2 results and the themes from focus groups and interviews. The researcher then completed convergence coding by comparing the quantitative and qualitative results to evaluate the extent of agreement, dissonance, silence, and expansion between the two sets of results. Agreement indicated that all themes and FES-2 item results in the domain conveyed similar information. Partial agreement indicated some similarities and some discrepancies between FES-2 item results and qualitative themes for that domain. Dissonance indicated contradictions between FES-2 item results and qualitative themes. Silence indicated that the results from one source of data were not discussed in the other data source. Expansion indicated that quantitative or qualitative findings provided additional details about the domain topic that were not captured by the other set of findings (Jordan & Garbacz, 2023). Finally, the researcher completed a convergence assessment by providing a narrative description of the convergence between the two threads of data.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

In the present study, the researcher utilized reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) to create themes from interview and focus group transcripts. RTA has been previously used across a diverse range of theoretical frameworks to analyze meaning-based patterns (i.e., themes) which are constructed by the researcher from interview transcripts, focus group transcripts, and other sources of qualitative data (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). This approach was appropriate for the present study, as it advantageously offered the researcher an analytic method amenable to both inductive and deductive analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2019). RTA is also compatible with critical qualitative research, as researchers are encouraged to identify the philosophical and theoretical assumptions informing their use of TA (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

During RTA, the researcher engages with the data throughout six phases of thematic analysis: (a) familiarization with the data set, (b) open-ended coding process, (c) initial theme generation, (d) development and review of prototype themes using the data, (e) identification and definition of final themes, and (f) final write-up. The following sections include descriptions of how each of the six phases was carried out in the dissertation study.

Phase I: Familiarization. The first phase of RTA is familiarization. This step is necessary for promoting deep engagement with the data (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). In the present study, the researcher completed familiarization by cross-checking transcripts with interview and focus group audio recordings. Throughout the cross-check process, the researcher maintained a digital document of familiarization notes detailing initial impressions, questions, and important points from each interview and focus group.

Phase II: Coding. The second phase of RTA, coding, is the process of interpreting and adding meaning to pieces of the text (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). Coding at this stage can be carried out using an inductive approach or a deductive approach. Bingham & Witkowsky (2022) describe deductive data analysis as a "top-down" method of data analysis which applies a theory to the data. Conversely, the authors define inductive data analysis as an emergent, "bottom up" strategy. Inductive data analysis is often used to make meaning from the data by generating codes and themes. The present study used a primarily inductive coding approach, wherein each code reflected the thoughts, ideas, and reflections of the participant speaking. The inductive coding approach was advantageous to the purpose of this study, as it preserved the original statements as much as possible, therefore centering participant voice.

To code, the researcher assigned short phrases to larger pieces of text to capture the important elements of the data (Braun & Clark, 2012). Following recommendations from Terry

and Hayfield (2021), the researcher engaged in "fine-grained coding" by working with smaller segments of text (i.e., one to two sentences at a time, dependent on content) and coding all relevant elements of the transcript. As the codes accumulated, the researcher applied existing codes to other excerpts within and across transcripts. The researcher used Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software, to complete the coding process. Overall, the coding phase of data analysis was dedicated to breaking the data into smaller, meaningful pieces to facilitate further theming and analysis. The coding process resulted in 568 codes across 13 interview transcripts, and 109 codes across three focus group transcripts.

Phase III: Initial Theme Generation. The third phase of RTA is the initial generation of themes (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). In this phase, the researcher identifies meaningful patterns across all transcripts using their codes. For these detected patterns, the researcher assigns themes which are grounded in the data and relate to the observed patterns. Terry and Hayfield (2021) describe two approaches for organizing themes: clustering and promotion. In clustering, the researcher groups codes from phase two according to similarity, and each code holds equal weight in representing a larger story about an aspect of the data. In promotion, the researcher selects one code for promotion from code to theme. Oftentimes, these promoted codes are codes that were repeated in phase two and capture a central organizing concept in the data. Regardless of the approach utilized, Terry and Hayfield (2021) emphasize that the researcher can reorganize and reform themes at any point in the process of initial theme generation.

In the present study, the researcher used a clustering approach to initial theme development. To create initial themes, the researcher printed all the codes and excerpts. The researcher cut each code and accompanying excerpts from the piece of paper to create smaller slips of paper, and they physically arranged these slips on a large, flat surface. While organizing

each slip of paper, the researcher reviewed the theme name and excerpts and made any changes they deemed necessary to the clarity and organization of the codes, such as merging similar codes and changing code titles to better represent excerpts. When the researcher recognized a central idea (i.e., initial theme) among several codes, this initial theme title was documented on a sticky note, and this note was placed at the top of the list of codes and excerpts. During the process of initial theme generation, the researcher used an inductive-deductive approach to organize codes and create themes using a liberation psychology lens. Because RTA allows for inductive and deductive approaches to be integrated on a spectrum, rather than making them mutually exclusive, it was appropriate to use a blend of both approaches to theme generation even after generating codes inductively (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Using the theoretical lens of liberation psychology in initial theme creation was essential to the study's goal of exploring perceptions of family engagement practices from a liberation psychology standpoint. Concurrently, the inductive elements of the approach to theme generation allowed participant voice to continue to be centered throughout the analysis.

Phase IV: Developing and Reviewing Themes. The fourth phase of thematic analysis described by Terry and Hayfield (2021) focuses on developing and reviewing themes. During this phase, the researcher reconnected initial themes to the collected data and wider data set to confirm that the story represented by prototype themes accurately represented the interview and focus group transcripts. To complete this step, the researcher referenced familiarization notes, codes, and excerpts from data (from phase two) while reviewing the prototype themes organized as clusters of paper slips on a large, flat surface. Where necessary, the author re-organized codes to emphasize new themes. During this stage, the researcher also created subthemes where appropriate, as evidenced by numerous codes emphasizing a distinct aspect of the protype theme.

Additionally, the researcher evaluated the quality of their prototype themes and subthemes using the following reflection prompts drawn from Braun and Clarke (2012):

- Is this more than just a code? Is it a theme that multiple codes are able to cluster around its central organizing concept?
- What does this prototype tell us about the data set and our research question?
- What does this prototype theme include and exclude? What are its boundaries? Are those boundaries permeable (is there overlap with other themes)?
- How much data are there to support this prototype? Would too much need to be made of too little? Are there good exemplars of data evident that could be used?
- How broad is the theme? Does it contain a strong central organizing concept, or are the data too diverse, suggesting it is a domain summary rather than a theme? (p. 56)

After reviewing the reflection questions in conjunction with the protype themes and subthemes, codes, and transcript excerpts, the researcher continued to re-arrange codes and prototype themes until all codes were categorized into a theme or subtheme with a central organizing concept.

Phase V: Naming and Defining Themes. The final phase of RTA was the creation of theme definitions and names. Theme definitions are descriptive explanations of the theme's central organizing concepts. The purpose of defining themes is threefold: First, theme definitions further refine the theme by pushing the researcher to engage with the organizing concept of each theme. Additionally, defining themes serves as a quality check to ensure that all themes are

multifaceted, complex, and concise. Finally, the process of defining themes clarifies the relational shape of the themes as well as the overall story told by their relationships. Using the prototype themes on the sticky notes (heading the paper slips of codes and excerpts), the researcher noted prospective theme titles on a table within a Microsoft Word document. After adding each title, the researcher reviewed the codes and corresponding excerpts to (a) create a concise, multifaceted theme definition and (b) identify exemplary excerpts to include in the Word document as examples. At the end of this process, the researcher created one table comprised of 22 themes and 11 subthemes, with definitions and exemplars for each one. To increase the organization of so many themes and subthemes, the researcher also developed seven domains, defined as groups of distinct yet interrelated themes which capture a broader trend in the data (Terry & Hayfield, 2015).

Descriptive Statistics

The researcher used descriptive statistics to examine scores from the FES-2. The researcher calculated the mean, median, range, and standard deviation across the FES-2 responses that each of 13 participants completed prior to their individual interview. Each participant completed the FES-2 only one time. Using Microsoft Excel, the researcher calculated descriptive statistics for the group across the five domains of the FES-2: (a) welcoming environment, (b) supporting student learning, (c) effective communication, (d) sharing power and advocacy, and (e) community involvement. Additionally, the researcher calculated mean, median, and range reported by participants on the FES-2 for each school.

Credibility Measures

Brantlinger et al. (2005) identify a number of strategies that qualitative researchers often use to establish their studies as rigorous and credible. The present study incorporated several

credibility measures, namely data triangulation, researcher reflexivity, external audits, and member checks.

Triangulation. The researcher utilized two triangulation techniques in this project. Methodological triangulation is the use of multiple data collection techniques, and data triangulation describes the use of more than one data source during analysis (Denzin, 1978, as cited in Farmer et al., 2006). In the present study, the researcher engaged in methodological triangulation by collecting varied sources of data, namely interview transcripts, focus group transcripts, and FES-2 data. Data triangulation was informed by the triangulation protocol developed by Farmer and colleagues (2006).

Researcher Reflexivity. Researcher reflexivity is emphasized as a part of the RTA process. RTA is underscored by the understanding that themes are created in the context of the interaction between data and the researcher; recognition of the researcher's active role in identifying patterns/themes is an essential aspect of this approach to qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, it was crucial that the researcher be transparent and reflective regarding the impact of their personal and social positioning on their interpretation of the data. In fact, Braun & Clarke (2021) posit that disclosure of researcher positionality is a necessary indicator of quality reflexive thematic analysis.

Throughout this project, my role as a researcher was informed by my positionality. My identity as a second-generation Mexican immigrant helps me be attentive to the ways that Latine cultural values (e.g., familialismo, respeto, educación) play a role in family engagement practices. However, I recognize that, being from the West Coast, my understanding of the Latine experience in Midwest schools and communities is comparatively limited. Additionally, many Latine participants in the present study had ancestral roots in Latin American countries other

than Mexico. This prompted me to reflect on the dominance of the Mexican nationality within the conversations about Latinidad in the United States, and I reflected on how this power dynamic impacted my understanding of participant experiences during and after interviews and focus groups. Moving forward, my linguistic identity as a bilingual (English and Spanish) speaker will allow me to connect with caregivers who primarily speak Spanish without the need for an interpreter. Using interpreters can make conversations flow unnaturally and oftentimes increase the amount of time needed for a conversation. Throughout the interviews and focus groups with participants, all of which were in Spanish, I reflected upon the strength of bilingualism and how it allowed me to connect with caregivers who have historically been excluded from research populations. At the same time, I reflected upon the linguistic hegemony of English in academia and research, which will continue to limit which caregivers share their voice in research until the oppressive force of linguistic hegemony has been challenged and dismantled. Moreover, as an academic researcher, I recognize that I was an outsider to the communities of caregivers who participated in this research group. I am thankful to my community consultant for guiding me in building connections with participants and for helping me to understand how to reach more families. Finally, I used familiarization notes as a tool for reflective practice. These familiarization notes, created during the first phase of reflective thematic analysis, served the purpose of creating space for written reflection about my initial reactions to focus group. Within these reflections, I interwove discussions of my positionality and how it impacted my reactions. During focus group sessions, a section of the introduction was dedicated to explaining my positionality, its role in data analysis, and how this relates to the need for a member check process (described in the following section).

Hay's ADDRESSING Model (1996) was used to guide a conversation about positionality in the current research project with the community consultant. The community consultant and I shared several important identities, such as Latine/Mexican ancestry, low socioeconomic status, and gender identity. However, key differences highlighted why it was necessary to work alongside a community consultant to mitigate bias. Although my nationality is American and I am a second-generation immigrant, the community consultant was a first-generation immigrant. The community consultant's social identity and lived experience were more similar to the study sample than my own. Additionally, the community consultant was a caregiver to several children, one of which was in middle school. The identity of being a mother was one that the consultant shared with participants, although I did not share this identity.

Member Checks. Member checks were implemented in the present study during the focus groups with interview participants. During focus groups, participants and the researcher discussed positionality; reviewed initial themes created by the researcher from interview transcripts; and identified congruencies, inaccuracies, or missing elements in the themes. The researcher then completed the reflexive thematic analysis process using the focus group transcripts as the data source. Once the researcher created themes for the focus group, they followed recommendations by Kornbluh (2015) to compare focus group themes to interview themes using a matrix (see Appendix G). Comprised of three columns, the matrix displayed the interview themes and subthemes in the first column, focus group themes in the second column, and reflections in the third column. The researcher reflected on differences and similarities between interview and focus group themes and subthemes discussed. These reflections also indicated changes to the themes/subthemes that the researcher believed would be appropriate. The researcher and the community consultant reviewed the matrix and the consultant's notes

from the focus group sessions. Together, the researcher and consultant finalized the matrix to converge the interview and focus group themes into one set of final themes. Key improvements included clarifying theme titles, reducing theme overlap, and adding themes and subthemes to identify prominent ideas in the qualitative analysis. Specific changes and rationale are detailed in the matrix document (see Appendix G). The finalized themes, subthemes, and definitions were listed together on a Microsoft Word document.

External Audit. Two individuals with expertise in qualitative analysis and liberatory practices conducted external audits during two instances by applying quality assurance standards published by Braun and Clarke (2021), who originated the RTA method. The first audit was conducted after themes were developed (before member check feedback was implemented), and the final audit was conducted after the first draft of the manuscript was completed. For the external audit process, both auditors referenced the twenty questions developed by Braun and Clark to evaluate the quality and rigor of the use of reflexive thematic analysis in the present study. Prior to the audit, the researcher and auditors met to discuss the project, the qualitative analysis approach, and positionality in relation to participants.

Discussions of positionality were centered around Hays' ADDRESSING model (1996). This model was selected as the reflexivity took due to the researcher's previous experience with using this measure for other research projects. One auditor identified as a Latina woman in her mid-20s who was born in the United States to a working-class family. She did not have children in the public school system. Another auditor identified as a White woman in her late 20s who was born in the United States to a working class/lower middle-class family. She did not have children in the public school system. In addition to discussing social identities, the research team discussed how key social identities impacted their engagement and understanding of the codes

and themes. The research team also engaged in written reflection and group dialogue about power dynamics present in this research.

The auditors audited the research by independently reviewing the themes and dissertation manuscript. Each auditor provided responses in a Word document to reflection questions created by Braun and Clarke (2021) for the purpose of quality assurance in RTA. Auditors responded independently, submitted their feedback to the researcher, then met together with the researcher to review feedback, clarify terms and ideas, and resolve disagreements. Key areas for improvement addressed by auditors included theme overlap and confusing theme groupings. This feedback resulted in some themes being merged or erased to clarify the qualitative results and themes. These changes were incorporated during the matrix activity described in the previous section.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter includes the results of the present study. To reflect a convergent mixed-method design, quantitative and qualitative results are presented separately and are then integrated in three joint display tables aligned with each research question.

Family Engagement Survey–Version 2 (FES-2)

Each participant received the FES-2 prior to their participation in individual interviews. Although most participants completed the survey prior to their interview, one participant completed the survey after the interview, and two participants completed the survey during the interview appointment. In total, 13 survey responses were received. Table 9 displays the mean, median, range, and standard deviation across all five domains of the survey: (a) Welcoming Environment, (b) Effective Communication, (c) Support Student Learning, (d) Sharing Power & Advocacy, and (e) Community Involvement.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics from the FES-2 survey

Survey Domain	Mean	Median	Range	Standard Deviation
Welcoming Environment	3.50	4	1-5	1.16316
Effective Communication	3.46	4	1-5	1.14669257
Support Student Learning	3.29	4	1-5	1.11882291
Sharing Power & Advocacy	3.69	4	1-5	1.05790139
Community Involvement	3.69	4	1-5	1.07981105

Overall, the mean value across all scales (i.e., Welcoming Environment, Effective Communication, Support Student Learning, Sharing Power & Advocacy, and Community Involvement) fell within the 3.29 to 3.69 range. A rating of three on the FES-2 indicates a

response of "neutral," and a rating of four indicates the response "agree." Thus, mean ratings across the five domain areas indicate that participants noticed some family engagement practices at their child's middle school while also noting that other practices were not being engaged or implemented. The median value across the five domain areas was four, indicating a response of "agree." In isolation, these values would indicate that middle schools of participants in this study successfully implement many practices to promote family engagement practices across those scale areas. However, the range value of 4 for each of the five domains indicates that there were large discrepancies between survey responses. Across each of the domains, some participants indicated a rating of 1 ("Strongly Disagree") for an item, and others rated the same item as a 5 ("Strongly Agree"). Due to the large amount of variability between the survey responses, the data set is disaggregated by school site in Table 10 and Table 11.

Table 11

Descriptive statistics from the FES-2 survey (Pino Verde, Cedro Alto, Caoba Roja)

School	Pino Verde [a]			Cedro Alto [b]			Caoba Roja [c]		
Survey Domain	Mean	Median	Range	Mean	Median	Range	Mean	Median	Range
Welcoming Environment	4.25	4	1-4	3.85	4	1-5	3.25	4	4-5
Effective Communication	4.2	4	1-4	3.76	4	1-5	3.3	4	3-5
Support Student Learning	3.75	4	1-5	3.45	3	1-5	3.57	4	3-4
Sharing Power & Advocacy	3.5	3.5	1-5	3.95	4	2-5	3.375	4	4-4
Community Involvement	4	4	1-3	4.27	4	3-5	3.83	4	3-4

[a] $n = 2$. [b] $n = 5$. [c] $n = 2$.

From the survey responses of the two participants from Pino Verde Middle School, the mean scores across the five domains of the FES-2 for this school fell between the range of 3.5 to 4.25. The lowest domain mean endorsed by participants from Pino Verde Middle School was 3.5

for Sharing Power & Advocacy, which fell between a rating of 3 (“Neutral”) and 4 (“Agree”). The highest domain mean endorsed by participants from Pino Verde Middle School was 4.25 for Welcoming Environment, which fell between a rating of 4 (“Agree”) and 5 (“Strongly Agree”). The lowest median value was a 3.5 for Sharing Power and Advocacy, which aligns with the mean value obtained for the same domain. All other domains had median values of 4. The range for each domain of the FES-2 indicate that variability between survey item ratings within and across responses of the two Pino Verde participants.

From the survey responses of five participants from Cedro Alto Middle School, the mean scores across all domains of the FES-2 for Cedro Alto Middle School fell between the range of 3.45 to 4.27. The lowest domain mean endorsed by participants from Cedro Alto Middle School was 3.45 for Support Student Learning. The highest domain mean endorsed by participants from Pino Verde Middle School was 4.27 for Community Involvement, which fell between a rating of 4 (“Agree”) and 5 (“Strongly Agree”). The lowest median value was a 3 for Support Student Learning, which is congruent with the mean value for this domain also being the lowest. All other domains had median values of 4. The range values fell between 2 and 4, suggesting that there was some variability between the responses from the five Cedro Alto participants.

The mean score across the five domains of the FES-2 for Caoba Roja Middle School fell between the range of 3.25 to 3.83. The lowest domain mean endorsed by participants from Caoba Roja Middle School was 3.25 for Welcoming Environment. The highest domain mean endorsed by participants from Caoba Roja Middle School was 3.83 for Community Involvement. All domain median values were a 4. Most range values fell between 0 and 1, although the Effective Communication domain had the highest range value of 2. This indicates that the Effective Communication domain had the highest variability between the two Caoba Roja participants.

Table 12

Descriptive statistics from the FES-2 survey (Olmo Grande, Ahuehuete Viejo, Jacaranda Azul)

School	Olmo Grande [a]			Ahuehuete Viejo [b]			Jacaranda Azul [c]		
Survey Domain	Mean	Median	Range	Mean	Median	Range	Mean	Median	Range
Welcoming Environment	4.13	4	1-4	4.25	3	2-3	4.25	4	4-5
Effective Communication	3.9	4	2-4	2.6	3	2-3	4.2	4	4-5
Support Student Learning	3.75	4	2-4	2.25	2	2-3	3.75	4	3-4
Sharing Power & Advocacy	4	4	2-5	2.5	2.5	2-3	3.5	3.5	3-4
Community Involvement	3.67	4	4-4	3.67	4	2-5	4	4	4-4

[a] $n = 2$. [b] $n = 1$. [c] $n = 1$.

The mean score across the five domains of the FES-2 for Olmo Grande Middle School fell between the range of 3.67 to 4.13. The lowest domain mean endorsed by participants from Olmo Grande Middle School was 3.67 for Community Involvement. The highest domain mean endorsed by participants from Olmo Grande Middle School was 4.13 for Welcoming Environment. All domain median values were a 4. The Welcoming Environment and Sharing Power and Advocacy domains had the highest range value of 3. This indicates that the Welcoming Environment domain had the highest variability between the two Olmo Grande participants.

The mean score across the five domains of the FES-2 for Ahuehuete Viejo Middle School fell between the range of 2.25 to 4.25. The lowest domain mean endorsed by the one participant from Ahuehuete Viejo Middle School was 2.25 for Support Student Learning. The highest domain mean endorsed by participants from Ahuehuete Viejo Middle School was 4.25 for Welcoming Environment. The lowest median value was a 2 for Support Student Learning, which is congruent with the mean value for this domain also being the lowest. The highest median

value was a 4 for Community Involvement. Most range values were a 1, indicating little variability within the participant's responses for each domain. The largest range was 2-5 for the Community Involvement domain, suggesting that the school uses few school-family-community collaboration practices.

Finally, the mean scores across the five domains of the FES-2 for Jacaranda Azul Middle School fell within the range of 3.5 to 4.25. The lowest domain mean endorsed by the one participant from Jacaranda Azul Middle School was 3.5 for Sharing Power & Advocacy. The highest domain mean endorsed by participants from Pino Verde Middle School was 4.25 for Welcoming Environment. The lowest median value was a 3.5 for Sharing Power & Advocacy, which is congruent with the mean value for this domain also being the lowest. All other domains had median values of 4. The range values fell between 0 and 1, suggesting low variability between the item responses within each domain.

Qualitative Analysis Themes

Using reflexive thematic analysis, the researcher used qualitative data from 13 interviews and three focus group sessions created eight domains and 22 themes. In addition, the researcher created 11 subthemes which are comprised of codes complementary to the corresponding theme. A need for a subtheme was identified when the researcher identified a group of codes related closely to a theme and did not directly align with the theme definition. The purpose of including subthemes in addition to themes was to highlight important aspects of the qualitative data. All domains, themes, and subthemes were crafted from the inductively analyzed codes using a liberation psychology lens. Table 12 includes the domains and their corresponding themes and subthemes. Please see Appendix H for a full table providing each domain, theme definition, subtheme definition, and exemplar quotations.

Table 13

Domains, Themes, and Subthemes from interviews and focus groups

Domain	**Themes** and *Subtheme*

1. Belonging in the School Community	a. **Spanish in the schools helps connect with and navigate the school**
	  a. *Interpretation does not always help understanding*
	b. **Accessibility versus belonging**
	c. **Increasing efforts to represent Latine voice and vote**
	  a. *Insecurity about complaining about or questioning the school*
	d. **Caregivers supporting the school**
	  a. *Internalized self-blame*
	e. **Attitude of inclusion for nondominant cultures and social classes**

2. Communication to inform, support, and empower	a. **Universal messages/communications**
	b. **Communication with the school is inconsistent**
	c. **Knowledge empowers**
	  a. *Selective translation limits access to information for Spanish-speaking families*
	  b. *Technology can exclude some families*
	d. **Acompañamiento**
	e. **Caregivers and teachers are a team**

3. Networks of Support	a. **Network of support between Latine caregivers** b. **School and community offer resources to families**
4. Concientización	a. **Critical action** b. **Political agency** c. **Critical reflection**
5. Social Structures Reproduced in School Context	a. **Social structures are reproduced in who gets to be in decision-making spaces in the school community** b. **Removing barriers to participation without fixing the system**

6. Building Community	a. **Building connections in the school community**
	b. **Events at school**
	  a. *Purposeful, engaging events*
	  b. *Cultural* events
	  c. *Informative events*
	  d. *Perseverance when inviting families*
	  e. *More personal invitations to events*

7. Previous Experiences with School	a. **Previous negative interaction with staff that broke trust**
8. Systems-level issues	a. **Communication between school and community organization staff** a. *The family liaison role needs more clarity amongst staff* b. **School is chaotic/unpredictable**

Domain 1: Belonging in the School Community

The first domain captures participants' reflections on their belonging as a family and as a minoritized community in their school communities. It is comprised of the following themes (and subthemes): Spanish in the schools helps connect with and navigate the school (subtheme: *Interpretation does not always help understanding*); accessibility versus belonging; increasing efforts to represent Latine voice and vote (subtheme: *Insecurity about complaining about or questioning the school*); caregivers supporting the school (subtheme: *Internalized self-blame)*; attitude of inclusion for nondominant cultures and social classes.

During interviews and focus groups, many participants identified school practices that facilitated a sense of connection and belonging in the school community. For example, caregivers shared that the availability of interpretive services in the office when they visit the school made them feel welcomed and that interpretive services at caregiver meetings relieved worries that they would not understand others at school events. Additionally, participants identified how they have supported the school previously, be it in a volunteer role or by helping the school connect with other Latine families. Many caregivers expressed a desire to help the school more. For example, Lirio sharing the following during her interview:

> They think that it's going to be a burden for the parent, or perhaps that they are bothering the parent if they ask for collaboration. I would like to be involved in whatever collaboration, whatever need that the school may have.

Many participants identified an attitude of inclusion for nondominant cultures and social classes as a facilitator for their sense of belonging in the school community. Caléndula described feeling included and welcomed by the caring interactions with front office staff, stating, "The times they have contacted me, they have been very kind, and depending on what needs to be

discussed, they have always been respectful." On the other hand, Violeta highlighted how the absence of this inclusionary attitude was detrimental to her connection with the school:

> That day, I had seen other moms from other social classes and of another race who were, like, looking at me strangely... And I say to myself, 'Why are they looking at me?' I mean, my kids go to this school, they are part of this community, and still, we don't have that connection with these moms that makes you feel like... I can't say."

Within this domain, themes also included elements of family engagement practices that have been less successful in facilitating to their engagement with the school community. Although one theme identified Spanish interpretation as a facilitator to Latine family engagement at their child's middle school, caregivers also identified several issues with interpretation, including broken audio devices, low quality interpretive services, and interpreters using uncommon words/phrases. Moreover, many caregivers expressed that interpretation alone did not provide the same access to the school community that English-speaking caregivers do. For example, Girasol stated, "Perhaps I am understanding what the translator is saying, but it's not the same, because I don't really know how the – how exactly the person is expressing it." Iris described the power of bilingual or Spanish-speaking spaces in facilitating full participation in the school community, saying, "A lot of the time, I understand part of it but not – like… it's not clear to me what it's all about, even though I have a translator. For me, it would be better, like, in my own language." Additionally, Latine caregivers expressed guilt or self-blame for not being more involved in the school community, despite the impact of other factors (e.g., conflicting work hours, power dynamics) on their participation. In the following quote, Orquídea blames herself for not speaking up, despite the presence of racial power dynamics in school decision making spaces, "They [the white majority] make decisions – decisions that we may not like, but

why didn't they take us into account? Because I didn't raise my voice." Some caregivers described unawareness or hesitation with questioning or raising complaints at their child's school. For example, Violeta shared, "I tell you, sometimes parents feel embarrassed [to question the school]. Or they respect the education system a lot, too. Like they trust in what they are doing."

Finally, some caregivers identified ways that their school seeks and considers the opinions of the Latine community, though others shared that their school leadership do not solicit the opinions of the Latine community. In light of the varying approaches to the solicitation of Latine voices in decision making, some participants offered suggestions for how the school could better include Latine caregivers in decision-making. These ideas included sending an asynchronous survey to solicit input in decision-making processes, sending meeting notes for caregivers who cannot attend caregiver meetings, and having "voceros" or representatives to share information from meetings with Latine caregivers who were not able to attend.

Domain 2: Communication to Inform, Support, and Empower

The second domain captures participants' themes about how communication with the school has impacted on their belonging as a family. It is comprised of the following themes (and subthemes): Universal messages/communications; Communication with the school is inconsistent; Knowledge empowers (subthemes: *Schools limit access to information for Spanish-speaking; technology can exclude some families*), Acompañamiento; and Caregivers and teachers are a team.

During the interviews and focus groups, participants noted that their school frequently sent universal communications about events at the school, changes to school policy and procedure, or other general information. Participants identified various methods of distributing

information (e.g., email, flyer, text). Many caregivers shared that communications from the school increased their awareness of the school system and its procedures, which facilitated their engagement with the family engagement opportunities available. Additionally, caregivers described acompañamiento (the sense that someone is walking the journey alongside them) as an important facilitator for their engagement in the schools, as caregivers described being more responsive to personalized communications or solicitations of input for decision-making regarding their child's education. Finally, parents and teachers described appreciation for the school team consulting the family for decisions regarding their child's education, supporting the family's goals for their student, or maintaining a collaborative relationship with the caregiver. As Caléndula stated in her interview, "They [school staff] have called me to see what they can do to make the girl feel better in certain circumstances… that's why I see that they are collaborators with me and with my family situation."

Because themes are constructed to multifaceted around one unifying concept, the theme "Knowledge Empowers" also contained codes which described unfamiliarity with the school system as a barrier to feeling empowered to participate in the school community. Caléndula shared, "I believe that, for me at this moment, it is fundamental and very important to be sufficiently informed and oriented for what will come ahead." Additionally, one related subtheme revealed that some schools don't provide equitable access to information for Spanish-speaking families. As Violeta reported, "It depends on what news they are sending or whom or what they want to include. I think that they [school staff] are very selective in how it is put in Spanish." A second subtheme revealed how the use of technology (e.g., email, online portals) excludes Latine caregivers who have had limited experience with technology. Girasol shared her frustration during her focus group, "When people from our counties, who have never had contact

with technology, arrive… How does one ensure that parents who don't have the [technological] capacity receive this information? How do we integrate them?" Finally, participants indicated that their interactions with the school are not consistent or that the school does not answer all messages from caregivers. In fact, some caregivers stated that their communications with the school were minimal, with Rosa sharing, "Here at the middle school, we only talk when there are conferences."

Finally, some aspects of themes suggested desired changes in the middle school community relative to communication with Latine families. First, many participants stated a preference for paper communications (flyers), as Iris exemplified in stating, "In truth – I am speaking sincerely – I like it [communication from the school] more by paper… sometimes, my phone gets saturated with emails." Additionally, codes within the theme of "Communication with the school is inconsistent" indicated a need for consistent or frequent communication from the school about changes to school policy and procedure.

Domain 3: Networks of Support

The third domain captures participants' themes about how a network of support between families, the school, and community organizations support caregivers' engagement with their child's middle. It is comprised of the following themes and subthemes: Network of support between Latine caregivers and School and community offer resources to families. Both of these themes are facilitators for participant engagement in their child's middle school.

Many participants shared their appreciation for a supportive network of Latine caregivers with children at the same middle school. Participants described that these networks were a source of information about school news and support when navigating unknown experiences (e.g.,

seeking help for their struggling student). Gardenia highlighted how she was able to share her knowledge with recently arrived families:

> Of the families that I know who recently arrived or who will be arriving soon to this state, communicating to them exactly that… what the education system is like, what you should [do], or what benefits it could have, or how to manage from going to the district, selecting a school, transport, food, and the rest.

On the other hand, Lirio described how she sought help from other caregivers in lieu of school staff, stating, "If I have a concern or a question, or if I never understood something, I try to ask other parents who have older children and who have already gone to school there." During focus group sessions, participants took the time to share information about resources and family programs in the school with one another, thus exemplifying the interchange of knowledge that was a key aspect of the theme "Network of support between Latine caregivers."

During interviews and focus groups, participants also shared their appreciation for the resources offered by the school and by community organizations partnering with the school. This included material resources (e.g., school supplies, clothes, food), programming resources (i.e., student programming for their middle school student), and informational resources (e.g., mental health supports, housing information). Additionally, participants described how their child's middle school partnered with community organizations to amplify their ability to offer resources to families in the school community. For example, Lirio shared, "Or then they would say, 'Oh, I heard that Centro Hispano helps those people.' They would find the information for us."

Domain 4: Concientización

The fourth domain is comprised of themes aligned with Freire's (2000) scholarship on concientización (critical consciousness). Watts et al. (2011) describes three interrelated parts of

critical consciousness: Critical reflection, political agency, and critical reflection. All three components were the titles of the deductively constructed themes within this domain.

The first theme, critical action, was highlighted in participant testimony of the changes they or other Latine caregivers led their school communities. In the following excerpt, Violeta spoke of her experience organizing other Latine caregivers to advocate for change: “I feel like that time that I brought those moms was powerful… calling them from my personal cell phone and saying, ‘you know what, Mrs…’ Or seeing them at the bus stop and asking, ‘what do you think?’” Participants also described political agency, their belief that they and other Latine caregivers have the potential to be change-makers in their communities. Dalia described her change-making potential when working together with other caregivers:

> It would be when we have a relationship or communication with the community. It’s when you can say, ‘Okay, we could do this, I could talk with them [community], and we could agree on something.’ … it would have to be in a group.

On the other hand, some participants shared that they did not yet feel empowered to see themselves as change-makers due to lack of familiarity with the school community. Plumeria exemplifies this in stating, “At the school where [my daughter] goes, I currently feel… like I’m in diapers, because I feel, well, new there. I think that [feeling empowered to make changes] hasn’t happened yet.” Finally, participants demonstrated disparate degrees of critical reflection. Some participants described their awareness of injustice and inequality in their school communities. For example, Violeta shared, "I see that if a parent of another race complains, they quickly listen to them." On the other hand, Caléndula discounted the role of systemic inequalities and caregiver presence at school, stating, "So I think the barriers (to being at the school), I think they couldn't be systemic or related to inequality."

Domain 5: Social Structures Reproduced in School Context

The fifth domain captures participants' themes regarding the reproduction of inequitable social systems in the school community's decision-making spaces. It is comprised of two themes: Social structures are reproduced in who gets to be in decision-making spaces in the school community; Removing barriers to participation without fixing the system.

First, many participants described how inequities in broader society manifested in caregiver attendance caregivers in decision-making spaces within the school community, such as Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. Many participants identified that their experiences at the intersection of racial identity, linguistic identity, citizenship status, and socio-economic status limited their ability to be fully engaged in their middle school community. Plumeria described her observations:

> At the end of the month, there are bills to pay. Perhaps someone who doesn't have to work a second job, who is set with what they earn in a job with an 8-hour shift to cover their necessities and those of their family, well perhaps they have more time and can attend these kinds of meetings. I'm sure it is very nice in the sense that one can take advantage of what comes out of these reunions, of these reunions.

Violeta identified the implications of systemic barriers to participation in the school community, stating, "In the end, this decision was made by all the white people with money and power, where their children benefited."

Furthermore, many participants identified actions taken by the school or by caregivers themselves to bypass barriers to participation related to socioeconomic status, immigration identity, race/ethnicity or other marginalized identities. Common barriers cited included work, lack of childcare, and conflicting events at multiple school sites. However, these efforts to boost

participation bypassed the barriers rather than addressing the root cause of the problem (oppression based on one or more social identities). For example, Rosa shared, “If they have any reunions, sometimes they do them via Zoom or in person, whatever is easiest for you." This quote exemplifies how the school helps caregivers get around the barrier of demanding work hours, even though the system continues to privilege caregivers with more flexible work hours. Violeta shared, “I do think that sometimes it’s… saying, ‘we can be here, because we come from a worse place.’” In this quotation, Violeta highlighted how caregivers hesitate to ask the school for change or for assistance, because they believe that they can overcome the barrier themselves and therefore should.

Domain 6: Building Community

The sixth domain is comprised of themes describing how participants have built connections with school staff and other families in their school community. It is comprised of the following themes (and subthemes): Building connections in the school community; Events at school (subthemes: *Purposeful, engaging events; Cultural events; Informative events; Perseverance when inviting families; More personal invitations to events*).

During interviews and focus groups, some participants shared that they felt like they are a part of their child’s school community, which facilitated further engagement with the school. Participants also described engaging in activities that helped them feel connected to school staff and other families. Namely, participants stated that events hosted by the school were a space to get to know school staff and other caregivers of middle school students. Participants described previous events that were informative (e.g., an event to discuss the middle to high school transition) as well as cultural events for building community.

When discussing unhelpful family engagement practices, some participants shared that they felt less motivated by school events that appeared unengaging or purposeless. Dalia described her observations in the following quote:

> Many times, it was set up like, you arrive and… Nothing. We just ate, turned around, and left, and then the parents never… they didn't talk to each other in a way to get to know each other. They didn't interact because there was nothing to do.

Many codes within the "Events at school" theme reflect participants' reflections that their middle schools host fewer events than the elementary school their child attended.

Finally, participants discussed changes they wished to see in their school's family engagement practices, which were captured across several themes and subthemes within this domain. For example, some participants voiced a desire for more engaging events with student or family-focused activities. Dalia highlighted this need in the following excerpt:

> Perhaps making them [events] a bit more enticing, because it's just like 'Come.' And it's like, 'Well, but what's going to be there? I mean, what are we going to do?' 'We're going to celebrate such and such day,' but there's no - specific activity.

Some participants also described a desire for more cultural events at their school, such as potlucks or cultural events similar to what they experienced at their child's elementary school. Iris stated, "In all my years here, I have always wanted to do a Kermes [a traditional carnival or festival] like the ones in Mexico." Additionally, participants expressed a desire for more personal invitations to events, stating that direct communications from staff would motivate caregivers to attend more than a school-wide email. Some participants also stressed the importance of perseverance when attempting to build bridges with unresponsive caregivers. Lirio stated, "There

comes a moment when you want to give up, and you have to get up again to do different activities so that people start getting involved again."

Domain 7: Previous Experiences with School

The seventh domain highlights how previous experiences with the school set the tone for future engagement with the school community. There is one theme in this domain: Previous negative interaction with staff that broke trust. This theme is comprised of codes wherein participants described a negative interaction with school personnel that broke their trust with the school for future interactions. Dalia highlighted this in the following excerpt:

> Now I don't feel very comfortable talking to the principal. The form in which he managed the situation put distance between us, because when I asked him a question… he started to laugh, as if to say, 'It's logical.' So that bothered me.

Domain 8: Systems-level Issues

The eighth domain is comprised of themes related to broader systems-level issues that participants reported as related to their engagement with the school community. The domain captures the following themes: Communication between school and community organization staff (subtheme: *The family liaison role needs more clarity amongst staff*); School is chaotic/unpredictable.

Several participants identified that the quality of communication within school-community collaborations impacted the family's experience accessing those services. For example, Peonia expressed her frustration at the lack of communication between the school and community organization, as described in the following excerpt: "So, I spoke with his teacher, I wrote to her and said that he is in that [community partner's in-school program], that if he could please stay at school, and she response, 'The thing is that we don't know anything about that

program.’” Within the school itself, Violeta expressed that staff need more clarity on the role and importance of the liaison between the school and Spanish-speaking families, stating, “Every year, there are people on the board, in the administration who question, ‘Why do we need a [bilingual liaison]?’... ‘Why do we need that position if we have an interpreter?’” Finally, several participants shared concerns that their child’s middle school environment is disorderly and unpredictable, citing concerns about fights, bullying, or lack of control over student behavior. These concerns were shared by several caregivers during interviews and were echoed widely during focus group sessions.

Mixed Method Analysis

Following separate quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the researcher engaged in convergent mixed method analysis by integrating the two types of data in a joint display table (see Appendix I). The mixed method analysis was informed by a triangulation protocol developed by Farmer et al. (2006). The following section includes a discussion of the mixed method analysis organized by convergence codes. The researcher completed the convergence assessment by providing a narrative description of the overall degree of convergence between the two threads of data.

Agreement and Dissonance

Across the eight domains used to organize convergence coding, there were none in which there was full agreement or dissonance between the qualitative and quantitative findings.

Partial Agreement

There was partial agreement between the qualitative and quantitative findings related to communications that inform, support, and empower caregivers. Quantitative results from four FES-2 Effective Communication domain items and four Support Student Learning domain items

indicated that schools send regular messages about upcoming events and the child's education, offer opportunities for reciprocal communication with school staff, and consider caregivers as collaborators in supporting their student's academic success and well-being. These quantitative findings shared similarities with qualitative themes indicating the availability of universal communications from the school, teamwork between caregivers and teachers to support the student, and individualized communication between school staff and caregivers to support the family's needs. At the same time, there was dissonance between these quantitative results and qualitative results indicating inconsistent communication with school staff and linguistic or technological barriers to accessing information about the school or their child. This convergence coding domain also included quantitative data from one FES-2 Welcoming Environment item and two Sharing Power and Advocacy items. Descriptive statistics at the item level indicated that school staff encourage caregivers to share concerns about their child's well-being and partner with caregivers to collaboratively make decisions about their child's education yet fail to consistently solicit caregiver input to understand the student or their family. On one hand, these quantitative results aligned with qualitative findings that the school consults caregivers for decisions regarding their child's education and supports the family's goals for their student. Conversely, there was disagreement between quantitative finding that school staff do not seek caregiver input to understand the child or family and qualitative data indicating that school staff directly communicate with caregivers in order meet their needs or understand their perspectives. Overall, the partial agreement between the quantitative and qualitative findings within this convergence domain indicated that the schools utilize communication-related family engagement practices that Latine caregivers find helpful (agreement), but school staff are less attentive to the

factors that impact Latine caregivers' experiences with communications that inform, support, and empower them as collaborators in their child's education (disagreement).

Next, there was partial agreement between the qualitative and quantitative findings related to systems-level issues that impact the family engagement experience. The quantitative results from two FES-2 Community Involvement items indicated that school partnerships with community organizations are successful for helping students learn and become more involved in their communities. The qualitative findings partially corroborated the quantitative findings, as many participants reported that community organization-based programs at the school have enriched their family's experience. However, qualitative results also revealed that poor coordination between the school and community organization result in caregiver frustration and a perception that such programs are not stable. In sum, the partial agreement between the two sets of results indicated that although caregivers value school-community partnerships (agreement), some caregivers perceive inconsistency and unpredictability regarding their child's access to the program. Table 13 summarizes the areas of partial agreement between the qualitative and quantitative findings. Numbers in the quantitative findings column indicate the item number for the FES-2 item listed in the column. Letters indicate the order of the listed themes, subthemes, and FES-2 domains.

Table 14

Mixed Method Analysis (Partial Agreement)

Convergence Coding Domain	Quantitative findings	Qualitative findings
Communication to inform, support, and empower	a. Welcoming Environment (*M* = 3.50, *SD* = 1.16) 2. School staff seek my input to better understand my child and family (*M* = 2.92, *SD* = 1.38) b. Effective Communication (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = 1.15) 5. I am informed of upcoming events and how to contact school staff (*M* = 4.00, *SD* = 1.08) 7. Teachers regularly inform me about what my child is learning (*M* = 3.23, *SD* = 1.09) 8. School staff regularly inform me of my child's progress with easy-to-understand data (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.14) 9. Teachers contact me to tell me positive things about my child (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = 0.85) c. Support Student Learning (*M* = 3.29, *SD* = 1.12) 10. I can easily find information about my child's progress (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = 1.18) 11. My school provides helpful information about how to support my child's learning at home (*M* = 3.08, *SD* = 1.12) 12. During conferences, teachers and I exchange valuable information about my child's strengths and challenges (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = 1.19) 13. Teachers help my child see personal and academic strengths (*M* = 3.42, *SD* = 1.08)	a. Universal messages/communications b. Communication with the school is inconsistent c. Knowledge empowers a. Selective translation limits access to information for Spanish-speaking families b. Technology can exclude some families d. Acompañamiento e. Caregivers and teachers are a team

	d. Sharing Power & Advocacy (*M* = 3.69, *SD* = 1.06) 14. School staff encourage me to share concerns about my child's academic, social, and emotional wellbeing (*M* = 3.92, *SD* = 1.04) 15. School staff consider me an important partner in making decisions that are in the best interest of my child (*M* = 3.92, *SD* = 0.86)	
Systems-level issues	e. Community Involvement (*M* = 3.69, *SD* = 1.08) 18. The school partners with businesses and community organizations in ways that promote students' learning (*M* = 3.62, *SD* = 1.19) 19. Partnerships with businesses and community organizations help expand my child's awareness and involvement in our community (*M* = 3.77, *SD* = 1.09)	a. Communication between school and community organization staff a. The family liaison role needs more clarity amongst staff b. School is chaotic/unpredictable

Note. Numbers in the quantitative findings column indicate the item number for the FES-2 item listed in the column. Letters indicate the order of the listed themes, subthemes, and FES-2 domains.

Silence

In the qualitative data, caregivers reported experiences with components of concientización (critical consciousness), such as identifying and reflecting on inequitable outcomes in the school community, recognizing their own political power, and organizing other Latine caregivers to advocate for change. The quantitative findings did not provide data related to this topic, so this was one area of silence.

Qualitative findings regarding the reproduction of social structures in the school context revealed how systemic inequities in the community are reflected in the demographic of

caregivers whose opinions are included in school decision-making processes. Additional qualitative data indicated that schools and caregivers circumvent barriers to participation related to socioeconomic status, immigration identity, race/ethnicity or other marginalized identities. However, these efforts rarely address a systemic pattern of exclusion and are therefore a temporary solution. The quantitative findings did not provide data related to this topic. As a result, this was another area of silence.

Moving forward, qualitative results regarding community building suggested that school-based activities are important for bringing families and staff together to cultivate a sense of community. Some participants shared suggestions for increased frequency of school-based events, particularly those with student or family-focused programming and cultural activities. The FES-2 did not include any items with content related to community building activities. As a result, this was an area of silence.

Finally, qualitative results revealed that a caregiver's previous experiences with the school impacts their future engagement in family-school partnerships. Specifically, unresolved negative interactions with school staff cause harm for caregivers and damages their trust in the school. The quantitative results did not provide data related to this topic, so this was another area of silence. Table 14 summarizes the areas of silence, wherein the qualitative findings revealed information that was not present in the quantitative findings. The letters denote the order of the listed findings.

Table 15

Mixed Method Analysis (Silence)

Convergence Coding Domain	Quantitative findings	Qualitative findings
Concientización	a. No data collected	a. Critical action b. Political agency c. Critical reflection
Social structures reproduced in school context	b. No data collected	a. Social structures are reproduced in who gets to be in decision-making spaces in the school community b. Removing barriers to participation without fixing the system
Building Community	c. No data collected	a. Building connections in the school community b. Events at school a. Purposeful, engaging events b. Cultural events c. Informative events d. Perseverance when inviting families e. More personal invitations to events
Previous Experiences with school	d. No data collected	a. Previous negative interaction with staff that broke trust

Note. The letters denote the order of the listed findings.

Expansion

The qualitative and quantitative findings regarding participants' belonging in the school community were in partial agreement, and the qualitative results expanded the quantitative findings related to this topic. The quantitative results from three FES-2 Welcoming Environment items and one Effective Communication item indicated that participants are welcomed at their

child's middle school, receive clear communication in their preferred language, and feel that their children and family are valued by school staff. Qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative results, as caregivers reported that they feel welcomed and included by school staff, particularly bilingual staff and interpreters. However, qualitative data also revealed disruptions to caregivers' sense of belonging, often related to inconsistent quality or availability of interpretive services and limited opportunities to engage with others in their native language, Spanish. The qualitative data expanded the quantitative data by revealing a relationship between language and a sense of belonging for Latine caregivers, which was not recognized by the quantitative findings. Moving forward, quantitative analysis of two items in the FES-2 Sharing Power and Advocacy domain suggested that caregivers trust school administration to make decisions which benefit all families and give caregivers the opportunity to provide input into decisions about the school community (e.g., improvement efforts). The qualitative findings revealed mixed reviews about the solicitation of Latine caregiver feedback; although some participants reported that their schools had previously solicited their input (agreement), other participants expressed that their school does not seek input from Latine caregivers (disagreement). This convergence comparison revealed partial agreement, and additional qualitative data expands this comparison by suggesting that caregiver insecurity about questioning the school may have informed the high FES-2 rating for the item rating caregivers' trust in school administrators' decision-making. The qualitative findings also expanded quantitative results regarding networks of support for Latine caregivers. The descriptive statistics from one item of the FES-2 Community Involvement domain indicated that schools help caregivers connect with resources in the community. This finding aligns with qualitative results indicating that schools and community organizations offer a wide range of resources to families. The qualitative findings expanded the quantitative findings

by revealing the value of support within groups of caregivers and community members. Participants described that these networks were a significant source of support, information, and guidance. Table 15 summarizes the areas of expansion in this mixed method analysis. Numbers in the quantitative findings column indicate the item number for the FES-2 item listed in the column. Letters indicate the order of the listed themes, subthemes, and FES-2 domains.

Table 16

Mixed Method Analysis (Expansion)

Convergence Coding Domain	Quantitative findings	Qualitative findings
Belonging in the school community	a. Welcoming Environment (M = 3.50, *SD* = 1.16) 1. School staff are welcoming to my family (M = 3.62, *SD* = 0.87) 3. I feel my child is valued and cared for in this school (M = 3.62, *SD* = 1.19) 4. School staff value the diversity and uniqueness of my family (M = 3.85, *SD* = 1.07) b. Effective Communication (M = 3.46, *SD* = 1.15) 6. School staff communicate with me in my preferred language using words that are easy to understand (M = 3.62, *SD* = 1.45) c. Sharing Power & Advocacy (M = 3.69, *SD* = 1.06) 16. I trust the school administration to make decisions that are in the best interest of *all* families (M = 3.77, *SD* = 1.01) 17. I have opportunities to provide input into school policies, programs, and improvement efforts (M = 3.15, *SD* = 1.21)	a. Spanish in the schools helps connect with and navigate the school a. Interpretation does not always help understanding b. Accessibility versus belonging c. Increasing efforts to represent Latine voice and vote a. Insecurity about complaining about or questioning the school d. Caregivers supporting the school a. Internalized self-blame e. Attitude of inclusion for nondominant cultures and social classes

Networks of support	h. Community Involvement (M = 3.69, *SD* = 1.08) 20. The school helps families connect with needed community resources and supports (M = 3.69, *SD* = 1.03)	a. Network of support between Latine caregivers b. School and community offer resources to families

Note. Numbers in the quantitative findings column indicate the item number for the FES-2 item listed in the column. Letters indicate the order of the listed themes, subthemes, and FES-2 domains.

Convergence Assessment

Overall, a comparison between the quantitative and qualitative findings revealed no domains with full agreement or full dissonance. There was partial agreement on two out of eight of the total domains (25%) and expansion in two domains (25%). For four domains (50%), data were present from the qualitative results and were silent in the quantitative results.

RQ1: Which aspects of School-wide Family Engagement Practices in middle school do Latine caregivers perceive as being helpful for facilitating their connection with the school?

Quantitative results from the FES-2 survey responses suggested that respondents' schools use a variety of family engagement practices that are helpful for creating a welcoming environment, an effective communication system, a supportive environment for student learning, a space of shared power and advocacy for families, and a school-family-community partnership. Agreement indicates areas where qualitative data corroborated that the related family engagement practices were helpful for facilitating their connection to the school. Although there were no domains that were in full agreement during the convergence assessment, areas of agreement in domains with partial agreement or expansion suggest that schools successfully use many family engagement practices to build connections with Latine caregivers and families.

Based on the agreement between quantitative and qualitative data concerning communication between the school and family, the findings indicated that schools implement communication-related family engagement practices that Latine caregivers find helpful, such as regular communications to families using multiple formats, opportunities for reciprocal communication with staff, and individualized communications between school staff and caregivers to support the family's needs. Convergent results in this domain also indicated that schools successfully support family engagement by collaboratively working with caregivers, consulting them for decisions about their child's education, and supporting the family's goals for their student. Additionally, agreement between the qualitative and quantitative datasets indicated that school-community partnerships offer a valuable programming and resources for students and families.

Agreement in two areas of expansion revealed additional practices that have been helpful for facilitating a connection between the school and Latine caregivers. First, quantitative results indicated that participants are welcomed at their child's middle school, receive clear communication in their preferred language, and feel that their children and family are valued by school staff. Qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative results, as caregivers reported that they feel welcomed and included by school staff, particularly bilingual staff and interpreters. Agreement between quantitative findings and some qualitative findings in this domain also indicated that schools use several practices to solicit the opinions of the Latine community, such as sending out surveys. Additionally, agreement between the qualitative and quantitative datasets revealed that caregivers value the wide range of resources to families thanks to school-community partnerships.

RQ2: Which aspects of School-wide Family Engagement Practices in middle school do Latine caregivers perceive as being unhelpful or detrimental to facilitating their connection with the school?

Quantitative results from the FES-2 survey responses suggest that respondents' schools use family engagement practices that are helpful for creating a welcoming environment for caregivers, an effective communication system, a supportive environment for student learning, a space of shared power and advocacy for families, and a school-family-community partnership. Disagreement indicates areas where qualitative data revealed challenges related to these family engagement practices. Although the convergence assessment did not reveal any domains that were in full dissonance, areas of disagreement in domains with partial agreement suggested that some family engagement practices are not helpful for reaching Latine caregivers and families.

There was partial agreement between the qualitative and quantitative findings related to communications that inform, support, and empower caregivers. Specifically, disagreement between the two sets of data suggests communication is not consistent with the school and that caregivers did not always have access to information about the school or about their child's education. These interruptions to communication and information-sharing between the school and family were oftentimes described in the context of linguistic barriers, as caregivers shared that interpretive services are of inconsistently available or are low quality (e.g., malfunctioning audio devices, missing or inaccurate translations, and interpreters who lack Spanish proficiency). Caregivers also described that the school's reliance on technology for communication (e.g., email news bulletins) and information-sharing (e.g., online parent portals) is unhelpful for caregivers who are less familiar with technology. In brief, the disagreements indicated that although schools use effective communication practices to reach caregivers in the school

community, school leadership are less attentive to the factors that impact Latine caregivers' experiences with communications that inform, support, and empower them as community members and collaborators in their child's education.

Moving forward, the convergence analysis revealed disagreement between quantitative and qualitative findings about school partnerships with community organizations. Although quantitative results suggested that caregivers are satisfied with programming from school-community partnerships, qualitative results indicated that poor coordination between the school and community organization result in caregiver frustration at the inconsistency and unpredictability of the programming.

Disagreement in one area of expansion revealed additional practices that have not been helpful for facilitating a connection between the school and Latine caregivers. Despite the alignment between quantitative and qualitative results indicating that caregivers feel welcomed and included in their school communities, the qualitative findings revealed disagreement due to inconsistency in the availability of Spanish-speaking staff, which is an important facilitator for feeling welcomed and included. This area of disagreement indicated that family engagement practices such as interpretive supports and bilingual staff become unhelpful when schools do not mobilize sufficient resources to make these supports consistent or high-quality.

RQ3: What changes to School-wide Family Engagement Practices would Latine caregivers want to see at their middle school? What would be the aim of these changes? How do caregivers view their agency to make these changes?

Areas of silence comprised half of the domains in the convergent analysis. In each instance, an area of silence occurred because the qualitative data revealed a finding that was not covered by the FES-2. One possible explanation for so many areas of silence is that the

development of the survey measure was informed by feedback from state and district administrators rather than caregivers. This explanation suggests that this measure does not accurately capture the issues that are important to caregivers, because the developers and families view family engagement in different ways. Areas of silence in this convergent analysis can reveal needed changes to how schools conceptualize and prioritize family engagement. Areas of silence covered four domains: Concientización, the reproduction of inequitable social structures in the school, building a sense of community, and previous experiences with the school.

Concientización was an area of silence, as related themes were found only in the qualitative data. The FES-2 did not include content about caregivers recognizing the need for change, believing that they have the power to make changes, nor advocating for change. Although the survey measure did include several items about caregivers as decision-makers in their child's education, the survey's only question about decision-making for issues related to the school community implied that caregivers should trust school administration to make the best decision for all families. Participant responses from interviews and focus groups indicated that many participants did not see themselves as having the agency to make changes in their school community. This uncertainty was related to lack of familiarity with the school community, limited knowledge about the school system, and few opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes in the school community. In sum, the silence in this domain indicated that school staff may view caregivers as collaborators in their child's education but not in matters related to the entire school community. If school administrators fail to challenge a perspective of school decision-making that upholds traditional power hierarchies by excluding caregivers, they lose the opportunity to learn from families in an equitable partnership.

A related area of silence concerned the reproduction of inequitable social structures in the school. Qualitative data revealed that participants' experiences at the intersection of racial identity, linguistic identity, citizenship status, and socio-economic status limited their ability to be present in the few decision-making spaces open to caregivers, such as PTO meetings. Although participants described actions taken by the school or by caregivers themselves to bypass such barriers, these actions were temporary solutions to a larger pattern of challenges in the school community. This area of silence indicated that the FES-2 did not capture the issues and challenges that are important for Latine caregiver engagement. Consequently, the school misses important contextual barriers to engagement and fails to understand the needs of Latine caregivers.

Another area of silence emerged regarding findings related to building a sense of community. Qualitative findings indicated that school-based activities bring families and staff together to cultivate a sense of community. In fact, participants expressed a desire for increased frequency of school-based events in middle school, particularly those with student or family-focused programming and cultural activities. The quantitative measure lacked questions on the topic of events and other community-building activities, indicating that this measure of family engagement satisfaction fails pto capture an aspect of family engagement that is important for caregivers.

The last area of silence concerned the domain of previous experiences with the school. Qualitative findings indicated that previous negative interactions with school staff are detrimental to a caregiver's motivation and comfort when engaging with their child's school. The FES-2 did not include an item with similar content about negative experiences with the school or the school's follow up to such interactions. This silence suggests that this measure may not

capture a significant deterrent for family engagement, even though identifying such deterrents and resolving them with restorative justice practices could repair the harm in the family-school relationship.

Areas of expansion also provided important insights to necessary changes to family engagement practices. Areas of expansion occurred when qualitative data expanded findings from the FES-2. One instance occurred in the comparison of qualitative and quantitative findings regarding participants' belonging in the school community. Although both sets of findings suggested that caregivers feel welcomed and included in their school, qualitative data added an important contextual detail – participants felt belonging in their schools when they interacted with bilingual staff or interpreters. The qualitative data expanded the quantitative data by revealing a relationship between language and a sense of belonging for Latine caregivers, which was not indicated in the quantitative findings. In fact, some caregivers even expressed that they would feel more comfortable and integrated in the school community if there were more bilingual or Spanish-speaking events for families.

A second area of expansion concerned data about decision-making for the school community. Results from one FES-2 item indicated that caregivers trust school administration to make decisions, and qualitative data expanded this finding by indicating that caregivers feel insecure to question or challenge the school. The qualitative data suggested that, due to unfamiliarity with the school system, caregivers are uncertain that they can advocate for change in their school communities. In this way, traditional power hierarchies are present in school decision-making processes. This area of expansion suggested that school administrators must challenge any underlying adherence to traditional power hierarchies and view caregivers as knowledgeable collaborators for the betterment of the school community. Additionally, school

staff must give Latine caregivers access to the tools and knowledge they need be changemakers and advocates in their school community.

Finally, an important area of expansion was discovered in the domain of supportive networks. Although both threads of data identified school and community-based resources as helpful for caregivers, the qualitative findings illustrated the value of support within groups of caregivers and community members. Participants described that these networks are a significant source of support, information, and guidance, yet this kind of support was not described in the FES-2 content. This expansion suggested that networks of support between caregivers are an important form of family engagement that goes unrecognized by schools. School staff must ensure that they are creating spaces and opportunities for these networks to form and flourish.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The association between caregiver engagement with their child's school community and a multitude of positive youth outcomes is well-documented in the literature. Family engagement is associated with many positive outcomes, including academic success (Barajas-Gonzalez et al., 2024; Tran, 2014; Wilder, 2014) and social-emotional well-being (Blair et al., 2011; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014; Powell et al., 2010). Furthermore, family engagement is important for school decision-making. School initiatives to center anti-racist and culturally responsive practice and policy benefit from the diverse perspectives and ideas of families in the school community. When caregivers with a wide range of identities and experiences are included as collaborators, schools are better able to meet the needs of their community.

Schools use family engagement practices to facilitate connections between caregivers, school staff, and other members of the broader school community. These practices also invite caregivers to share decision-making power with administrators and faculty by keeping caregivers informed about school news, school-community projects (e.g., fundraisers, food pantries), and upcoming decisions within the school community. Unfortunately, family engagement practices are typically more robust in the early part of a child's educational journey, and those practices decreases in quality and quantity as children grow older (Davis & Lambie, 2005; Smith et al., 2019). According to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995), these and other invitations to join the school community are an important foundation for a caregiver's engagement with the school. Without sustained efforts to encourage all caregivers to be active agents in the school community, caregivers who did not become involved during their child's elementary school years are less likely to be involved with their child's middle school.

Engagement is further complicated for Latine caregivers, who typically face more barriers to accessing their child's school community compared to white caregivers (Turney & Kao, 2009). Even though U.S. K-12 public school population is comprised of about 28.5% Latine youth and adolescents (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023) and 7.8% Spanish-dominant English Language Learners (ELL; National Center for Education Statistics, 2022), schools continue to let Latine caregivers fall through the cracks in their family engagement practices. Although many schools neglect to address common barriers to family engagement (i.e., scheduling conflict, work schedule, language barriers), other schools that address some barriers see a continued gap in the involvement of Latine caregivers with the school community compared to other families in the school community (Sanders-Smith et al., 2020). This disparity is even larger in middle school communities, where existing barriers for Latine family engagement with schools intersect with decreased quantity and quality of family engagement practices. Therefore, a more robust understanding of family engagement practices in middle school is vital for ensuring that Latine families are also included as members and decision makers within their school community.

Unfortunately, this area of research is understudied due to several gaps in the family engagement literature. Most family engagement research focuses on early childhood and elementary school rather than middle and high school (Reinke et al., 2019). Furthermore, research has systematically excluded minoritized groups from participation, and this longstanding pattern of exclusion has negatively impacted the inclusion of Latine caregivers from participation in family engagement research studies. Many studies on family engagement practices with the Latine community, such as Lowenhaupt (2014), attend to school staff

perspectives rather than those of the caregivers themselves. Furthermore, critical approaches still lack representation in the family engagement literature.

The present study addressed the identified gaps in the literature. In addition to exploring family engagement practices in the middle school setting, which is scarce in the extant body of literature, the current study gave light to the understudied perspectives of Latine caregivers from a majority Spanish-speaking sample. Generally, Spanish-dominant Latine caregivers have less access to research opportunities. The present study bypassed common barriers by providing supports to enhance the accessibility of the research opportunity, including community-based recruitment strategies, the availability of multiple interview formats in both English and Spanish, and food and childcare for focus groups. Finally, the present dissertation study expanded the application of liberation psychology in family engagement practice research by applying this theoretical lens to the construction of themes during qualitative analysis.

Key Findings

Quantitative and qualitative data were integrated in a mixed method approach to reveal findings about the helpful and unhelpful aspects of family engagement practices for the Latine caregivers of middle school youth. First, mixed method findings suggested that some middle schools already use several family engagement practices that Latine caregivers identified as helpful, such as regular communication in the family's preferred language, individualized and reciprocal communication between caregivers and staff, collaborative approaches to work with families, and school-community partnerships to offer resources and programming for families. Additionally, findings indicated that some middle schools use unhelpful family engagement practices, including inconsistent communication with caregivers, lack of access to information about the school or about their child's education, unpredictable availability of Spanish-speaking

staff, and programming interruptions related to poor coordination within school-community partnerships. Finally, mixed method analysis revealed several needs for change in family engagement practices, such as viewing caregivers as collaborators in decision-making related to the entire school community, amplifying understanding of the barriers and needs related to Latine caregiver engagement, restoring relationships with families after negative experiences, hiring more bilingual staff, and creating multilingual opportunities for caregiver interactions to take place.

As Terry and Hayfield (2015) explain in their guide to RTA, a researcher's approach to the code and theme development process is situated on a spectrum of inductive to deductive analysis. The codes for the current project were constructed using an inductive approach, and the themes were constructed using an inductive-deductive approach. Due to the mixed nature of the qualitative analysis, some themes were not directly related to liberation psychology, and other themes were clearly aligned with this theoretical approach. This approach centered both participant voice and liberation psychology in the construction of themes. Liberation psychology focuses on historical and ongoing patterns of power, oppression, and resistance (Torres Rivera, 2020). Using the lens of liberation psychology allowed data analysis and resulting themes to highlight the relevance of power hierarchies, systemic inequity, and oppression within conversations about family engagement practices used by schools.

Specifically, themes from the present study identify how schools maintain systems of oppression which reproduce social inequities to disadvantage Latine families in the school community across three areas: Reducing access to information, limiting opportunities to be in decision-making spaces, and limiting opportunities to build connections with school staff and families. First, many participants reported that their schools perpetuated limitations to Latine

caregivers' access to important information about their schools by reinforcing linguistic and logistical barriers (e.g. not translating all materials, sharing information during meetings held at inconvenient times). Some participants also reported that their school's reliance on technology for communication is a barrier to receiving important news and information about their school community; schools relying on technology reinforce the exclusion of low-income and recently immigrated Latine caregivers who are less comfortable with technology compared to caregivers who have more frequent access and familiarity with technology. Next, several participants shared that their middle schools limit the opportunity for Latine caregivers to build connections with other families by hosting fewer events compared to elementary schools and by not creating bilingual or Spanish-dominant spaces for caregivers to network. Although some participants described the value of informal network for support and information-sharing, other participants stated that they felt isolated from others in the school community due to lack of opportunity to build connections with others. Finally, systems of oppression operate in the school system by limiting Latine caregivers' access to decision-making spaces, such as collaborative spaces with administrators or Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO, or any similar organization) meetings (Olivos, 2006). Participants reported that, even when quality interpretation is offered during meetings, they do not feel authentically engaged as full participants in the space due to the language barrier. No participant described a bilingual or Spanish-speaking PTO at their child's middle school, even though several schools were home to a percentage of the Latine community that was above the district average. Many participants also reported that demanding work schedules interfered with their availability to attend meetings, especially meetings scheduled right after school ends. When schools do not provide variable meeting times or asynchronous participation options for decision-making, the school reproduces the systemic oppression of

economically disadvantaged families in their school communities. In short, oppression rooted in capitalism and linguistic hegemony layers to reduce the number of Latine caregivers present in school decision-making spaces. Consequently, white and economically advantaged caregivers make decisions about the school community that privilege their children and further reinforce systemic inequities in the school community.

The connection between the three arms of oppression described above can be understood in the context of Freire's (2000) scholarship on concientización (critical consciousness). When there is no sense of community, there is no way to share general knowledge about the school nor critical reflections with others in the school community. In turn, Latine caregivers are not brought together to reflect on their political agency and discuss collective resistance or critical action. As a result, Latine caregivers are not empowered to fight for change, instead feeling like they'd be operating alone. However, there were notable exceptions in the stories shared throughout the data collection process for this project, which exemplify resistance to oppression in the school community. For example, Violeta shared that, when she noticed inequitable distribution of transportation resources in her district (critical reflection), she made connections with other moms at the bus stop to raise the issue with them. Together, their conversations empowered participating caregivers to seek change (political agency), and she organized a meeting between this group of mothers and the district administrators to raise concerns and advocate for change (critical action).

It is important to consider the findings of the present research study in the context of the limited literature on family engagement practices for Latine families. One of few studies to examine this intersection of topics was Lowenhaupt's (2014) study on family engagement practices implemented in schools within an "emerging Hispanic state" (p. 528), identified as

such due to the state's booming Latine population growth over the last several decades. Responses from principal and teacher surveys indicated two general categories of practices. The first theme described practices which enabled access to the school community for Latine caregivers, such as the providing translated materials, hiring interpreters at events, and integrating Spanish-speaking staff or interpreters within daily school functions (i.e., answering a parent phone call). Results from the current study corroborated these results in Lowenhaupt's study, as participants in the present study also reported that translated materials and interpretation at events facilitated their access to the school community, and Spanish-speaking staff facilitated their access and sense of belonging. The second theme described by Lowenhaupt focused on participation as an outcome of family engagement practices, including attendance at parent-teacher conferences and participation in Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs). Lowenhaupt's finding that Latine caregivers participated in parent-teacher conferences at a higher rate compared to their rate of participation in PTO meetings was echoed by participants in the present study, many of whom shared that they prioritize parent-teacher conferences but seldom attend the middle school PTO meetings. The results of the present study also corroborated findings from a recent case study on family engagement practices in the secondary school context (Landa et al., 2023). Landa and colleagues noted the effectiveness of the school-based practices such as distribution of universal bilingual communications using multiple means of delivery (i.e., flyers, website, phone), ensuring the availability of Spanish-speaking staff in the building, and hiring a bilingual community liaison. In the present study, all three of these practices were identified as helpful by participants. Another key finding from Landa and colleagues was that opportunities to build connections with school staff and caregivers are important for building a network of support that caregivers can later use to navigate challenges

regarding the school or their child's education. The importance of building these networks and their utility in navigating challenges was echoed by participants in the present study.

Findings from the present study expand previous work on family engagement practices for Latine communities in important ways. First, the findings indicate that, although translation and interpretation help many Spanish-speaking caregivers access the school (Landa et al., 2023; Lowenhaupt, 2014), these supports are rendered ineffective when they are low-quality (e.g., interpretation technology isn't functioning, interpreters are not fluent in Spanish). Findings identified several barriers to the effectiveness of translation and interpretation, such as inaccurately-translated materials, broken simultaneous interpretation audio devices, and underqualified interpreters. Findings from the current study also expand Lowenhaupt's (2014) discussion of access to the school community, which was informed by the perspectives of principals and teachers. In the present study, caregivers discuss how family engagement practices that support accessibility, such as those described above, do not always foster a sense of belonging that would facilitate further engagement with the school community. Furthermore, findings from the current study add to previous scholarship on shifting family engagement from a school-centric lens to recognize undervalued forms of participation that do not fit within the normalized mold (Landa et al., 2023; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Olivos, 2006). Although school-centric models of family engagement may not recognize participation in informal caregiver networks as equivalent to traditional forms of caregiver involvement, these findings indicate that, for many Latine families, informal networks are valuable sources of information, navigational support, and motivation to pursue critical action. Findings from the present study expand the limited literature on critical family engagement by identifying the relationship between systems of oppression, family engagement practices, and the ongoing marginalization of Latine caregivers from the

school community and its decision-making spaces. Even though some previous work has taken a critical lens to examine family engagement practices (e.g., Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020; Paredes Scribner & Fernández, 2017; Warren et al., 2009), the present study is one of the first to apply liberation psychology in an examination of Latine family engagement in schools.

Limitations

In considering the findings of this research project, it is important to consider several limitations to this study. First, the participants in this research study were recruited from one county in the Midwest, thereby hindering the generalizability of the findings. Contextual influences vary between communities, and the experience of Latine caregivers in this research project may not be the same as that of Latine caregivers in regions with different community supports, sociopolitical climate, or demographics. Researchers hoping to understand their school's needs for Latine family engagement should conduct their own research within their communities. Another limitation related to setting is the variability in the data collection setting, particularly for interviews. Participants selected one of the following formats for interview completion: In-person, Zoom, or phone call. Generally, phone interviews were shorter in duration compared to Zoom interviews. Only one participant completed their interview in person, and the duration of this interview was shorter compared to Zoom interviews and some phone calls.

In the present research project, there were limitations in the researcher's adherence to the community-engaged research approach, which limited the researcher's ability to understand their bias and influence in the project. The inclusion of only one community consultant was one such limitation. Due to the unique experiences related to one's intersectional identity, one individual cannot speak for an entire community. Including only one community consultant may not have

been sufficient to fully understand bias and researcher influence or to fully embody the tenets of community-engaged research. Moreover, participants in this dissertation study were not as engaged in the research process as they would have been if the present study had used a different methodological approach, such as participatory action research. Given this limitation, there may have been more bias and researcher influence compared to more participant-led research approaches.

An additional limitation emerged from the researcher's selection of the FES-2 as a quantitative measure. The content of many FES-2 survey items is about the school's use of family engagement practices aligned with each of the five survey domains. The FES-2 is not an effective measure of caregiver attitudes regarding family engagement practices and may not have been the best tool for the convergent mixed-method approach of this dissertation study, given that the survey content largely focused on the school's existing practices rather than caregiver attitudes about these practices, which was the focus of the qualitative data analysis. Moreover, the FES-2 developers reported that they solicited feedback about the measure from school and district administrators, state and national leaders, and Kansas Technical Assistance and Support Network (TASN) providers (Gaumer Erickson et al., 2022). The developers did not seek caregiver input for the development of this measure, and mixed method analysis demonstrated that the developers of this survey conceptualized family engagement in a manner that was discrepant from caregiver perceptions of family engagement captured within the qualitative findings. This discrepancy may be related to the lack of caregiver input in the development of this tool.

Finally, the project's focus on caregiver perspectives limited the scope of the research. Including the perspectives of other individuals in the school community could have provided a

more complete understanding of the Latine community's experience with family engagement practices. Students, who witness both the school's family engagement practices and their caregivers' response to such practices, can provide valuable insight on how their school can continue to develop and implement helpful family engagement strategies. Bilingual school liaisons have similarly insightful perspectives that would have been an asset in the present study. As key players in schoolwide family engagement, bilingual school liaisons understand the school's family engagement agenda and oftentimes have a close relationship with the families they reach (Miller et al., 2014). The inclusion of bilingual school liaison perspectives would have provided more insight on how current practices are helpful or unhelpful in building a relationship with Latine caregivers. Bilingual school liaisons may have also provided commentary on the role of systemic oppression on family engagement, given their direct work with families to identify and resolve challenges to caregiver engagement (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007).

Practical Implications

Recommendations from the present research should be interpreted and implemented with caution, as data for the study were collected from a sample of caregivers in the geographical, cultural, and sociopolitical context of one county in a Midwestern state. The methods from the present community-engaged research study can be modeled by districts in other areas to better understand their community's needs for family engagement practices.

Caregiver responses throughout this research project indicated several strengths of the family engagement practices currently used by their middle school, such as using translation and interpretation to increase the accessibility of information and events, helping families overcome common barriers to participation (e.g., childcare, transportation), hiring bilingual staff (e.g., teachers and liaisons), hosting events or activities for caregivers to build connections in the

school community, and offering flexible approaches to participation to increase the accessibility of decision-making spaces. These results emphasize the importance of these practices for Latine caregivers and indicate that these practices can serve as a starting point for engaging families.

Themes regarding unhelpful or detrimental family engagement practices reveal the importance of high-quality and consistency for the helpful practices previously listed. Translation and interpretation, for example, is only helpful when the services are provided with accuracy and clarity. Furthermore, results from this research study underscored the importance of knowledge for Latine caregivers' engagement with the school. Current findings corroborated previous research on the detrimental impact of unfamiliarity with the school system (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007; Turney & Kao, 2009), and practitioners should provide informational and relational resources to help Latine caregivers, particularly those raised outside the United States, navigate the school system and understand their rights as caregivers. Finally, the findings from the current study indicate that caregiver participation in a network of support with other Latine caregivers is a valuable form of family engagement that often goes unrecognized by school staff and academics, who typically focus on more school-centric forms of engagement (Lowenhaupt, 2014; Olivos, 2006). Thus, it is important for schools to recognize the power of these networks and to create bilingual or Spanish-dominant spaces for these networks to develop. This could entail hosting more frequent family-centered events in middle school, so that caregivers can build connections with school staff and other families. This would serve to bring together caregivers from different elementary schools as well as families who recently moved to the area. Middle schools could also incorporate mentorship programs to develop the connection between caregivers who are new to the school community and the existing network of caregiver support in the community.

Findings from the present study also demonstrate how systems of oppression operate within the school community to reproduce inequities in the school community. These conditions perpetuate the minoritization of Latine caregivers from decision-making spaces in their school communities, and privileged caregivers are left to make decisions that benefit their children. Improving family engagement practices to more authentically welcome Latine caregivers as valued members and decision-makers of the school community is one part of the solution. In addition to this, school staff should continue to engage in reflective practice about historical and current patterns of exclusion and oppression within the school community. Practitioners must recognize their role as advocates and partners in collective resistance for systemic change within and beyond their school communities. As a future bilingual and bicultural practitioner, I will leverage my privilege to advocate alongside Latine caregivers for community spaces where families can learn from one another, mutually support each other, and identify areas of needed change in the community.

Research Implications and Future Directions

The contributions of the present study are a small step in the direction of centering Latine caregivers as experts on their lived experiences with schoolwide family engagement practices. Future research should continue to prioritize Latine community perspectives by recruiting Latine participants with diverse ancestral roots and linguistic identities. Within the current project's sample of Latine caregivers, several identified as new arrivals to the United States. The experiences reported by these caregivers differed from the experiences of Latine caregivers who had been in their community for many years prior to this project. Compared to other participants, recent arrivals reported more unfamiliarity with the school system, technology, and their rights and responsibilities as caregivers. Additional research should be conducted to determine how

schools can support recently immigrated families. Future research should also examine school factors that may impact family engagement practices, such as identification as a Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program. Examining the family engagement practices used by these programs, which oftentimes serve multilingual families, may reveal additional practices not included in the present project.

Furthermore, the academic literature lacks measures of caregiver attitudes regarding family engagement practices. There is a need for the development of such measures so that researchers and school-based practitioners can advance their understandings of caregiver and community perspectives. Moreover, the researcher noted a misalignment between the visions of family engagement that informed the development of the FES-2 and the qualitative themes. Future research should work prioritize collaborative work between caregivers, community members, school staff, and researchers to develop representative measures of family engagement practices. Measures could also be modified to better assess attitudes regarding family engagement practices by changing the Likert scale anchors from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree* to 1 = *Not at all helpful* to 5 = *Extremely helpful*.

Future work in this area should use participatory approaches wherein participants have a more active role throughout the entire process of the research project. Examples of participatory research approaches include community based participatory research (Wallerstein et al., 2018; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006), participatory action research (Baum et al., 2006), or decolonizing methodologies rooted in indigenous research methodologies (Chilisa, 2019). Including participants as collaborators in the research process is important to the goal of creating a shared vision for family engagement that supports the growth of equitable, collaborative, and inclusive school communities. Finally, expanding the critical family engagement literature is crucial to

raising awareness to the ways in which school practices can perpetuate the systemic inequities in broader society. These discussions are foundational to the ongoing work of collective liberation and healing from the impacts of oppressive systems that operate in schools.

Conclusion

Previous research on existing Latine family engagement practices in schools has pointed to the utility of translation and interpretation services (Lowenhaupt, 2014), a wider definition of family engagement (Mapp & Hong, 2010), and bilingual liaisons to build connections with multilingual caregivers (Miller et al., 2014). However, the literature in this area is relatively scarce, and many previous studies failed to include a diverse sample of Latine participants in their research study, instead collecting data from school staff and administrators. Additionally, the existence of Latine family engagement research using a critical lens is limited, despite the obvious power hierarchies and oppressive forces which contextualize family-school relationships, particularly those with minoritized families (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). In the present study, the researcher used liberation psychology as a critical lens to understand Latine caregivers' experiences with the family engagement practices of their middle school. The researcher also used a community-engaged research approach to empower participants by dismantling traditional power hierarchies through a member check process that invited participant collaboration in the finalization of themes. The researcher utilized additional community engaged research strategies – namely collaboration with a community consultant and researcher reflexivity exercises – to ensure that community perspectives, ideas, and concerns were not overshadowed by researcher bias.

The current study adds to the growing literature on critical approaches to family engagement practices. This study also contributes to understanding family engagement in middle

school and Latine family engagement, both of which are underrepresented in the family engagement literature. Findings from the present study indicate that middle schools use several successful strategies for engaging Latine caregivers, including clearly written and accurately translated communications, resources offered by the school or via school-community partnerships, and hiring bilingual staff and teachers. Findings also identified practices which are detrimental to family engagement, including low quality or missing translations, a lack of school events (particularly engaging, family-centered events), and inflexible opportunities for caregivers to be involved in decision-making. Furthermore, qualitative findings revealed that systems of oppression operate in the school context by limiting the participation of Latine caregivers, particularly those who are new arrivals in the U.S. or are economically-disadvantaged, in information-gathering, community-building, and decision-making spaces. This results in decisions being made by a white, privileged majority of caregivers, who make decisions that further marginalize families of color.

Overall, these results not only call on schools to bolster their family engagement practices with Latine family, but they also call on the school community to draw awareness to inequitable power dynamics in the school community and advocate for the destruction of these hierarchies. Future research should aim to continue the expansion of critical approaches to understanding family engagement for Latine caregivers. This research should be carried out with a community-engaged approach to center Latine caregiver voices and perspectives.

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Appendix A

Screening Survey Items

1. Name
2. Phone number
    a. How should we get in touch over?
        i. Text
        ii. Phone Call
        iii. Both
3. Can we leave voicemails for you at the phone number provided?
    a. Yes
    b. No
4. Email
5. Which ethnic/racial identities describe you? Select all that apply.
    a. Hispanic/Latine
    b. Black/African American
    c. American Indigenous
    d. Asian
    e. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
    f. White
    g. Other
        i. Please describe: _____
6. Which language(s) do you speak at home? _____
7. Which middle school is your child currently attending? _____
8. Do you have other children who have attended the same middle school?
    a. Yes
    b. No
9. Is your child currently enrolled in any of the following programs? Check all that apply:
    a. English Language Learner (ELL)
    b. Special Education
    c. Other: _____
10. Has your child previously been enrolled in any of the following programs? Check all that apply:
    a. English Language Learner (ELL)
    b. Special Education
    c. Other: _____
11. Participation in this study includes an interview that will last about 1-hour. The interview can take place in person, by phone, or over Zoom. Please select your preferred interview format:
    a. In-Person
    b. Phone
    c. Zoom
12. Study materials can be provided in English or in Spanish. What is your language preference? Select one:
    a. English

   b. Spanish
13. Interviews can be completed in English and in Spanish. What is your language preference? Select one:
    a. English
    b. Spanish

14. What does your child's middle school do to get families involved?

Appendix B

Individual Interview Protocol

1. Before beginning the interview, check that recording devices are ready to go.
2. Welcome participant into the space.
3. Go over informed consent and have caregiver sign the consent document.
4. Create a shared understanding of schoolwide family engagement.
    a. Describe that family engagement is a set of processes and practices that schools employ to invite families to be a part of the school community and/or to make decisions about the school and their child's education.
    b. Demonstrate and briefly discuss a list of family engagement activities. If in-person, provide caregivers with a copy of the list. If virtual, share screen with participant to display a PDF file of the list. If by phone, read examples to participants.
    c. Demonstrate and briefly discuss a chart that explains structures and power as it relates to liberation psychology.

General

"To start the interview, I am going to ask you some questions about the practices your schools use, like the ones you read about in the survey you completed on [insert date of completion]."

- How does the school communicate with you about opportunities to get involved in the school community?
    - What kinds of opportunities are available?
- What barriers have made it difficult for you to engage with your child's middle school?
    - How do you think these barriers are related to societal structures and systemic inequalities?
- How have you noticed that your family is being engaged in a manner that is similar to or different from how the school includes other families?

RQ 1: Which practices are helpful?

- What is something your family did that helped you feel like a part of the school community?
- What are some helpful ways that your school has attempted to build a connection with you and your family?
    - Can you tell me about a time when you felt like you were a part of the school community because of something the school did?
- In what ways do you feel the school has empowered you to make decisions about your child's education?
    - How does the school support you in advocating for your child's educational needs?
- In what ways do you feel the school has empowered you to make decisions about the school community?

- How do your school's family engagement practices honor the cultural values of Latine families?

RQ 2: Which practices are unhelpful?

- What are some unhelpful ways that your school has attempted to build a connection with you and your family?
    - Has your child's middle school ever reached out to you in a way that felt insensitive, disrespectful, or harmful?
- Some caregivers have said that their family engagement experiences have been negatively impacted by power hierarchies between the school and family. Have you experienced this power hierarchy? Please explain.

RQ 3: What needs to change?

- How do you wish you could engage in the school community?
- How would you like your school to connect the Latine community?
    - What are some changes the school could enact to make you feel more welcomed at the school?
- How do you think the school can better empower Latine families to lead change in your school community?
- What is your role in promoting changes in your middle school community?

Appendix C

Individual Interview Protocol (Spanish)

General

"Para empezar la entrevista, voy a preguntarle acerca de las practicas que usa su escuela, como las que leyó en la encuesta que mande [día que los mande]"

- ¿Cómo se comunica la escuela con usted acerca de las oportunidades para involucrarse en la comunidad de la escuela?
    - ¿Qué tipos de oportunidades están disponibles?
- ¿Cuáles barreras han hecho que sea difícil participar con la escuela secundaria de su hijo/a/e?
    - ¿Cuál cree que sea la relación entre estas barreras y las estructuras sociales e desigualdades sistémicas?
- ¿Cómo ha notado que su familia está siendo involucrada de manera similar o diferente a cómo la escuela incluye a otras familias?

RQ 1: Which practices are helpful?

- ¿Qué ha hecho su familia que les ha ayudó a sentirte parte de la comunidad de la escuela?
- ¿Cuáles son algunas formas útiles en que su escuela ha intentado establecer una conexión con usted y su familia?
    - ¿Puedes contarme de una vez en la que usted sintió que era parte de la comunidad de la escuela debido a algo que hizo la escuela?
- ¿De qué manera sientes que la escuela lo/a/e ha empoderado para tomar decisiones sobre la educación de su hijo/a/e?
    - ¿Cómo apoya la escuela sus necesidades educativas en relación a su hijo/a?
- ¿De qué manera siente que la escuela lo/a/e ha empoderado para tomar decisiones sobre la comunidad escolar?
- ¿Cómo ha notado que las prácticas de colaboración familiar han honrado los valores culturales de las familias latinas?

RQ 2: Which practices are unhelpful?

- ¿Cuáles son algunas formas no útiles en que su escuela ha intentado establecer una conexión con usted y su familia?
    - ¿Alguna vez pensó que la escuela de su hijo/a/e lo contacto de una manera insensible, irrespetuosa o perjudicial?
- Algunos cuidadores han dicho que sus experiencias de participación familiar han sido afectadas negativamente por jerarquías de poder entre la escuela y la familia. ¿Ha tenido experiencias con esta jerarquía de poder? Por favor, explícalo.

RQ 3: What needs to change?

- ¿Cómo le gustaría participar y colaborar con la comunidad de la escuela?
- ¿Cómo le gustaría que su escuela conecte con la comunidad latina?
    - ¿Cuáles cambios podría realizar la escuela para hacerlo/a/e sentir más bienvenido/a/e?

- ¿Cómo cree que la escuela puede empoderar mejor a las familias latinas para liderar cambios en la comunidad escolar?
- ¿Cuál es su rol en promover cambios en la comunidad de su escuela secundaria?

Appendix D

Focus Group Protocol

1. Welcome and introduction to the purpose of the activities
    a. Purpose: Give participants the opportunity to evaluate the themes that I identified after reviewing all of the interviews.
    b. Positionality: I am a student, single, with no children. I am the daughter of Mexican immigrants, but I was born here, and this American school system is the only one I know.
    c. "Even though I created these themes with the stories and information that you all, the moms here and the moms that are not here today, gave me, there is a change that I misunderstood something or that I neglected to include something important. This is why we have member checks.
    d. Pause for questions
    e. Introduce community consultant
    f. Audio recording disclaimer
    g. Participant introductions (name, school, country of origin)
2. Review of liberation psychology terminology
3. Time to independently review handout with themes listed
4. Group discussion
    a. What are your initial impressions of the generated themes regarding changes to family engagement practices?
    b. Thinking about the specific ideas and recommendations you shared in the interview; which themes align most with your experience?
    c. Which themes would you change and how?
    d. How might any of these themes misrepresent your ideas?
5. Recommendations card sort
    a. Introduction: Restate that the purpose of this project is partially to offer schools ideas for how to improve family engagement practices for the Latine community. Each recommendation on the card was informed by interview responses. There are also blank index cards and pens to write additional recommendations.
    b. Instructions: Categorize each recommendation into one of three rows: Important to me, neutral (neither important nor unimportant), not important to me. If you have additional suggestions, please use index cards

Appendix E

Member Check Matrix

Interview Theme / *Subtheme*	**Focus Group Theme**	**Narrative Comparison**
Spanish in the schools	Interpretation does not always help understanding	The interview theme ("Spanish in the schools") presents a more nuanced portrait of interpretive services in the school, wherein I fit codes that highlight the positives and negatives of interpretive services. However, this focus group theme brings the challenges of inconsistent or subpar interpretation to the forefront, rather than making them a mere aspect of the theme. Thus, I will create a subtheme about how subpar interpretive services exist and impede caregivers' ability to understand and communicate with their school community.
Accessibility versus belonging	Bilingualism fosters belonging	Although these themes are very similar, the interview theme ("Accessibility versus belonging") is broader in that it captures bilingualism as a facilitator of belonging in addition to explaining that interpretive services are not sufficient for fostering belonging in the school community. Maribel also added that multiculturalism and respecting your roots should be a part of this, as well. Thus, I believe that the focus group theme could be absorbed into the interview theme, albeit with updates to the interview definition to enhance the clarity of bilingualism and biculturalism as a facilitator for belonging.
Efforts to incorporate Latine voice and vote		
Caregiver understanding of their role in the school	**Internalized self-blame**	These themes are quite different, although codes touching on internalized self-blame were embedded in the interview theme noted here. Therefore, self-blame fits into the interview theme. I believe this focus group theme could be a subtheme of the interview theme. This new theme will also absorb the theme of "Caregiver awareness of current participation levels," as this theme would overlap with this new subtheme, which is a sign of weak coding. I will include caregiver awareness as an element in the subtheme's definition.

Insecurity about complaining about or questioning the school		
A more active role in the school community	The parent supports the school	These theme definitions are very similar, although the focus group theme adds the element of caregivers helping connect the school to other caregivers they haven't been able to reach. The theme definition will be updated accordingly.
Attitudes of people in the school community		Based on focus group notes, Maribel suggested that the theme be changed to clarify that the attitudes are around the inclusion of people from different cultures and socioeconomic statuses. The title and theme will be updated accordingly.
Universal messages/communications		
Need frequent communication about changes at the school		See cell below.
Communication with the school is inconsistent		Maribel suggests updating this theme to make it a call to action – that schools should have more consistent communication. The theme definition will be updated accordingly, and the subtheme *Need frequent communication about changes at the school* will be absorbed into this theme so that there is minimal overlap between this updated theme and the above subtheme.
Knowledge empowers	**Lack of familiarity with the school system**	The focus group theme ("Lack of familiarity with the school system") is captured within the original theme definition of the interview counterpart theme, "Knowledge empowers." Both themes capture an unfamiliarity with the school system, albeit the interview theme is broader and captures other related codes. The focus group theme should be absorbed into the interview theme, as it is already captured.
Schools limit access to information for Spanish-speaking		
	Technology can exclude some families	This theme was generated from focus group transcripts but not interview transcripts. However, I believe that it could be a subtheme of "Knowledge empowers," as the knowledge of technology determines the ease with which caregivers access information and meetings within the family-school community.

Regular, reciprocal communication to support student	Acompañamiento	One major difference between these two themes is that, in the focus group theme ("Acompañamiento"), the theme focuses on direct communication to understand caregiver perspectives and needs. The initial interview theme ("Regular, reciprocal communication to support student") is more specific to these communications supporting student success. I believe that the focus group theme is a broader one that captures the support students, caregivers, and other family members receive from the school's direct outreach efforts with caregivers. Thus, the interview theme will be absorbed into the focus group theme, and the definition will be updated to include all elements captured in the interview theme.
Caregivers and teachers are a team		
Network of support between Latine caregivers	**Networks of support**	These two themes are similar in both title and definition. No changes need to be made.
Schools offer resources to families	Resources for families	These two themes are very similar. One difference is that the focus group theme was broader in the codes that it included, as it did not make a distinction between the resources available to whole families versus students (who are also a part of the family unit). I believe it could be helpful to merge the "Availability of student activities and resources" theme with this broader "Schools offer resources for families" theme, as this will reduce theme overlap but also not losing too much significant detail.
Collaboration with community organizations to distribute more resources		
Availability of student activities and resources		See above note for the "Schools offer resources to families / Resources for families" themes.
Latine families leading change in their school communities		This subtheme name will be changed to critical action to more clearly align with Freire's (1970) scholarship on concientización. Furthermore, this theme contains some codes that better align with "political agency," and will therefore be split into two subthemes.
Political agency		This subtheme emerged after splitting the above theme to better align with Freire's (1970) scholarship on concientización. This theme will capture units where caregivers

		describe their awareness that they could make decisions to benefit the entire school community, which does not align as well with "critical action."
Critical consciousness (awareness)		This theme name will be changed to critical reflection to more clearly align with Freire's (1970) scholarship on concientización. It will also be demoted to a subtheme to fit within conscientización as a theme.
Not all caregivers have the decision-making power in their school		This theme is closely related to the revised interview theme (formerly subtheme) "Social structures reproduced in who is present at the school." Thus, it will be absorbed. See corresponding row for rationale.
Barriers to being present at school		I can sense that there is a bit of overlap between this theme and the newly developed "Social structures reproduced in who is present in decision-making spaces" as well as the subtheme "Removing barriers to participation without fixing the system." In order to reduce theme overlap (which is a sign of weak coding), I will suppress this theme to promote the other overlapping themes. I will ensure that this theme remains represented by adding details about barriers to the former theme and promoting the latter subtheme to be a full theme. This change will not only reduce theme clutter but will also add more depth to the conversations about barriers.
Social structures reproduced in who is present at the school	Inequalities in community reproduced in who gets to be in decision-making spaces	The focus group theme is a bit more descriptive about the implications of barriers to being present in at their child's middle school. Thus, the interview subtheme title will be promoted to a theme and revised to adopt this additional consideration of implications. Including these implications feels to me like merging in the interview theme of "Not all caregivers have the decision-making power in their school," so I will likely merge that interview theme into this interview theme. Upon revising the title and description to match what was discussed in the focus group, this theme will overlap with the "Not all caregivers have the decision-making power in their school" theme, so it makes sense to merge them.
Removing barriers to participation without fixing the system	Removing barriers without fixing the system	These two themes are very similar, although the definition for the interview theme included actions caregivers take to bypass the

		barriers as opposed to just the schools perspective on the focus group side. Thus, I will keep the interview theme title and add to the definition from the focus group theme definition.
Connections with others in the school community	Building community	These two themes are very similar. However, the interview theme definition for "Connections with others in the school community" is broader and is therefore more inclusive. Thus, the focus group theme can be merged with the interview theme to create "Building connections in a school community," albeit with minor changes to specify engaging in activities that build community.
Events at school	**Events at the school**	These two themes are very similar. No changes need to be made to the interview theme.
Purposeful, engaging events		
Cultural events		
Informative events		
Perseverance when inviting families		
More personal invitations to events		
Previous negative interaction with staff that broke trust		From focus group discussions and insight into the current events of the community, Maribel suggested that this theme be updated to address a need for restorative practices. This will be incorporated into the definition.
General positive commentary about the school		
Caregiver awareness of current participation levels		This theme will be merged with a new subtheme that was generated following the focus groups. See note about "Internalized Self-Blame" subtheme above for more of the rationale.
Communication between school and community organization staff		
The family liaison role needs more clarity amongst staff		

Observations of the school environment	School is chaotic/unpredictable	The focus group elicited the primary topics that contributed to this theme in the interviews – namely, fights between students at the school and general unpredictability about the availability of resources in the school community. Thus, the interview theme title and definition will be updated to adopt the focus group theme and definition.
	Feedback about the MC process	This focus group theme was not present in the interview themes, as it is specific to feedback about the focus group process. However, because this theme speaks to the focus group process rather than the family engagement practices themselves

Appendix F

Domains, Theme and Subtheme Definitions, and Exemplars

Domain	**Theme** or *Subtheme*	Exemplar Quote
1. Belonging in the School Community	a. **Spanish in the schools helps connect with and navigate the school:** The participant describes interpretive services offered by the school or describes that interpretive services have helped them during school meetings, events, etc.	"You can put on your headphones, and you don't need to be worried that you won't understand."
	b. *Interpretation does not always help understanding:* The participant describes various difficulties that make interpretation/translation ineffective for helping families understand and communicate. These difficulties include broken audio devices, low quality interpretive services, and using uncommon words/phrases.	"There are times where it seems very clean and I understand perfectly, and it seems to me that it is more – it was written by someone who speaks Spanish, because they don't use such weird words. I mean, I don't know, it sounds short and other times it's like they're doing – one says to themselves, 'I don't know what they were trying to say.'"
	c. **Accessibility versus belonging:** The participant describes why the translation or interpretation is not sufficient to access the school community. Identifies bilingualism as a facilitator for a sense of belonging. Offers ideas for creating bilingual or Spanish-dominant and multicultural spaces of belonging for Latine families in the school community.	"Oftentimes, I understand part of it, but not, I mean, it really doesn't – it's not very clear like what it's all about, even though I have a translator. For me, it would be better in my language." "Sometimes you would like to be in a place where you know the language, having a conversation in your language."
	d. **Increasing efforts to represent Latine voice and vote:** The participant describes how the school is incorporating Latine voices. Some participants state that the school does not solicit the ideas and opinions of the Latine community, or they share ideas for how the school could do this more successfully.	"Like, giving us the opportunity to offer our ideas. Like, making us feel that they – but not including us like with the whole population, but rather more – focusing a bit more on us [Latine families], like asking our opinion."
	e. *Insecurity about complaining about or questioning the school:* The participant describes unawareness that	"That's like - and I will remind other parents, like you know what, you can ask, even if you speak Spanish. I

	caregivers can question or complain at school. It also includes participants describing hesitation to question or complain at their school.	mean you can tell me; I'll send the message. But,|I tell you, sometimes parents feel embarrassed. Or they respect the education system a lot too, like they trust in what they are doing, yes."
	f. **Caregivers supporting the school:** The participant describes the caregiver supporting the school in either a volunteer position or by facilitating the school's outreach efforts for families in the community. This theme also includes codes wherein the caregiver describes that they would like a more active role with the school as a volunteer.	"They think that it's going to be a burden for the parent, or perhaps that they are bothering the parent if they ask for collaboration. I would like to be involved in whatever collaboration, whatever need that the school may have, and that the parents would be able to help. Well, for me there would be no problem, I would do it."
	g. *Internalized self-blame:* The participant describes caregivers blaming themselves or blaming other Latine caregivers for their current level of involvement with the school community.	"They [the White majority] make decisions – decisions that we may not like, but why didn't they take us into account? Because I didn't raise my voice."
	h. **Attitude of inclusion for nondominant cultures and social classes:** The participant describes that the attitude (positive or negative) of staff or other caregivers in the school community has impacted their experience at school.	"That day I had seen other moms from other social classes and of another race who were, like, looking at me strangely... And I say, 'Why are they looking at me?' I mean, my kids go to this school, they are part of this community and still we don't have that connection with these moms that makes you feel like... I can't say." "The times they have contacted me they have been very kind and depending on what needs to be discussed. They have always been respectful."
2. Communication to inform, support, and empower	a. **Universal messages/communications:** The participant describes how the school distributes information about events at the school, changes to school policy and procedure, or other general information. This includes various methods of distributing information (e.g., email, flyer, text).	"They usually use emails for my husband, and for me [they use] text messages." "When I went to enroll my daughter, that's where you tell them about your preference for how they can communicate with you."
	b. **Communication with the school is inconsistent:** The participant describes that interactions with the school are not consistent or that the school does not answer all messages from caregivers. The participant may also describe a need for more consistent or frequent	"Here at the middle school, we only talk when there are conferences." "I said, 'They are new policies that, okay, I agree, it's safety for the children, it's fine. But if you notify me ahead

	communication from the school about changes to school policy and procedure.	of time, it's better.' Whether it's through one of the announcements, newsletters, or something else."
c.	**Knowledge empowers:** The participant describes a need for activities related to increasing their awareness of the school system or its procedures. This could be due to being a new family at the school or simply not being familiar with the school and its processes.	"I believe that making a welcome packet when a new family arrives, or at the beginning of the year, of all these resources that are for you, all of these frequently asked questions." "I believe that, for me at this moment, it is fundamental and very important to be sufficiently informed and oriented for what will come ahead."
d.	*Selective translation limits access to information for Spanish-speaking families:* The participant describes that, when the school selectively translates information shared with families, they limit access to knowledge for Spanish-speaking families.	"It's like it depends on what news they are sending or whom or what they want to include. I think that they [school staff] are very selective in how it is put in Spanish."
e.	*Technology can exclude some families:* The participant describes difficulties, confusion, and frustrations with technology used by schools to reach out to families.	"When people from our counties, who have never had contact with technology, arrive… How does one ensure that parents who don't have the [technological] capacity receive this information? How do we integrate them?"
f.	**Acompañamiento:** The participant describes school personnel directly communicating with families in order meet their needs or understand their perspectives. It includes communications between the caregivers and school about topics such as their child's performance or the family's current needs.	"Right now, we have a principal who listens to the families sharing their needs. He worries for us, and this, to us as parents, well, we also try to get involved, so that it'll be an easier role, like we're working together as a team." "[School name] sends a message, what is going wrong, how can we help, what strategy should we use, and I have had good communication with [school name]. They are always there to listen."
g.	**Caregivers and teachers are a team:** The participant describes that the school consults them [caregivers] for decisions regarding their child's education, supports the family's goals for their student, or maintains a collaborative relationship with the caregiver. This theme also contains codes that describe the motivation caregivers have to collaborate with the school to support their children's studies.	"Motivation to go to school, to college, college scores. It's not, I think it's not so much the school, but that I am a parent, the one who has to motivate, and the school provides the tools." "They have called me to see what they can do to make the girl feel better in certain circumstances. So, I think that would be the difference and that's why I see that they are collaborators with me and with my family situation."

3. Networks of Support	a. **Network of support between Latine caregivers:** The participant describes caregivers supporting one another or sharing information about the school between each other.	"If I have a concern or a question, or if I never understood something, I try to ask other parents who have older children and who have already gone to school there."
	b. **School and community offer resources to families:** The participant describes that the school and community partners offer material or informative resources to everyone in the family and in the school community.	"For example, the food for – you didn't need to be a part of the school to go and get your food and you didn't need any identification or anything. You could go get food, and they would distribute lots of flyers so that people would go." "Or then they would say, 'Oh, I heard that Centro Hispano helps those people.' They would find the information for us."
4. Concientización	a. **Critical action:** The participant describes how Latine families have lead changes at their schools.	"I feel like that time that I brought those moms was powerful. No one was aware except those of us at the meeting and the moms, but I think that if I hadn't seen all of those moms, calling them from my personal cell phone and saying, 'you know what, Mrs…' Or seeing them at the bus stop and asking, 'what do you think?'"
	b. **Political agency:** The participant describes recognition that the Latine caregivers and community have the potential to make decisions and changes in their school communities.	"It would be when we have a relationship or communication with the community. It's when you can say, 'Okay, we could do this, I could talk with them [community], and we could agree on something.' … it would have to be in a group."
	c. **Critical reflection:** The participant describes different levels of awareness of injustice and inequality in school communities. Some codes describe noticing these things, while other codes reveal that a participant has not noticed.	"I see that if a parent of another race complains, they quickly listen to them." "So I think the barriers (to being at the school), I think they couldn't be systemic or related to inequality."
5. Social Structures Reproduced in School Context	a. **Social structures are reproduced in who gets to be in decision-making spaces in the school community:** The participant describes how inequities in broader society reproduce which caregivers get to be in decision-making spaces within the school community (e.g., PTO meetings).	"At the end of the month, there are bills to pay. Perhaps someone who doesn't have to work a second job, who is set with what they earn in a job with an 8-hour shift to cover their necessities and those of their family, well perhaps they have more time and can attend these kinds of meetings. I'm sure it is very nice in the sense that one can

		take advantage of what comes out of these reunions, of these reunions." "In the end, this decision was made by all the white people with money and power, where their children benefited."
	b. **Removing barriers to participation without fixing the system:** The participant describes what schools or caregivers do to bypass barriers to participation related to socioeconomic status, immigration identity, race/ethnicity or other marginalized identities. These efforts, however, bypass the barriers rather than addressing the root cause of the problem (oppression based on one or more social identities). Examples of common barriers include work, lack of childcare, and conflicting events at multiple school sites.	"If they have any reunions, sometimes they do them via Zoom or in person, whatever is easiest for you." "I changed my job to be more aware of what's happening."
6. Building Community	a. **Building connections in the school community:** The participant describes feeling that they are a part of their school community or engaging in activities that help them feel connected to other families at their child's middle school; or the participant describes feeling isolated without community.	"Yes, it makes me proud to go to my daughters' school and then [hear] 'Oh, that's [daughter]'s mom."
	b. **Events at school:** The participant describes events happening at school, their motivation to attend events, or the purpose of the events. Some codes describe the differences between events in middle and elementary school.	"Because it's like, okay, my son is going to be in the choir, let's go. And then you stay and chat with the others."
	c. *Purposeful, engaging events*: The participant describes previous events that were not engaging or did not appear to have a purpose. This theme also contains codes wherein the participant communicates a need to have more engaging events with student or family-focused activities.	"Many times, it was set up like, you arrive and… Nothing. We just ate, turned around, and left, and then the parents never… they didn't talk to each other in a way to get to know each other. They didn't interact because there was nothing to do." "It's just like, 'Come.' And it's like, 'Well, but what's going to be there? I mean, what are we going to do?' 'We're going to celebrate such and such day,' but there's no - specific activity."

	d. *Cultural events*: The participant describes cultural events that have occurred in the past or ideas for new cultural events.	"Cultural events where each country expresses its culture, demonstrates its culture, its typical dishes… That event would be very good within the school, so that everyone knows the culture of each country." "In all my years here, I have always wanted to do a Kermes like the ones in Mexico."
	e. *Informative events*: The participant describes informative events or workshops that have happened in the middle school.	"Another talk was also for the transition from middle to high school, and that also seemed quite interesting to me."
	f. *Perseverance when inviting families*: The participant expresses that the staff should not give up when inviting unresponsive families to participate.	"There comes a moment when you want to give up, and you have to get up again to do different activities so that people start getting involved again."
	g. *More personal invitations to events*: The participant expresses that it would be helpful to have more personal or individualized communications from staff to invite more caregivers.	"I think so, but there should be someone in charge of calling parents."
7. Previous Experiences with School	a. **Previous negative interaction with staff that broke trust:** The participant describes a negative interaction with school personnel that broke their trust with the school for future interactions. The participant may also describe a need for restorative practices to move past the negative interaction.	"Now I don't feel very comfortable talking to the principal. The form in which he managed the situation put distance between us, because when I asked him a question… he started to laugh, as if to say, 'It's logical.' So that bothered me."
8. Systems-level issues	a. **Communication between school and community organization staff:** The participant describes communication between school staff or between the school and community partners. The quality of these interactions impacts caregivers' experience with the school.	"So, I spoke with his teacher, I wrote to her and said that he is in that [community partner's in-school program], that if he could please stay at school, and she response, 'The thing is that we don't know anything about that program.'"
	b. *The family liaison role needs more clarity amongst staff*: The participant expresses that school staff need more clarity on the role and importance of the liaison between the school and Spanish-speaking families.	"Because I feel like every year there are people on the board, in the administration who question, 'Why do we need a SAFESA?'... 'Why do we need that position if we have an interpreter?'"
	c. **School is chaotic/unpredictable:** The participant describes observations of disorderliness and	"Lately I have seen many kids in – in fights, but they're kids that will, all of a sudden, fight for themselves."

	unpredictability in their child's middle school, such as fights, bullying, or lack of control over student behavior.

Appendix G

Mixed Method Analysis

Convergence Coding Domain	Quantitative findings	Qualitative findings	Convergence code
Belonging in the school community	a. Welcoming Environment (*M* = 3.50, *SD* = 1.16) 2. School staff are welcoming to my family (*M* = 3.62, *SD* = 0.87) 5. I feel my child is valued and cared for in this school (*M* = 3.62, *SD* = 1.19) 6. School staff value the diversity and uniqueness of my family (*M* = 3.85, *SD* = 1.07) b. Effective Communication (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = 1.15) 7. School staff communicate with me in my preferred language using words that are easy to understand (*M* = 3.62, *SD* = 1.45) c. Sharing Power & Advocacy (*M* = 3.69, *SD* = 1.06) 18. I trust the school administration to make decisions that are in the best interest of *all* families (*M* = 3.77, *SD* = 1.01) 19. I have opportunities to provide input into school policies, programs, and improvement efforts (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.21)	f. Spanish in the schools helps connect with and navigate the school a. Interpretation does not always help understanding g. Accessibility versus belonging h. Increasing efforts to represent Latine voice and vote a. Insecurity about complaining about or questioning the school i. Caregivers supporting the school a. Internalized self-blame j. Attitude of inclusion for nondominant cultures and social classes	Expansion

Communication to inform, support, and empower	d. Welcoming Environment (M = 3.50, SD = 1.16) 2. School staff seek my input to better understand my child and family (M = 2.92, SD = 1.38) e. Effective Communication (M = 3.46, SD = 1.15) 5. I am informed of upcoming events and how to contact school staff (M = 4.00, SD = 1.08) 7. Teachers regularly inform me about what my child is learning (M = 3.23, SD = 1.09) 8. School staff regularly inform me of my child's progress with easy-to-understand data (M = 3.15, SD = 1.14) 9. Teachers contact me to tell me positive things about my child (M = 3.31, SD = 0.85) f. Support Student Learning (M = 3.29, SD = 1.12) 10. I can easily find information about my child's progress (M = 3.31, SD = 1.18) 11. My school provides helpful information about how to support my child's learning at home (M = 3.08, SD = 1.12) 12. During conferences, teachers and I exchange valuable information about my child's strengths and challenges (M = 3.38, SD = 1.19) 13. Teachers help my child see personal and academic strengths (M = 3.42, SD = 1.08) g. Sharing Power & Advocacy (M = 3.69, SD = 1.06) 14. School staff encourage me to share concerns about my child's academic, social, and emotional wellbeing (M = 3.92, SD = 1.04) 15. School staff consider me an important partner in making decisions that are in the best interest of my child (M = 3.92, SD = 0.86)	a. Universal messages/communications b. Communication with the school is inconsistent c. Knowledge empowers a. Selective translation limits access to information for Spanish-speaking families b. Technology can exclude some families d. Acompañamiento e. Caregivers and teachers are a team	Partial Agreement

Networks of support	h. Community Involvement (M = 3.69, SD = 1.08) 21. The school helps families connect with needed community resources and supports (M = 3.69, SD = 1.03)	a. Network of support between Latine caregivers b. School and community offer resources to families	Expansion
Concientización	i. No data collected	d. Critical action e. Political agency f. Critical reflection	Silence
Social structures reproduced in school context	j. No data collected	c. Social structures are reproduced in who gets to be in decision-making spaces in the school community d. Removing barriers to participation without fixing the system	Silence
Building Community	k. No data collected	c. Building connections in the school community d. Events at school a. Purposeful, engaging events b. Cultural events c. Informative events d. Perseverance when inviting families e. More personal invitations to events	Silence
Previous Experiences with School	l. No data collected	b. Previous negative interaction with staff that broke trust	Silence

Systems-level issues	m. Community Involvement (M = 3.69, SD = 1.08) 22. The school partners with businesses and community organizations in ways that promote students' learning (M = 3.62, SD = 1.19) 23. Partnerships with businesses and community organizations help expand my child's awareness and involvement in our community (M = 3.77, SD = 1.09)	c. Communication between school and community organization staff a. The family liaison role needs more clarity amongst staff d. School is chaotic/unpredictable	Partial Agreement

Note. Numbers in the quantitative findings column indicate the item number for the FES-2 item listed in the column. Letters indicate the order of the listed themes, subthemes, and FES-2 domains.