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**I, Vickie Mc Mullen , hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Urban Educational Leadership.**

It is entitled:

**Community engagement through Collective Efficacy: Building partnerships in an urban community to encourage collective action to increase student achievement in a neighborhood school.**

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Community engagement through collective efficacy: Building partnerships in an urban community to encourage collective action to increase student achievement in a neighborhood school.

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## ABSTRACT

The challenge of ensuring educational equity, closing the achievement gap between African American students and White students attending public schools has gone on for half a century. As we enter the twenty-first century, neither educational reforms enacted by the public school system nor legislative actions, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, with its accountability mandate have produced solutions that will insure that African American children are equally educationally prepared to pursue a post-secondary education or to enter the workforce with marketable skills that would allow them to compete for jobs which offer competitive salaries more than a step above minimum wage. In fact the gap is widening (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lee & Orfield, 2005). It has been suggested that public schools must change how they improve student learning outcomes and consider developing outside relationships (Elmore, 1996). There has been growing agreement on the importance of community involvement in schools (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005; Noguera, 2003; Sanders 2003). Researchers are continually examining what affect community involvement may have on the academic outcomes of children attending schools in urban communities.

However, examining perceptions and beliefs of residents in predominantly African American communities and what variables may influence individuals in those communities to commit to working collectively for the educational success of children in their neighborhood required investigation.

Using one-on-one in-depth interviews, field observations and documentation, this qualitative study examined long-term and short-term residents, and community organizational

representatives' views from one community on perceived collective efficacy. This study utilized the conceptual framework of Bandura, (1982) and Sampson et al., (1997) Collective Efficacy construct.

The findings suggest that using a qualitative approach provides data for studying perceived collective efficacy that offers comprehensive views and observations of conditions in neighborhoods (Pebley & Sastry, 2004). Unlike earlier examinations, my study revealed that many long term residents believed that their perceived collective efficacy which grew out of the strong relationships and ties, and the kinships that they developed, still exist today; and is central to their efforts to improve the quality of life for all residents in their community. The data also revealed that among short term residents, there appeared to be a lack of the same social support networks and kinships and willingness to build perceived collective relationships with neighbors.

The data collected suggest that community residents and community organizations working collaboratively with neighborhood schools may facilitate perceived collective efficacy which could affect the academic success of children attending those schools. However, strong measurable evidence was not found in this study.

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the many people who have supported me through this journey. Specifically, my mother Maria Betts Mc Mullen for her love and strength in the midst of adversity and for teaching me that his grace is sufficient.

I also dedicate this study to the many community residents and organizational representatives who gave their time to meet with me and for all the work they do to support their community and their families.

To all of my nieces and nephews but especially Ashley and Megan Lytle for their love for Aunt Vickie; I hope that my completion of this journey will show them the importance of setting goals and working hard to achieve them.

This work is also dedicated to family and friends, for their understanding, when I was absent from their lives to complete this study.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

The struggle for educational equity, closing the achievement gap between African American students and White students attending public schools has gone on for half a century. Yet as we enter the twenty-first century we are no closer to moving toward a viable solution that will insure that African American children are equally educationally prepared to pursue a post-secondary education. These students are also unlikely to enter the workforce with marketable skills that would allow them to compete for jobs which offer competitive salaries more than a step above minimum wage. In fact the gap is widening (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lee & Orfield, 2005). The achievement gap has spawned a deluge of research studies, however an organized solution to bringing an end to this problem appears to be elusive and public school representatives, find themselves on a slippery slope while state and federal legislators look to one another in hopes that the other comes up with the next infallible reform.

Scholars have offered numerous reasons why the academic achievement gap exists, poverty, underprepared teachers, lack of resources, scarcity of educational tools including technology, low teacher expectations, lack of parental involvement (Arnold, 1993 & Ford, 1996). Some scholars, many who should know better, have even taken a position in which they suggest that the African American community is an accomplice in the educational subordination of their own children. There has been a charge of anti-intellectualism against the African American community levied by (D' Souza 1991; McWhorter 2001; Patterson, 2000; and Ogbu, 2003), suggesting that cultural traditions and peer influences have resulted in a community where education is not valued. In their studies, (Anderson, 1988, 2006; Cecelski, 1994; Cornelius, 1991; Siddle-Walker, 1996; and Webber, 1978),

provide significant evidence that such a claim against the African American community is without merit. They support the historically documented attitude of African Americans toward education as a means of liberation and critical to the elevation of their community (Siddle -Walker, 1996).

When one examines the literature on the achievement gap, it overwhelmingly places the responsibility of finding a solution squarely and singularly on the shoulders of the public school system (Bali & Alvarez, 2004; Cummins, 2001; Hochschild & Scovronic, 2003; Rumberger, & Williams, 1992). Many point to the No Child Left Behind legislation and its accountability mandate as evidence supporting this strategy (Baker, Betebenner & Linn, 2002). Yet even with the measures of No Child Left Behind, enacted with the best of intentions and all of the new programs slated for reform within the public school system, we are no closer to a solution for closing the achievement gap (Fusarelli, 2004). Rosen and Herrington (2006) have found that the academic achievement gap has become not only an “indicator of educational inequality but additionally has become a direct cause of socioeconomic inequality” (p. 22).

The disparity in school performance tied to race and ethnicity shows up in grades, test scores, course selections and college completion and in the workplace (Johnston & Viadero, 2000). African American students reading and math scores are below their White peers; the gap between Black fourth graders and their white counterparts in both reading and math is 30 points (National Assessment of Educational Progress Report [NAEP], 2009). The dropout rate for African Americans is 19.5 %, ten points higher than for White students. The graduation rate for African American males is 47% compared to 70% for White males (Schott Foundation, 2010). As for Africans American students entering college 56% of them never graduate, whereas the rate is 36% for White Americans. In the workplace the socio-economic impact of lower educational attainment for

African Americans is even more profound when considering the disparity in the level of life time earned income between Black and White employees. Work life earnings for Whites at age 65 is \$1.1million without a high school diploma and only 0.8 million for Blacks (Levin, 2009).

The undereducated who leave public schools today continue to be the underemployed working in lower paying services jobs or limited manufacturing jobs (Wilson, 2009). Domestic manufacturing companies that are expanding have fewer job opportunities for individuals with limited education as a result of the changing skill levels required of workers to meet the demands of a global market. Employers are now looking for individuals with an understanding of technology and the ability to operate machinery that once was operated with the push of a button or the turn of a key, but now requires an understanding of sophisticated computerized boards. Additional skills required include the ability to follow complex blue prints, higher math proficiency, and the capability to work independently without direct supervision, not typically the skills required in past manufacturing employee hires (Lawlor & O'Toole, 2006; Murnane & Levy, 1996; Rodino-Colocino, 2006). Employers are having problems finding employees with these skills since individuals capable of passing a basic skills test need the competency of reading and math at a ninth grade level. The underemployed, typically high school dropouts with limited education in this tumultuous economic labor market are the first to become unemployed. Furthermore their unemployment status is, not just for a short term, as they are now becoming the long term unemployed with little or no prospects for future employment (US Congress, Joint Economic Committee, 2010).

These findings illustrate that African American students who drop out of school or graduate from high school with an inadequate education will no longer find jobs that match their limited skills, those jobs that provided a safety net for this population are now beyond their skill level. African

American students who are recipients of an education that has left them with severe educational deficiencies have the following potential liabilities, an inability to further their education, prolonged joblessness, substandard living, and homelessness. They also become a detriment to the economic growth of this country. An undereducated population poses a critical loss of future viable employees for the labor market, lower tax revenues, increased health and public assistance costs as it is significantly costlier to sustain a population destined to live in poverty (Belfield & Levin, 2007). The personal hardships faced by these individuals are certainly disturbing, yet there is an even more harrowing situation that exists. Research indicates that the level of education that a parent receives affects the development and education of their children. Studies have suggested that in terms of the development of the fundamental task of reading and writing, children raised in homes where the income is below the poverty level, read less and have language delays and a smaller active vocabulary possibly subjecting another generation to educational challenges (Qi, Kaiser et al., 2006). These dire consequences provide evidence that we can no longer leave the resolution of the achievement gap solely in the hands of the public school system. The return on the efforts of the public school system as the lead driver in attempting to eradicate or narrow the gap has led to minimal success. The repercussions that befall the recipients of an inequitable education are threatening to the future of this nation and its communities. (Belfield & Levin, 2007; Noguera 2003; Warren, 2005). If there is to be a serious commitment to improving the educational experience of African American children in low income communities, thereby securing their economic futures, we must consider outside sources that can effectively partner with the public school system and become advocates in the effort to overcome the challenge of educational inequity for the children in these communities. Partners are needed to “merge diverse self-interests and support common core values

and goals” (Bandura, 1997 p. 37), for effective educational change. The goal of the present study is to research and determine the viability of potentially engaging community residents in working collectively and building partnerships with community organizations in order to form collaborations with neighborhood schools that would lead to successfully improving the educational outcomes of African American children.

## **Background of the Study**

The challenge of changing any large institution is a formidable undertaking. The process is typically encumbered by a host of divergent strategies and ideas that are usually offered as a means of pushing forward the agenda of the “interested parties” (Henig & Stone, 2008, p. 3). The sad consequence of so many reforms; very little benefit for those individuals for whom they were initiated and the desired outcomes are rarely realized. The urban public school system in the United States in the 2005-2006 school year had over 98, 905 public schools in over 14, 598 school districts (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2005-2006). The public school system in this country has been called a “loosely coupled system” (Fusarelli, 2002; Weick, 1976) and, where there are elements that “affect each other suddenly (rather than continuously), negligibly (rather than significantly), indirectly (rather than directly), and eventually (rather than immediately), resulting in an image that is simultaneously open and closed, with independent components that do not always act responsively” (Fusarelli, 2002, pp. 203-205).

Of the Black students in the urban public school system today, 50% attend a public school where 75% or more of all students are members of a minority group; whereas the percentage of White students in the United States that attend public schools where 75 percent or more of all students are



members of minority groups is only 3.2%. (US Department of Education, 2006). The landmark *Brown vs. the Board of Education* Supreme Court decision of 1954 case was heralded and brought heightened hope to the African American community that this law would be the beginning of the end of unequal access to education for children in their community. Many in African American communities supported the effort of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to change an education system that they believed was far from being equal. With this decision, African American communities across the country believed that they would finally see educational resources that would equalize academic outcomes for their children (Cecelski, 1994).

However, many residents in these communities also voiced concerns over what the repercussions of the new law would be on the schools in their communities (Cecelski, 1994). African Americans believed that education was the path to acceptance in this country and worked diligently and earnestly within a segregated school system to ensure that their children would receive an education. Their desire was to someday see their children have the opportunity to achieve a level of economic and social security that had been previously denied to the African American community in a segregated society along with the goal of uplifting the race (C. L. Morris & V. G. Morris, 2002). The African American community forged an efficacious, collective alliance of residents, organizations, and businesses in the community along with Black administrators and teachers in those schools, that resulted in the creation of a culture of support in the schools that Walker and Archung (2003) called interpersonal caring and institutional caring. Foster (2005) noted that this kind of caring was “historical in nature and represented the collaborative dynamic to student empowerment and achievement in schools within the African American community” (p. 690). Institutional caring at the school level was exhibited by “school leaders and teachers identifying the academic, social and

psychological needs of students and through the school's policy arranged for those needs to be met" (Walker & Archung, 2003, p. 34).

According to the Children's Defense Fund Annual Report, (2010) and Orfield and Lee (2005) this is what we know to be true since the ending of separate but equal education was legally eradicated with the Brown vs. Board 1954 Supreme Court decision.

- The level of re-segregation for Black students has been rising since the 1980s.
- The nation's shockingly high dropout rate problem is concentrated in heavily minority high schools in larger cities.
- 85% of Black fourth graders in public schools are reading below grade level.  
In math, 85 % of Black students are achieving below grade level.
- Black students are more than three times as likely as White or Asian/Pacific Islander and twice as likely as Hispanic students to be suspended from school.
- 46% of Black high school students attended 2,000 dropout factories across our country, where less than 60 percent of the freshman class will graduate in four years with a regular diploma.
- 61% of Black children attend schools in which 50% of their classmates are from low income families.
- Minority children are far more likely to grow up in persistent poverty.

Edelman (2010), voicing her concern regarding the achievement gap, observes that "at a time when the number of poor and minority children in America is growing and the number of White middle-class children is decreasing, our schools are once again becoming isolated by race and class" (para 2), and voices concern at the re-segregation of schools. Orfield and Lee (2005), wrote that in large cities efforts are being made to "break large segregated high poverty high schools into small

schools, hoping that it will create a setting better able to reduce inequality”( para 4). Another remedy offered for overcoming the problem of segregation and low academic achievement involves the opening of Charter schools. However, Lee and Frankenberg (2003) found that current research data does not prove that students perform better in Charter schools, and a “high level of racial segregation exists in Charter schools” because these schools are located in highly segregated areas. (pp. 5-7). This is inevitable as long as there remains a high level of poverty in African American communities. Rothstein (2004) notes that an” impoverished neighborhood will typically mean impoverished schools and goes on to suggest that “we tend to provide weaker education in highly impoverished communities” (p. 10).

In 2007, the Supreme Court dealt a serious blow to desegregation with their decision that school districts can no longer consider diversity as a factor in school assignments (Jenkins-Robinson, 2010). The obvious reality that we are now facing is a re-segregated public school system that also contributes to the academic achievement gap. Consequently African American children living in predominantly low-income communities will continue to attend schools with a high concentration of African American students for the foreseeable future (Morris, 2004).

African American urban communities can no longer look to public schools or the court system to end the educational inequity that oppresses their community and keeps it constantly underserved. For the sake of the children that live in these communities, the residents must now take a look back and examine how the perceived collective efficacy (mutual trust and collective action) (Bandura, 1982 ; Sampson et al., 1997), that sustained these communities during a time of social and economic apartheid, in their history can be rekindled in order to advocate a movement toward

organizing and building partnerships with community residents, and community based organizations around the issue of educational inequity in their neighborhood schools.

### **Statement of the Problem**

“What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?” (Hughes, 1959 p.221)

-excerpts from Langston Hughes’ (1959) poem “A dream deferred”  
“Harlem, Selected Poems of Langston Hughes

The educational achievement problems of African American students from impoverished communities will not be solved solely by the public school system (Coleman, 1966; Gordon, 2005). Over forty years ago, in his report *The Equality of Educational Opportunity*, also known as the Coleman Report, Coleman (1966) was one of the first to suggest and open up for consideration that public schools were unable to solve by themselves, the academic achievement problems of Black students and that the public school system must look beyond the classroom for solutions. Elmore (1996) noted that schools must change how they lead to improve student learning outcomes, and must consider developing outside relationships. If you review the historical evidence of academic achievement of African American students the partnerships that were established between the schools and the African American parents and the community before the desegregation of schools stand out

as of important significance (Anderson, 1988; Dempsey & Noblit, 1993; Siddle Walker, 1996). This was lost as the structural partnership between the schools and the community shifted with integration. The social ramifications for both the children and the residents of the African American community have impacted the academic achievement of Black students (Cecelski, 1994; Edwards, 1993, Irvine and Irvine, 1983; hooks, 1996). Lightfoot (1980) wrote that a “critically important ingredient of educational success for black and white children lies in the power relationship between communities and the schools” (p. 7). Dewey (1915/1980) acknowledged that “the community has a role to play in the education of its youth” (p. 5). Yet, in spite of The No Child Left Behind [NCLB] Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), which has mandated the development of school and community partnerships in Title I schools, many have not addressed these requirements Epstein, (2005) and Ferguson, (2003) wrote that the “provision requiring family and community involvement is being overlooked” (p. 1).

Numerous scholarly writings have discussed the importance of community involvement in schools, (Epstein & Sheldon, 2005; Noguera, 2003; Sanders 2003). They have also documented the positive academic outcomes of children attending schools during the time of segregation in African American communities, resulting from residents of these communities partnering with their respective schools (Anderson, 1988; Edwards, 1993; Nettles, 1991). The issue under investigation is whether today those same communities will take the lead in working collectively with residents and community organizations to build partnerships with public schools that could lead to raising the academic achievement of the children who live in their communities. Hawkins (1970) noted that educators must look beyond “buildings, books, and curriculums,” (p. 12), to ensure the educational equity of African American students. Franklin (2002) wrote that “with the Brown decision and the

federal government's efforts in the 1950's and 1960's to insure African American children's access to public supported schools, many African Americans came to believe that they would no longer have to use their collective resources to provide "excellent public schooling for their children; now at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we know that this is not the case" (p 180).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of this study is to examine what influences residents in an African American community to work in a unified effort to improve the well being of residents living in their community (Korbin, 2001) through a collective socialization process such as collective efficacy (mutual trust, shared expectations and intervening on behalf of the common good), (Bandura, 1997; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997; Wilson, 1996, 2003). This study will investigate how a contemporary urban African American community produces perceived collective efficacy among residents; and how it forms partnerships with community organizations in order to mobilize those entities, to execute a course of action that will improve the educational outcomes of children living in their community and attending neighborhood schools (Brooks-Gunn & Leventhal, 2000; Connell & Kubisch, 2001; Ginwright, 2007, 2009; Rankin & Quane, 2002; Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999).

The findings from this study will provide information on what influences the development of perceived collective efficacy in an African American community. The study will examine how collective efficacy has influenced residents in an African American community to work collectively with religious, social, political and educational organizations to ensure the educational success of the children in the community and that a "community of commitment" (Hansot and Tyack, 1982, pp 249-262), a strong relationship between the schools and the community existed. This study will also investigate whether contemporary urban communities, in spite of social and political changes that

have occurred in these communities, are willing to work collectively, to improve the academic outcomes of children living in their community. (Buckner, 1988; Ginwright, 2005; Harris, and McKenzie, Lee, 2001; Mitchell, Florin and Stevenson, 1999; Morris, 2004; Morris, 2008; Sinclair-Chapman 2006; Spencer, 2001 & Wilson, 2003).

Lee (2001), suggests that collective efficacy may not always be spread consistently among residents throughout a community, that it may spread “patchwork fashion” (p. 35) over a social group. In examining the variations that may affect the development of collective efficacy in a community, this study will also look to determine if there are specific variables that may drive the development of collective efficacy in residents (Burton, 2001; Duncan & Raudenbusch, 2001). Burton, (2001) notes that these “unmeasured influences” (p. 152), critical neighborhood variables can best be captured through the use of ethnographic methods. Sampson, Earls and Raudenbauch (1997), argue that development of collective efficacy in a neighborhood occurs not only with the sharing of mutual trust and shared goals (social cohesion), but also the ability to regulate itself through desired principles (informal social control) and the higher the collective efficacy, it is more likely that neighborhood residents will work together on neighborhood problems and build and maintain strong local institutions (Pebly & Sastry, 2003).

The current literature persuasively calls for the re-involvement of the African American community in the educational needs of their children. (Edwards, 1993; Franklin, 2002; Mediratta and Fruchter, 2003; Morris, 2004; Nettles, 1991; Stone, 2001; Warren, 2005). Scholars have covered extensively the African American communities’ historical past involvement in their neighborhood public schools (Edwards, 1993 and Siddle, Walker, 2002, 1996), the problems that inhibit the schools’ community involvement (Sanders, 2001), the models for urban school and community

involvement (Sanders, 2003 and Schlechty, 2009), the miscommunication between teachers and school administrators and community residents, specifically, African American parents (Brown & Beckett, 2007). However, there is limited information or mixed results in the literature regarding what variables matter in encouraging residents in communities to link collectively to influence the development of children in their communities (Booth & Crouter, 2001). The element that is missing from these studies is the “voice of the residents” living in African American communities, offering their perceptions, experiences, ideas and critiques on community involvement in the lives of children living in their communities.

This grave oversight can only be remedied through an in-depth study that examines evidence (Merriam, 1998) of what is needed in order to produce the collective action required to build a social and cultural climate among residents in African American communities which could foster a community-wide commitment for championing partnerships with neighborhood schools to raise the academic achievement of the children living in these neighborhoods (Allensworth, Bender-Sebring Bryk, Luppescu and Easton, 2010); in the midst of the economic hardships confronting many of the residents in those communities.

Education reform needs to be funded effectively to work. This has been one of the criticisms brought against the No Child Left Behind legislation. A report by the Education Trust, entitled *The Funding Gap* (2005), revealed that “in 27 of the 49 states that were studied, the highest-poverty school districts received fewer resources than the lowest-poverty districts” (p. 2). The report also stated that in “30 states, high minority districts receive less money for each child than low minority districts” (p.2). The African American community understood that if their children were to be educated there was a cost that must be paid and they worked collectively as a community to secure



the funds to start schools in their community and to provide continuous support. Today, the funding for improving the schools in these neighborhoods requires economic resources that African American communities alone cannot bear (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

This study will also explore the strategic alliances that could be forged with community organizations and other resources in the broader community aiming to achieve educational equity in community schools. Beck and Ohmer (2006); Ohmer (2007, 2008, 2010) discussed how perceived collective efficacy can impact community involvement in poor communities, but they did not study the issue of education in these communities.

Another important area for exploration is the role that community organizations and representatives from neighborhood schools might play in promoting collective efficacy among community residents, encouraging a school-community partnership geared to improve the academic experience of neighborhood children. This study will also examine the benefits that the residents of these communities would reap from participating in and leading an effort to improve schools in their community that will in turn shape the destiny of the children in their community and may ultimately affect the entire community (Florin & Wandersman, 2000). Finally, this research will add additional evidence to the growing studies of how communities can “make their mark on the families, children, and adolescents” that live in urban communities (Booth & Crouter, 2001 p. ix).

## Research Questions

Mintzberg (1979) advocates that it is important for the researcher to go into the study with a “well-defined focus” (p. 585) to ensure that the researcher will collect data systematically.

The research approach used in this study was qualitative and enabled the researcher to enter into the community that was studied and examine the “cultural and social history of individuals through in-depth conversations and participant observations from their frame of reference” (Biklen & Bogdan, 2007 p. 2).

The Research questions that will guide this study are the following:

- (1) What do residents in an African American community perceive to be the variables that influence collective efficacy in their community (mutual trust, shared expectations and intervening on behalf of the common good)?
- (2) What strategies do community organizations and school representatives think contribute to facilitating collective efficacy in a predominantly African American community?
- (3) How do school leaders perceive the influence of collective efficacy on student academic outcomes?

## Conceptual Framework

Collective efficacy provides the lens through which this study was analyzed. Collective efficacy suggests that within a community, mutual trust and shared expectations for “intervening on behalf of the common good leads to a collective ability to undertake actions that achieve intended effects” ( Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997, p. 919). Historically, as a result of forced segregation, the African American community continually found ways not to be victims of their

circumstances, shaping the destiny of their community therefore the lives of residents in their community by working collectively. These collective efforts were critical in the development of schools in these communities, as they provided an education to their children that they hoped would lead them to a better life (Siddle-Walker, 1996).

The initial construct of collective efficacy was developed by Bandura (1982) and it is a variation of his self-efficacy construct. Bandura (1997) indicated “ that individuals are capable of overcoming any number of disadvantages if they believe their actions will make a difference in their lives and a resilient sense of efficacy enables individuals to do extraordinary things by productive use of their skills in the face of overwhelming obstacles” (Bandura, 1997 p. 478).

By including collective efficacy, to his social cognitive theory Bandura recognized the challenges that individuals face in an ever-changing and complex world required “sustained collective effort to produce any significant change and the strength of groups, organizations, and even nations lies partly in people’s sense of collective efficacy that they can solve their problems and improve their lives through concerted effort” (Bandura, 1997 p. 478).

Perceived collective efficacy, offers community residents an opportunity to forge partnerships as a unified entity to meet the challenges in their communities, sharing each other’s strengths and overcoming their own apprehensions of influencing change for the chance to improve their lives. The completion of these tasks “are the product not only of shared knowledge and skills of its different members, but also of the interactive, coordinative, and synergistic dynamics of their transactions” Bandura (1997 p. 480). The strength of “families, communities, organizations, and social institutions, lies in people’s sense of collective efficacy” (Bandura, 1997 p. 477). Quane and Rankin (2002) in their study on youth outcomes suggested that communities perceived collective efficacy has a positive effect

on youth outcomes and believed that other research should focus on how neighborhoods influence schools.

The continuing achievement gap has initiated a call for increasing the involvement of residents in African American communities to partner with schools in their communities to work toward finding solutions to alleviate this problem, championing the academic success of their children. Significant economic and social changes have impacted many of the residents living in these communities which may have some effect on the building of collective efficacy among residents “that are representative of the community” (Cantillon, Egeren, Foster-Fishman & Pierce, 2007 p. 96; Chaiskin & Joseph, 2009). Sampson et al., (1999, 1997) in their broader application of collective efficacy and its affect on neighborhoods found that community networks in a modern urban community do not have to have strong private ties, that the focus should instead be on social efficacy, “emphasizing shared beliefs in a neighborhoods conjoint capability for action to achieve an intended effect, and hence an active sense of engagement on the part of residents” (Sampson, Morenoff & Raudenbush , 2001 p.521). The paramount goal is to acquire some level of working trust, social cohesion and informal social control among residents in the community in order to ensure that shared expectations and beliefs take root to realize collective as opposed to forced goals” ( Sampson, et. al, 1997 p. 918).

Bandura (1997) suggests that the individual’s beliefs in collective efficacy may influence the “futures they seek to achieve through collective action” (p. 2). Carroll, Rosson, and Zhou (2005) found that community collective efficacy “influences peoples tendencies toward community-oriented behaviors, including planning and use of shared resources and a willingness to persist in the face of internal conflicts, political challenges or social concerns” (p. 2).

## **Limitations of the Study**

The case study focused only on one African American community in this Midwestern city. The range of residents interviewed in one community will limit the study because the sample did not represent residents from every block in the community.

Additionally, this study focused on community and school partnerships with one elementary school in this community, the only neighborhood school, with a majority of the students attending this school living in this community. This school was also chosen as a result of studies indicating that African American students' academic performance difficulties begin early in their schooling and educational reform efforts have been proven to be more successful at the elementary level (Murphy & Datnow, 2003). Furthermore, data on the effect of collective efficacy on the academic outcomes of children in neighborhood schools was collected from two participant sources only, the school Assistant Principal and the Community Resource coordinator from within the school.

However the findings from this study can be used as a benchmark for future studies on what variables are perceived to influence collective efficacy and efficacious action by community residents for the purpose of encouraging community residents to become involved in school reform (Quane & Rankin, 2002).

The findings from this study may not be equally beneficial in providing evidence to improve the educational outcomes of children in middle and high schools. There is substantial difference in the strategies required to assure positive educational outcomes for middle and high schools students through the partnerships of schools, parents and communities (Barber & Olsen, 2004; Eccles, 1996; Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Hill & Chao, 2009)

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of the Literature

#### Introduction

Kasarda and Janowitz' (1974), "systemic" model of approach to community, suggests that "local communities are a complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life, ongoing socialization processes and local institutions" (Sampson, 2001 p. 94). The dimensions of this model include the "prevalence of interdependence and overlapping nature of social networks, density of acquaintanceships; intergenerational ties; network overlap, local participation in formal and voluntary organizations, and the span of collective attention that the community directs toward local problems" (Sampson & Groves, 1989, p 777). This "social control approach" to community (Sampson and Groves, 1989 p. 94) was prevalent in earlier decades in segregated African American communities, where residents in these communities,

"Invested their economic and social resources in churches, local public schools and community organizations, that reinforced the communities societal values and norms, that encouraged the possibility of upward mobility" (Wilson, 2003, p. 1101).

The struggle to gain an education for their children was a challenge that the African American community accepted with feverish determination. They were fully aware of the hardships or witnessed the struggles of others in their community, who were not afforded the opportunity to receive an education (Span, 2002). In these segregated communities, African Americans began to "sense their collective predicament as well as their collective strength" (Morris, 1983 p. 4). The

cultural climate that permeated African American communities efficacy and willingness to work collectively came as a result of a “group consciousness and solidarity” behind the mission of Education as a means of uplifting the entire community (Foner and Sitkoff, 1993). As legal litigation and the civil rights movements began the dismantling of Jim Crow Laws, African Americans began to work to end segregated education in hopes of equitable schooling for their children and a belief that this would lead to racial equality (Carter, Flores, & Reddick, 2004).

One of the greatest challenges that African American children face today is the fragmentation of African American communities that once, because of forced segregation promulgated a sense of perceived collective efficacy, a mutual trust among community residents of an unspoken alliance to watch over each other’s children (Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls, 1997) and to work cohesively insuring the best education possible for the children of their community within an “oppressive social structure” (Morris, 2004 p.72). The changes in these communities over the last forty years, have included, reduced numbers of middle and working class residents, decrease of home ownership, de-industrialization of jobs, brought on by the changing of the economy in many inner-city neighborhoods from manufacturing to service, and the exodus of manufacturing companies that continued production and moved to suburban areas. Additionally, a greater transient population has reduced the number of residents with long term historical ties to these communities prohibiting the intergenerational bonding between the older and younger generation of residents in a community (Dempsey & Noblit, 1993; Morris, 2004). These changes have led to a limited industrial and residential tax base for fostering resources for the community or their public schools and a weakened “collective kinship” that in the past supported their survival in a segregated society (Orr, 1999). Residents in these communities are bearing the repercussions of years of adverse racial, economic,

social, governmental policies and demographic changes that have impacted their community, for which they had no control.

Turbulent economic times, changes in the culture of the public schools including the decline of “relational power” (Cortes, Jr., 1993 & Loomer, 1976) between the African American community and the schools in their community, have resulted in community members not certain if they can make a difference in the educational experience of children in their community schools, this apprehension is especially acute among parents in these communities as a result of being made to feel unwelcome in their community schools by teachers and administrators who do not believe that they have the power to have any influence over their child’s education (Hoover- Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). These issues and the continuing educational inequity of African American children in urban schools have led to a resurgent call for the re-involvement of the African-American community in the educational decision making in the schooling of their children (Chou, Lewis, & Watkins, 2001; Morris, 2004).

Warren (1975) noted that the characterization of neighborhoods had changed and that holding on to past perceptions of neighborhoods as “social units that are primary groups and therefore must possess the face to face, intimate, affective relations which characterize all primary groups” (p.50), is not a contemporary way of defining a neighborhood. Sampson et al., (1997) decided to “highlight the combination of a working trust and shared willingness of residents in his developing concept of Neighborhood collective efficacy “as a task-specific construct that highlights shared expectations and mutual engagement by residents in local social control” (p. 634). This was a move away from Coleman’s concept of private ties to social efficacy emphasizing a shared belief in a neighbor’s capability for action to achieve an intended effect and therefore an active sense of engagement on the



part of residents. Sampson et al., (1997), in his challenge to social capital was acknowledging that the world had changed, urban communities have changed, networks in the community certainly are needed but they do not ensure social control. An important missing element is “purposive action, how ties are activated and resources are mobilized to bring about change” (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003, p.337).

According to (Fisher, 1982; Sampson et al., 1997; Wellman, 1979; and Wilson 1987) the collective socialization of urban inner city neighborhoods has changed from the 1940’s and 1950’s strong ties among neighbors are no longer the norm in many urban communities because friends and social support networks are decreasingly organized in an insular manner. The needs of the residents of urban communities have increased with their economic decline. Residents face struggles with housing instability, health and welfare, high levels of crime, and schools not meeting the educational needs of children who are many times victims of the problems of their communities. Sampson, (1999) with his theory of neighborhood collective efficacy, recognizes those changes, and emphasizes that collective efficacy, (social control and social cohesion) do not have to occur as a result of strong ties or associations, he noted that weak personal ties can be a driver for collective capacity and social action. Weakened social ties or limited ties of neighborhood residents who share a minimum level of trust, agreement on basic standards and a willingness to live by and enforce those standards can effect change (Sampson et al., 1997).

In the effort to influence collective efficacy in urban communities one of the greatest challenges is encouraging residents to believe that they can be contributors and bring relevant change to their communities. In spite of a strong need to galvanize to gain greater services for their communities, residents in these communities are dealing with the daily challenges of living in

neighborhoods that have been adversely affected by realignments of their communities, the construction of social policies and the nation's economic upheavals that have contributed to the stagnation of growth in many of these communities (Harris, Mc Kenzie, & Sinclair-Chapman, 2006; Klinkner, & Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2003).

According to Bandura (1977) self-efficacy is linked to collective efficacy, individuals must have a willingness to be forged into a "collective efficacious force" (p. 480). Woolcock (1998) wrote that that the building of social capital requires a willingness to build "systemic networks for neighborhood and social organization" (p. 161). Sampson (1999, 2002) suggest however that networks in a modern urban community do not have to be strong private ties that there should be instead a focus on social efficacy, "emphasizing shared beliefs in a neighborhoods conjoint capability for action to achieve an intended effect, and hence an active sense of engagement on the part of residents" (Sampson, Morenoff & Raudenbush , 2001 p.521). The goal is to acquire some level of working trust or cohesion with other residents in the community to ensure that shared expectations and beliefs are developed (Bandura, 1997 & Sampson, 1999). Duncan et al., (1997) suggest that in working to build collective efficacy researchers and others will need to study the demographics of these urban areas and develop strategies that are more intervention focused, targeting education programs for residents including specific groups such as single parent households and lower-income residents.

Ginwright (2005, 2007, 2010) wrote that one of the key elements critical to building collective efficacy in African American communities is building the capacity of African American youth to create better communities where they live.

### **Collective efficacy's effect on academic outcomes**

The concept of perceived collective efficacy where neighbors, through mutual trust and a common goal work collectively to accomplish outcomes that benefit their community is not a new concept to the African American community. The idea of community residents working together to bring relevant change to their community was key in the developing of resources that would help in the fight for their children to receive a quality Education. However there is limited research today, on how many of these communities are working “collectively” with other, residents, religious and community organizations, neighborhood school administrators and teachers to build partnerships that promote the educational success of children in their community.

From the end of slavery to the Brown v Board of Education decision in 1954, outlawing legal segregation in Education, white legislators in most of the southern states ( and many northern states) prohibited the use of public funds to provide equal funding for schools attended by African American students (Franklin, 2002). African Americans recognized the “value of literacy and schooling for themselves and their children” (p.175) and understood that schooling was closely associated with freedom. The earliest establishment of educational institutions came into existence through the African American's community's collective efforts; members of African American social and fraternal groups, women's clubs and organizations, and religious denominations in local black communities (Klugh, 2005). Community schools did receive some funding from outside sources such as the Rosenwald funds, but they “never gave even one half of the cost of the school house” (Anderson, 1988 p. 13). Anderson (1988) explained that Black residents had to take on almost all of the cost of building a school when they decided they wanted to invest in a school for the children in their district,

Black residents of the selected school district were required to raise enough money to match or exceed the amount requested from the Rosenwald Fund, which was initially a maximum of \$350.00; the approval and cooperation of the state, country, or township school officers were required; all property, including the land money, and the other voluntary contributions by Blacks, was to be deeded to the local public school authorities; the school building to be erected had to be approved by Tuskegee's Extension Department; and the efforts in each state were to be coordinated by the states of Negro education and the jeans Fund supervisors" (p. 158).

Though these requirements were stringent, the poorest of Black communities were able to mobilize their collective resources to establish these schools (Anderson, 1988; Gill, 2002; Savage, 2002). They had to learn how to work the system. Black parents overwhelmingly supported these schools, providing them with necessities (Walker, 1996). The schools became community institutions where "community members could focus their collective energies on a common goal; they could "invest in each other and actively create resources to improve their lives" (Greenbaum, 2002 p. 19).

The integration of the school system bore serious consequences for the community school institutions in Black communities. Blacks "sacrificed their leadership traditions, school culture and educational heritage for the benefits of desegregation" (Cecelski, 1994, pp. 8- 9). With school closings in their neighborhoods, dismissals of African American teachers and administrators who were once important members of the professional class in those communities and the transfer of control out of these communities of their schools have impacted the "educational heritage of these

communities (Cecelski, 1994). Savage (2002) writes that these changes “undermined the arrangement of community-school institutional resources and the ability of communities to work together in community-centered and community-controlled institutions to motivate their youth” (p. 207).

Informed parents, scholars and educators know that schools alone cannot enable or ensure high academic achievement (Coleman 1966; Gordon & Bridgall, 2001, Wilkerson, 1985.) As Cremin (1975) wrote,

The public school has never functioned alone or in isolation. Where it has succeeded, it has functioned as part of a large configuration of institutions, including families, churches, Sunday schools, and reform schools, committed to essentially complementary values. When the configuration has disintegrated, however, as it has from time to time in our larger cities, and when the centrifugal forces of heterogeneity have overbalanced the centrifugal forces of community, the public school has been less successful (p. 8).

In a study by Small and Supple (1998), they discuss a framework of how communities play an important role in the development and well-being of children. They propose that the community which is defined with attributes of collective efficacy, as “social relationships that individuals have, based on group consensus, shared norms and values, common goals and feelings of identification, belonging and trust, influences children and youth through what are called community settings” (p.3) These community settings include the families of children and youth, schools, peer groups recreational youth programs, religious institutions and child care settings provide a first opportunity for African American children to begin to be introduced to values and norms and expectations that are

shared in the community through their interaction with adults in these institutions, they call this cross-setting communication. Evidence is cited by (Baker and Stevenson, 1987; Epstein, 1990) that children do better in school when parents and teachers communicate with one another on the child's needs. In addition, parents of children, who are acquainted and communicate regularly, are better able to establish common rules and expectations as well as more effectively monitor the activities of their children. (Small & Eastman, 1991).

In a study of African American youth in Oakland from 2000 to 2003, Ginwright (2007) looked at how collective efficacy is sustained and developed in urban communities. He describes the importance of perceived collective efficacy in the Black community a generation ago and how it was critical to Black society, emphasized through Black churches, fraternal and community organizations and Black schools. However with major issues facing Black youth, that include educational disparities, joblessness, crime and violence in many of these communities, new groups must also be considered when shaping new strategies for the building of social capital.

This includes making a concerted effort to include the voices of youth in the community change actions, remembering the role they played as activists in the 1960's to end segregation (Ginwright, 2010). Akom (2003) describes in an ethnography on educational achievement among Black youth in a Philadelphia high school how the National of Islam through its deep roots in the community provided academic tutoring for students. Ginwright (2005) borrows from Sampson's et al., (1997), definition of collective efficacy, and writes his definition to fit his concerns, "collective efficacy for children is produced by the shared beliefs of a collectivity in its conjoining capability for action" (p 33). He explains that "collective community-level activity means maintaining

intergenerational ties, the sharing of information and establishing clear pathways for civic participation by young people in community settings” (p.33).

Warren (2005) offers a framework for the need for school-community collaboration: (1) work to transform the culture of schools and the practice of schooling and hold school officials accountable for education gains, (2) improve the social context of education so that children come to school better able to learn, (3) foster parental and community participation in the education of children and the work of schools, (4) help build a political constituency for public education to support the delivery of greater resources to schools and to address in other ways the profound inequities in public education.

In a report prepared by the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago (2006), on Chicago Public Schools, from 1990-1996, they looked at five essential supports for school improvement: (1) professional capacity of the faculty and staff, (2) a student centered learning climate, (3) ambitious instruction and parent-community ties (4) effective school leadership (5) instructional guidance-intellectual emphasis and pedagogical methods. The report revealed that there were both improved and stagnating schools in both African American and Latino Communities. The researchers found that the communities where schools were improving were those communities where there was high collective efficacy, active religious participation and extensive connections to outside neighborhoods (Consortium on Chicago School Research Report [CCSR], 2006).

Communities where schools were stagnating had low collective efficacy (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu & Easton, 2010). In two specific communities, researchers noted that the school leader the principal, in setting the vision for their schools, included garnering support from the LSC’s (local school committees) elected by the community, played a significant role in running the schools. Those LSC’s that functioned most effectively, were in communities where the collective efficacy was higher

leading to richer student outcomes. (Consortium on Chicago School Research [CCCSR], 2006 p. 47). This same study was replicated again from data from 1997 to 2005, with the same indicators showing as key ingredients for success, (Byrk et. al., 2010). In the updated report, the study provided evidence that over one-third of the schools in communities with high collective efficacy improved in mathematics in comparison with 22 percent in low efficacy neighborhoods (Byrk et. al., 2010). Byrk et al., (2010) found that this was achieved in one school in the district, Hancock Elementary, through the efforts of the new principal who developed a plan for the school that included community participation. The reform plan included efforts of internal and external collective efficacy. Internally within the school, this included making school improvement everyone's responsibility and built collective efficacy with the community by reaching out and strengthening ties with parents and the local community including them in efforts to educate the children of the neighborhood. The principal initiated a state funded program that brought parents and children in pre-kindergarten through second grade together for activities from reading to computer usage. The school became a resource center for parents, with the development of a GED program and offered a job search program. A grandparents club was started to utilize the grandparents in the community and a Real Men Read program was launched to enlist adult male role models from the neighborhood. As a result of the efforts of the leadership of the school and the community, the school became one of the one of the most improved schools in reading and math in Chicago (Bryk et al., 2010).

In a study of urban school reform at 3 North Carolina elementary schools that ran from 1997 to 2002 (Strahan, 2001, 2002, 2003), collective efficacy played a strong role in building, a climate that promoted achievement in schools where 65% to 85% of the students received free lunch. The strategies of the schools followed the essential supports in the Chicago study (Strahan, 2003). The



schools developed a strategy that included, defining “success comprehensively” and developing a shared mission toward learning and forming partnerships to sustain growth. The schools worked to build collective efficacy inside and outside of the school. In all of the schools over a five year period the state achievement scores rose from 50% proficient to 75% proficient at all of the schools. In Hunter elementary, they credit their improvement to their outreach to the community and the recruitment of 74 community volunteers that included adults and interns from the local university trained by school personnel that worked with their students in reading groups. (Strahan, 2003).

In their studies, (Beveridge and Catsambis 2001; Bowen, Bowen and Ware 2002); Caughy, Emory, Franzini, and Harris, 2008) provided additional evidence that neighborhoods with high levels of collective efficacy have an effect on the academic achievement of children in low-income neighborhoods.

Quane and Rankin (2002) found that collective efficacy influences the social functioning of African American adolescent youth positively and calls for more extensive studies on how neighborhood collective efficacy influences the outcome of children, in their schools and community organizations that serve youth. Yet why are there not more studies? Quane and Rankin, (2002) found that the limited but growing research has to do with theoretical and methodological shortcomings, and “few studies that ground youth outcomes in interrelated social contexts and the lack of data sets that are appropriate for multilevel analyses of the effects of neighborhoods on children and families” (p. 79). Additionally, “empirical models used in testing neighborhood effects are typically limited to direct effects, through the use of only survey instruments (Beck and Ohmer 2006; Quane and Rankin 2002; Sampson, et. al., 1997, 1999) and no follow up with qualitative methods to obtain comprehensive information (Pebley & Narayan, 2003); leaving unexplored alternative mechanisms

that potentially link neighborhoods and youth outcomes” (p.79). Studies determining the dimensions that build collective efficacy have used neighborhood level measures, which have not identified the “means and sources of variation within neighborhoods” (Sampson, et. al., 1999, p. 657), These views are supported by (Pebley and Sastry, 2004) in their comprehensive review of recent research in the area of all neighborhood effects from collective efficacy, to social capital. They put it more succinctly, “significant limitation with these studies is how the effect of these constructs occur” (p 16). Studying these “collective socialization models requires an extensive amount of data, on all aspects of neighborhood social organization. What is needed is the following information:

The density of social ties and level of interaction among neighbors, neighborhood norms about monitoring others’ children and about acceptable behavior, the availability of successful role models and neighborhood leaders, and the extent of residents’ social ties outside the neighborhood. Institutional models suggest that the availability and quality of social services directed to children and families ( e.g. schools, day care, after school and recreational programs; housing food and cash assistance) are also likely to account for part of observed neighborhood effects (Pebley & Sastry, 2004, p.165).

However according to Pebley and Sastry (2004) progress has been made in this effort by the following researchers (Brooks-Gunn & Leventhal, 2004; Caughy et al., 2001; Raudenbush & Sampson, 1999). The most influential, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) and their colleagues in the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) in their work measuring collective efficacy have used two methods, of assessing neighborhood environments: (1) a survey of

neighborhood residents exclusively designed to measure neighborhood-level characteristics and (2) systematic social observation (SSO), direct observations of neighborhoods by trained observers.

Collective efficacy has been shown to have influence on youth outcomes, and studies have suggested its power to influence student outcomes in schools. In their studies, (Bandura, 1993, 1997; Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2004; Goddard, Logerfo and Hoy, 2004; Hoy, Tarter and Hoy, 2006; Hoy, Sweetland and Smith, 2002) examined collective efficacy in schools and its successful impact on student achievement. Goddard Sweetland and Hoy, (2000), considered how school organizations facilitate teaching, learning and improving student achievement using the framework of Bandura's social cognitive theory, specifically perceived collective efficacy. Perceived collective efficacy refers to the judgment of teachers in a school suggesting that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students. They theorized that the "same drivers of social cognitive theory as "with collective efficacy develop both individuals and school-level perceptions of academic emphasis" (p. 688) Schools can choose through individual and collective efforts to "value student achievement, and can act purposefully to strengthen member perceptions of the importance of student academic success" ( p. 688). Capable school leaders that set a climate in the school of valuing academic success may be able to influence teachers to strive toward that level of excellence for their students. Goddard, Sweetland and Hoy (2000) in a study of 50 urban elementary schools, theorized that schools that collectively emphasize academic success can show a difference in the achievement of reading and math scores. Their findings were the following: schools that worked collectively in setting goals for students and setting up a climate of high expectations, had a 16.53 point average gain in student mathematics achievement and an 11.39 point average gain in reading achievement. Increasing academic emphasis by 1 standard

deviation brought a gain of nearly 40%. These findings were from a population where two thirds of the students received a free lunch and 60% of the population were African American. Hoy, Smith and Sweetland (2002) measured whether Collective efficacy and academic press, (the extent to which the school is driven by a quest for academic excellence) could improve mathematics scores of high school students. The study included 97 high schools in Ohio, (both urban and rural area schools) and revealed a “significant positive relationship between the collective efficacy of the school and school achievement in mathematics, suggesting the greater the collective efficacy of a school, the higher the degree of school achievement in mathematics” (p. 82). The study also revealed that between academic press and collective efficacy, collective efficacy was the strongest predictor of school mathematics achievement.

Fullan (2005) in a paper discussing how to build a more responsible system of public education indicates that an important step in developing effective schools is to “develop a certain collective capacity of the full staff to make a difference in student achievement and make a concerted effort while building collective efficacy in the school is to engage the community-considering them as part of the solution rather than part of the problem” (p. 214).

**Strategies for building collective efficacy in African American communities (Building collaborative partnerships with community organizations and neighborhood schools to promote educational excellence).**

When considering the engagement of residents in the building of collective efficacy, there must be some consideration on how the economic and societal changes in urban communities have caused a shift in what defines them. These changes required development of new strategies that will be needed to encourage collective efficacy and to provide additional options to consider for building

partnerships that will assist in meeting collective goals for educational improvement for children living in these communities.

Many of these community residents are struggling with the daily challenges of living in poverty and some a sense of low self-efficacy. Pecukonis and Wenocur, (1994) write that these feelings will have to be released, replaced by belief that they can “influence events that affect their life and have the capacity to make a difference” (p.14). According to Bandura (1977) self-efficacy is linked to collective efficacy; it is difficult to forge a collective efficacious force, if there is self-doubt. Woolcock (1998) reminds us that that the building of social capital requires a willingness to build “systemic networks for neighborhood and social organization” (p. 161). A willingness to develop ties outside of their geographic area can be an asset in building collective efficacy removing barriers, expanding opportunities and achieving goals (Sampson, 1999).

Warren (2005) describes the actions of a school in a community in a low-income neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey and their efforts to integrate school-and community partnerships. The school organized a team of individuals, that included the principal, the after school program director, and the school social worker and teachers. This team recognized that the “parents needed opportunities for education and development” (p. 10) they offered GED and computer classes for parents and required volunteer time for parents in the school for these services. This led to an increase of volunteer hours of parents of up to 750 hours per month and an opportunity for parents to become group leaders in the school trained for this function by a local college. As the parents developed leadership skills they became engaged in policy and instructional issues at the school.

The complexity involved in negotiating school reform and the financial cost requires coalitions that bring a multitude of expertise to this important issue. Communities that are interested

in changing the educational experience of their children will need to consider forming alliances with Community Based Organizations (CBO's). Warren (2007) writes that there has been an increased interest in Community-Based Organization's already operating in low income communities taking an active interest in the educational success of the children that they serve in these communities. These organizations are hoping that the educational success of children in these communities will impact the future economic well-being of the community, attracting middle-class families back into urban neighborhoods and keeping those families that improve their status in the neighborhood.

Beck and Ohmer, 2006; Chavis, Floring, Rich and Wandersman 1987; Ohmer, 2007, 2008; Perkins, Brown and Taylor 1996; Sampson, et al., 1997 have found that residents in impoverished communities building relationships with community organizations for change in their communities, leads to greater collective efficacy; as a result of residents "ability to guide the behavior of others toward pro social norms, mutual support for children, social control and social trust" (Beck and Ohmer , 2006, p. 182).

Warren (2007) suggest that Community Based Organization's bring their expertise in serving the residents of these communities, and have experience working with residents in the, building of relationships and trust among residents. Mediratta (2004) wrote that increasingly Community Based Organization's are becoming involved with public education reform and help residents to "define common schooling concerns, project new educational possibilities, and research reform strategies" (p. 1). The lack of financial resources in many of these communities is also a major hurdle in the effort of reform, not only the residents, but also the schools in these communities lack resources. Developing partnerships can provide additional resources. In Chicago, public schools have worked

with a “network of philanthropic, corporate and Community Based Organizations” strategically to build community schools (Warren 2007 p. 50).

Anyon (2005) proposes that education reform could propel initiatives to advance a wider social agenda for families. Oaks and Lipton (2002) conclude that if this is to be done educators must look beyond the “technical aspects of schooling:

The logic and strategies employed in social political movements-in contrast to those found in organizational change models-are more likely to expose, challenge, and if successful, disrupt the prevailing norms and politics of schooling inequality that frustrate equity-focused reforms. Without attention to these dynamics, such reforms are abandoned entirely or implemented in ways that actually replicate (perhaps in a different guise) the stratified status quo (p 383).

Warren (2006) suggests that administrators specifically principals must take the lead in collaborative partnerships with the community and share their leadership with non-educators.

Warren (2005, 2007) sees the collaboration of community organizations, residents and schools as a “foundation for the political effort necessary to address school and community inequality” (Warren, 2007 p 50). Mediratta (2004) wrote that “the literature suggest that community involvement for school reform has brought some changes” (p.1). However, more evidence is needed that shows clear gains in schooling outcomes linked to community organizing and involvement efforts.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This study will explore through their views and perceptions, what influences residents in an African American community to produce the collective efficacy conducive to the creation of a social and cultural climate that fosters a community-wide commitment to building coalitions among the community organizations interested in partnering with neighborhood schools for the purpose of raising the academic achievement of children living in those neighborhoods. This chapter describes the research methods used in this study

#### **Research Design**

This was a qualitative single case study made up of a number of smaller cases-the stories of community residents and community organization representatives (Patton, 2000, Yin, 2003). Multiple case studies are often considered more persuasive and the study is then regarded as more substantial (Herriot & Firestone, 1983). The specific case study design was ethnographic. Patton (2002) describes qualitative research as a “people-oriented inquiry that takes place in ‘real world settings’ (p. 27). It is a research methodology that requires the researcher to “look deeply at other people’s lives”. Patton, (2002, p. 35). Ethnographic methods of capturing research data, participant observation, interviews and document analysis (organizational reports, community history and demographic profiles), are methods for “reconstructing and analyzing a case” (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993 p. 1). Using ethnographic methodology, specifically, oral history interviews in this inquiry for reporting



out were appropriate for discovering, obtaining and revealing information. The methodology allowed for getting out in the field “sharing the time and space” with participants in this study and obtaining first person narratives and testimonies “(Abbott, 1997, p 1152; Bilken and Bogden, 2007; Gille and O’ Riain, 2002; Yow 2005). The research questions demanded participating in “describing a way of life of a people, their current and historical actions and their cultural basis of their peoplehood” (Vidich and Lyman, 2000, p. 38) and applying “ the findings from a cultural perspective” (Wolcott 1980, p 59; Chambers 2000). Burton (2001) notes that ethnographic studies can provide “intense, continuous observations” (p. 151) in specific environments or cultures which can in turn reveal valuable insights on nuanced neighborhood processes that are not captured in survey research” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Spradley & McCurdy, 1972, p. 151).

The knowledge learned from a case study according to Stake (1981) is enhanced because readers bring their own interpretation to the study. Patton (2002) points out the value of case study inquiry provides the researcher the opportunity to include “nested and layered” (p. 297), smaller cases in their study, stories of “specific individuals, groups or organizational units” (p 446). Olson (in Hoaglin et al., (1982) notes that case studies:

- (1) Illustrate the complexities of an issue; showing not one, but how many factors may have contributed to it;
- (2) Show the influence of the passage of time on the issue;
- (3) Obtain information from a wide variety of sources;
- (4) Spell out differences of opinion on the issue and suggest how these differences have influenced the result;
- (5) Examine a specific instance but also illuminate a general problem ( pp. 138-139)

Case study research provides an opportunity for the collection of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009). The research questions were answered using results from one-on-one semi-structured interviews, reviews of documentation collected at individual sites within the one community, informal observations of community events and archival reports documents.

### ***Context of the Study***

For the research and participant sites in this study, it was important to look for a community and organizations within that community that were reflective of the “phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2002 p. 40). The study was conducted in the community of Eden<sup>1</sup> a predominantly African American community located in a city in the Midwest. This community was predominantly White until the late 1940’s. The 1950’s brought a racial change in the community. The middle and upper class whites living in the community began moving out when Blacks moved in looking for housing after being were forced to move from the West end section of the city. This section of the city was a predominantly Black neighborhood, an urban renewal project that brought a new interstate highway through most of their neighborhood, resulted in the removal of housing units. Within twenty years Eden residents consisted of a “cross section of low, middle and upper middle-income Blacks” (City Planning Commission report, 1974, p. 5). The most current census data list the population of Eden today at 7,794; 71% of the population is African American (United States Census Bureau report, 2010) When you speak to residents of Eden, they will say that the percentage is higher. Unlike many

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<sup>1</sup>Names of individuals, streets, schools and organizations throughout this study have been changed for anonymity and confidentiality

urban predominantly, African American communities in the last forty years it has retained some of its middle class and working class residents. This in spite of the blight that has befallen the community brought on by a major downturn that began in the 1960's as a result of the economic hardships of the residents and the devastation of the business district. This deterioration in the community's assets was brought on by civil unrest, riots in the community fueled by the social and economic hardships affecting residents. In the 1970's the community was split in half by the building of a major interstate that runs through the community (City Planning Commission report, 1970).

This community of Eden at one time had one of the highest homeowner rates in the city (City Action Plan, 2010). Most of the residents living in Eden were homeowners; this is still true for those families that have been long term residents, living in the community an average of 25 plus years. There has been among these residents a shared understanding of the responsibility of working together through their religious and community organizations, in civic minded activities for the sustainability of the community. This desire to work collectively came from moving into a community where for many, this was where they bought their first home. There was a strong desire to sustain the community because of the investment they had made for a better life for their families.

Eden also has a population of residents with an economic income that is below the poverty level threshold; 22% of the single residents and 29% of the families in this community (United States Census Bureau report, 2000). The percentage of individual and families living below poverty in this community has been steadily increasing since 1980. From 1980 to 2000, the percentage of the population living below the poverty level in Eden, increased by 205% (City profile report to HUD, 2004).

There is a resurgence being led by long term residents of the community looking to revitalize this community. The Community Council is working with residents seeking improved housing for seniors and low income residents and improved community resources for neighborhood children and to help the unemployed to find jobs. The community residents are also concerned about the educational outcome of the children living in the community. One of the major concerns of the Community Council's leadership is the lack of participation in the planning of how to improve the neighborhood by residents in the community that have children that attend public schools in the community. Most of those residents are not homeowners (56% of the residents of Eden are renters (US Census Bureau Reports, 2010). Homeownership is decreasing while the number of renters and vacant units are increasing across the community. The residents that are not homeowners in the community typically are not long tenured residents, yet many of those residents, are members of the community impacted by the major problems that are affecting the quality of life of residents in the community.

There is a strong desire by Eden's Community Council that the voices of these residents be a part of the decision-making to ensure that the right solutions will be developed to meet the needs of all of the residents in the Community.

### ***Other participant interview sites***

#### **Community Agencies/Educational and Religious Organizations**

##### ***Public Elementary School***

The K-8<sup>th</sup> grade public elementary school in this study is part of a large urban school district that has a student population of 33,000 students, of which 70% of the students are African American; 23% are White 4% are Multi-racial; 2% are Hispanic; 0.5% Asian or Pacific and 0.5% are American

Indian or Native Alaskan (Ohio Department of Education, local report card, 2011). Two neighborhood elementary schools were merged three years ago and formed the public school under study. This school Eden Academy is the only neighborhood school in Eden, the majority of the students attending this school live in this community. The demographics of the merged school are the following: 400 students; 95% African American 5% Non-African American. Additionally, based on the Ohio Department of Education's statistics, 85% of the students are noted as being economically disadvantaged. The school is ranked as Effective, but the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, reading and math scores are below the state and federal requirements. None of the students in the other grades meet both the state and the federal requirements in reading and math proficiency.

#### *Community Council*

Eden has an active Community Council, which is a volunteer, community-based non-profit organization that has served the neighborhood since 1957. The Community Council has worked continuously to improve the neighborhood for residents and the businesses that remain in the community. The council has sought and received funding from the city and federal grants for enhancements to the housing of current homeowners in the community, and the building of new apartments for the elderly. Currently a grant is under consideration that would provide funding to renovate housing for low-income residents of Eden. The Community Council has also received funds to improve the Commercial district in the community, obtaining grants for small businesses to improve their store fronts. The education of the children in the community has been an important initiative of the Community Council since its founding. The Community Council has an Education committee that was formed to work on the education needs of children in the community. A partnership has been developed with the community's local university to help with the Education

committee's goal to support the educational achievement of children in the community. This has resulted in the development of a Saturday program at the University that offers tutoring and mentoring for students who attend the neighborhood school and scholarship opportunities for students living in Eden. The Community Council has also developed a scholarship fund that provides \$1,000.00 annually for the students in the community, who are interested in continuing their education beyond high school. The funding for the scholarship is provided by a corporate sponsor with business offices in the community and community fundraisers held annually. The current President of the Community Council has lived in Eden for forty years and taught in the public school system for twenty five years. Her teaching experience also included teaching at a public school located in Eden. The Community Council has 60 active members and 200 names in their database.

#### *Community Recreation Center*

Eden's Recreation Center provides activities for residents and has special activities for adolescents and teens. The center offers an After School tutoring program and provides a meal for students when they attend the program. The recreation center also has a special program for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8th grade students, where they are taken on field trips that include Reds baseball games, museum trips, trips to the local universities, and basketball games. The Recreation Center also serves as a Community Center for activities held in Eden. All Community Council meetings are held in the Recreation Center and the Community Council has an office in the facility. The Recreation Center has undergone a complete renovation, including a new swimming pool; this effort was championed by the Community Council in the neighborhood.

### *Religious Organization*

The Black United Methodist church in this community when it was started in 1805 was originally an integrated church in the central downtown area of the city. It was the only Methodist church in the city that allowed Black citizens to attend. When they were not allowed to worship in the church as they desired, in 1815, the Black members of the church decided to establish their own congregation also in the downtown area of the city. In 1825, the church established the first school for Blacks in the city; it was called a Sabbath school. Since the school's focus was on worshipping the Bible, the city allowed Black children to attend the school; however the members of the church, also taught the students to read and write. In 1866, the church partnered with the national Methodist organization to help fund the Freedman's Aid Society. This organization helped in establishing Black colleges in the South, i.e. Dillard University, Bethune-Cookman University, Clark-Atlanta University, Bennett College and Rust College. The church relocated to Eden in 1967, when they were forced to leave their downtown location as a result of a new interstate being built that ran through their old neighborhood. The building they now occupy sits in the center of the community and was formerly an all White Methodist church. When White residents began to leave this inner-city neighborhood, the building became available. The church currently has a membership of 150, and it is actively involved in the neighborhood. The Methodist church, partners with various organizations in Eden including the Black Episcopal Church in the community to offer parenting classes, for residents. Annually, the two churches hold a back to school event for the parents and children in the community. This year they gave away 400 book bags and school supplies to the children living in Eden. The pastor of this church also served as a member of the K-8 neighborhood school's Local School Decision Making Committee.

### ***Entry and Role Negotiation***

The process of gaining entry into this community began with networking with individual members of the community and sharing my ideas concerning the present study.

During my conversations with community residents, I explained that I grew up in a community, where the residents established a culture centered on the idea that there was a collective obligation and responsibility to ensure that the children in the community would have a better life than those that came before them. Residents in the community in which I grew up, understood that this goal could only be achieved through ensuring that each child received a quality education. In order to ensure this quality education was acquired, a partnership had to be formed with the neighborhood schools and the representatives of the schools; the principals and the teachers were seen as critical to achieving this goal. This partnership was not seen as something out of the norm, since neighborhood schools were viewed as important resources in the community and a gathering place for uniting the community.

I asked for names from community residents of individuals that I could meet with. An important resource was the President of the Community Council. Upon meeting with the Community Council President, she shared with me her wealth of knowledge about the community which is vast given that she has been living there for forty years. She was a former teacher in the public schools, and she is an avid advocate for the community. She also suggested a list of key names that could offer a good start to the purposeful sampling that would lead to building a list of potential participants for my study (Patton 2002).

Over the past year I have worked to build relationships with representatives and entities in the community who are working to help children in the community reach their educational goals. Those



entities have included the neighborhood school, recreation center and a religious organization with strong ties to the community. The representatives inside those entities that have contributed to my research have included the neighborhood school Assistant Principal and its Community Resource Coordinator-Parent Coordinator, the Director and Program Manager at the Recreation Center and the Minister in one of the religious institutions with an active involvement in the community.

I have shown my commitment to this community by volunteering for events planned for the children, attending Community Council meetings and doing work that supports the adults in the community who are struggling with the economic downturn.

Through this approach, by being seen as a contributor and not just someone coming in to collect information, I found that residents were excited and eager to suggest other individuals that I could consider meeting to gather additional information for my research. They provided me with new information that I considered valuable to my research study.

Once I completed the appropriate university and college protocols for beginning my research study, the groundwork that I laid by building relationships and trust in this community, allowed me to transition easily into the role of researcher. The volunteer work that I have done in the community has been appreciated and my interest in the community has been supported. My overall approach was to ensure that as I gathered research, I continued to listen to the members of this community and worked to share any resources or information that could be an asset to this community.

### ***Participants and Selection of Sample***

This study used non-probability sampling, the most “common form” Merriam, (1998 p. 61); criterion-based selection LeCompte and Preissle, (1993); or purposeful sampling Patton (1990) in deciding on participants for this study. I sought out “information rich cases” Patton (2003 p. 46);

residents in the community, representatives from community organizations that supported the community's effort of academic achievement for children in the community and school representatives involved in leading and educating children and working to ensure a quality education for the children living in this community . Those participants were able to assist me in discovering, understanding and gaining insight on “what is occurring in the community, the implication of what is occurring and the relationships linking occurrences” (Honigmann, 1982 p. 84).

There were two sets of participants for this study. The first set was residents of the community of Eden. They were divided up into subsets, long term residents having lived in the community for ten or more years and short term residents, individuals that have lived in the community for five or less years. There was an additional subset of the community residents interviewed whose full case narratives are in this study, the residents were selected because their interviews were more rich and comprehensive and thorough and their life epiphanies Denzin, (1989) would “illuminate my focus of inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 450). They were also selected because these were the cases that the researcher believed the users could derive the greatest understanding of the phenomenon being studied. (Patton, 2002).

The second set of interviews was from a purposeful sample of community organizations. Influencing individuals to become participants or partners of change in their communities has a great deal to do with what actions the organizations have taken to influence collective efficacy among the residents of the community (Ohmer, 2004; Ohmer & Beck 2006; Sampson, Morenoff & Gannon-Rowley, 2002; Sampson, Raudenbush & Felton, 1997, 1999). As a part of the study, I interviewed members of the Eden Community Council leadership including the President of the Community Council. I also interviewed representatives from the K-8<sup>th</sup> grade neighborhood school, the Principal,

the Community Resources Coordinator and the Parent Coordinator of the community service organization located in school to get their perspective on the value of school and community partnerships on the academic achievement of children in the community. Additionally, I interviewed, the Director and Program Manager of the community Recreation Center were interviewed and a participant from one of the oldest religious organizations located in Eden, members of this church have worked to serve residents of the community through civic activities.

### ***Data Collection***

Permission to proceed with this study was granted by the Institutional Review Board. This inquiry was conducted using an ethnographic case study approach, immersing myself in the community (Patton, 2002). Multiple data sources were used to explore the phenomena of interest (Yin, 2003). The data sources were one-on-one interviews, field observations of community meetings and document analysis, the review of historical documents, community reports and census data with the overall goal of identifying unmeasured variables that could influence collective efficacy (Burton, 2001). This section describes each data source and how the data was collected. The three data collection methods used helped to strengthen the inquiry of the study, Brewer and Hunter (1989), triangulate the data and increased the validity of the study.

The collection of the data was both structured and flexible over the five month period to allow for significant productivity and also to ensure that there was room for exploration of options that emerged as the investigation progressed (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

*Interviews* Semi-structured conversational interviews were set up with data sources that included, community residents, representatives from community organizations including neighborhood school representatives. Interview guides were developed for each these source groups.

The interview guides were designed to ensure that key questions would be covered in the interviews but would allow for the flexibility of follow up questions with all participants to explore subjects in greater detail. Prior to each interview a consent form was reviewed and signed by each participant (Appendix E). The researcher conducted the interviews at the participant's site.

The first source of participant interviews was with 15 community residents. The second source of participant interviews was with 5 participants from community organization that serve residents living in this community.

The interviews conducted with community residents were 90 minute oral history interviews, allowing the residents to focus on their "personal testimonies" (Yow p. 3) on the history of the neighborhood and their personal history in the neighborhood. These residents were divided up into two groups, long term residents living in the community for ten or more years and short term, residents living in the community for five or less years. The questions for these interviews examined the participant's perceptions of whether collective efficacy, social cohesion/ trust, informal social control and participation level (engagement in community activities) existed in the community in the past and whether it exists in the community today. Residents were asked to describe, explain and reflect (Yow, 2005) through examples or stories their perceptions and beliefs of illustrations of collective efficacy or lack of collective efficacy in the community (Appendix A). These participants also had the opportunity to discuss their views on whether Eden has changed from the time they originally moved into the community and to offer their insights on why if any changes have occurred in the environmental, social and cultural aspects specifically pertaining to "the sharing of outlooks and modes of behavior among individuals who face similar placed-based circumstances" (Wilson, 2009, p 4).

Using a combination of interviews and field observations for the collection of data from these entities will provide multiple sources of information on how these organizations support the residents of Eden and to “understand and capture the context within which community residents interact” (Patton, 2003, p 264). The interviews with community residents were 60 minutes. The questions used in these interviews examined how these organizations supported the residents of the community (Appendix B). The questions also sought data on community residents’ participation or lack of participation in these community organizations and what efforts were made by these organizations to encourage community participation. The interviews with the representatives from the neighborhood schools were 60 minutes. These interview questions focused on collecting data on the viability of collective efficacy as a means of encouraging community involvement and to gather evidence of its value on increasing the academic success of children in neighborhood schools (Appendix C). All interviews were audio-taped using a digital recording device and the data transcribed using audio transcription computer software.

*Field Observations* The observation of Community Council meetings continued for four months. The meetings normally ran for an hour and a half. During the meetings, I observed and took notes on who attended the meetings, race, sex and age, and how often. How community residents interacted before and after the meetings. I also acted as a participant observer Patton (2003) asking questions, during meetings if I needed clarification to further my understanding of topics discussed during the meeting. This was never an issue since having participated in volunteer activities in the community, I was known by many of the attendees of these meetings. I also stayed after the meetings to have conversations with community residents to determine if they were members of the organization, whether they attended meetings frequently and if they were actively involved in council activities,

and to find out some demographic information on the attendees, were they renters or homeowners and how long had they lived in the community. The observations helped me to understand the profile of those individuals that attend the community meetings. The questions designed for the field observations were descriptive questions and were developed to assist the researcher in “understanding and capturing the context within which community residents interact” Patton, (2003, p. 264) (Appendix D). All handwritten field notes were transcribed for data analysis.

*Documents* Data collected from documents included census reports, historical documents, from the city’s historical society on the history of the community and reports developed by the city planning commission to support this community’s revitalization and academic statistics from the website of the neighborhood schools website. The documents provided important information on the high and low points of the community’s’ evolution, its struggles and challenges. I reviewed these documents with the understanding that they had their limitations (Patton, 2003), as the researcher did not have a full understanding of the context in which these documents were produced (Biklen & Bogden 2006). However these documents were not used in isolation, and were augmented by other sources, the interviews, and field observations.

#### *Measures/Instrumentation*

In past studies to determine collective efficacy, researchers used only survey instruments that measured collective efficacy using scales (Ohmer & Beck 2006; Quane & Rankin 2002; Sampson 1997, 1999). The criticism of this approach has been the lack of follow up with qualitative methods of interviewing to get greater detail in the answers provided by a survey (Pebley & Narayan, 2003).

Burton (2001) states that,

“Ethnographic research adds to the investigation of neighborhood effects and offers the opportunity to discover, identify and define critical neighborhood variables that influence adolescent development and future studies must incorporate the integration of ethnographic and survey methodology” (p 156).

Burton, 1997; Jarrett, 1995, 1998; Korbin and Coulton, 1997, indicate that ethnographic research is important in identifying unmeasured variables in neighborhood effects research.

The interview guides that were used in this study contained semi-structured interview questions which descriptive and designed by the researcher to provide direction and some consistency in the interview process. The questions in this study that explored measurements of collective efficacy (**informal social control and social cohesion/trust**) have been used in the Sampson Raudenbush and Earls (1997) study of Chicago neighborhood's collective efficacy. I did not use a scale to rank answers as was done in the original survey, in my study, I delineated findings based upon responses to the questions during the interviews and the gathering of descriptive data from participant's responses on their perceptions and beliefs of what influences collective efficacy and what can limit collective efficacy. Follow up questions were asked requesting specific examples. I measured participant's **participation level** through their actual participation or interest in working with organizations in their community. I asked for information on the activities that they had or had not participated in, in the community. Sampson et al., (1997) found that collective efficacy was associated with organizational participation. I included questions in the interview guide that came from a similar model designed by Perkins, (1990); Perkins & Long, (2002); and York (1990).

The interview questions that were developed asked the community residents to reflect and focus on the way of life of their community. Through those examined exchanges came data on what influences collective efficacy, and what inhibits its development; all for the purpose of determining if the expansion of collective efficacy in this community could galvanize it around an important issue, the improvement of the educational experience of neighborhood children. I also examined through the interview questions, organizations in the community, where a foundation has been established in which networks had been formed through other residents, churches, schools, businesses to improve their environment” (Beck & Ohmer, 2006, p. 110), this data revealed the potential collaborative benefits of a partnership between community residents and community organizations.

### **Data Analysis**

This section explains the strategies the researcher used to analyze the interview, observations and document data. This study was a case study that contained multiple cases interpreting this data in addition to the field observations and the analysis of documents required that the data analysis should occur simultaneously (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1998). Analyzing case study research follows the qualitative process of coding, displaying the data, and arranging the events so that the entire story becomes clear (Polkinghorne, 1995) and the “conclusion makes sense” (Firestone, 1987, p. 19). In this single case study I obtained substantial and relevant descriptive information (Patton, 2002). Though this study is on one community, the data collected reflected different groups within the community, with multiple variables. Managing this data was critical to ensuring an effective analytical process.

The data from this study was analyzed using the framework of collective efficacy. The data collected from participant interviews, and written field notes from field observations was organized



into three measurements of collective efficacy: social cohesion/trust, informal social control, and participation level. Each of the three measurements findings were characterized as *Strong (S)*, *Moderate (M)*, *None (0)*. Participant's responses to questions were designated as strong if a participant spoke in detail about a specific sub-theme (attributes of the measurement) and followed up the question with examples to support their answer; anything less was marked as moderate; while participants that made no mention of a sub-theme were marked as none.

In developing a code protocol, I used a procedural approach developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) that recommended creating a list of codes prior to field work and using those codes in all field notes, and interview transcriptions. Reflective and marginal remarks on field notes were also an effective data management tool (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The simultaneous data collection and analysis approach used in this study was identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The step by step process is as follows [all of the steps occur at the same time]: (1) Start collecting data (2) Immediately look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that can become categories of focus; (3) Engage in coding (*Refer to figure 3.1*) and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories. Describe and account for all incidents in the data while continually searching for new incidents; (4) Collect data that provides many incidents of the categories of focus, with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories of focus (*Refer to figures 3.2 and 3.3*).

To organize the edited data and to display “a set of forces for change and trace the consequential processes and outcomes” (Miles and Huberman, 1994 p.148), I used a Mixed method analysis approach. This involved “stacking comparable cases, writing up the group/cases with their various variables then using matrices, cross case displays to analyze each group/case in depth.

Denzin (1989) suggest that cross case analysis provides the researcher an opportunity to collect multiple cases and bracket them allowing careful inspection for essential elements or components and differences across groups/cases (*Refer to figure 4.1*). In this type of cross case analysis, types or families were set up to determine if certain patterns, themes, configurations or relationships emerged (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994); in line with the theoretical frame work of collective efficacy and the research questions of this study.

Working with the data and emerging model the researcher discovered basic social processes and relationships (Bogdan and Bidlen, 2007) through inductive analysis, “immersion in the details and specifics of the data” important patterns and themes emerged” (Patton 2000, p. 41); (Taylor and Bogden, 1984).

**Figure 3.1**

	<b>Classification Codes</b>
<p><b><u>Research Participants</u></b></p> <p><i>Collective efficacy: Informal Social Control and Social Cohesion/Trust</i></p> <p>Code: CEIFS (Strong level of Informal Social Control) Code: CEIFM (Moderate level of Informal Social Control) Code: CEIFN (No evidence of Informal Social Control)</p> <p>Code: CESCO (Strong level of Social Cohesion/Trust) Code: CESCMI (Moderate level of Social Cohesion/Trust) Code: CESCNI (No evidence of Social Cohesion/Trust)</p> <p><i>Participation Level</i></p> <p>Code: PLS (Strong Participation level) Code: PLM (Moderate Participation level) Code: PLN (No Participation level)</p> <p><b>Participants Demographics</b></p> <p><b>Education</b></p> <p>Code: F (Did not complete High School) Code: G (High School Diploma) Code: I (College Degree)</p> <p><b>Residency</b></p> <p>Code: KH or KR (More than five years, Home Owner or Renter ) Code: LH or LR (two to five years, Home Owner or Renter)</p>	

## Figure 3.2

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### Collective efficacy Framework

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#### (Themes)

##### *Informal Social Control*

- Resident intervenes when children are skipping school
- Resident notifies parents of neighborhood children when observing deviant behavior

##### *Social Cohesion/Trust*

- Resident is a member of the neighborhood watch
- Resident drives elderly residents to do grocery shopping

## Exhibit 3.3

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### Participation Level

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#### ( Themes)

- Resident is a member of the Community Council
- Resident volunteers for community events or in the school

**Figure 4.1**

**Collective efficacy Matrix-Cross Case Display**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Ann W.</b>	<b>Mike T.</b>	<b>Dan S.</b>	<b>Mary J.</b>	<b>Jane D.</b>
<b><u>Informal Social Control</u></b>					
• Resident intervenes when children are fighting	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>
• Resident volunteers for neighborhood clean-up rallies.					
<b><u>Social Cohesion/Trust</u></b>					
• Resident is a member of the neighborhood watch	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>
• Resident drives elderly residents to do grocery shopping					
<b><u>Participation Level</u></b>					
• Resident is a member of the Community Council	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>
• Resident volunteers for community events or in the school					
<b><u>Education</u></b>					
• Did not complete High School ( <b>F</b> )			<b>F</b>		
• High School Diploma ( <b>G</b> )		<b>G</b>		<b>I</b>	<b>G</b>
• College Degree ( <b>I</b> )	<b>I</b>				
<b><u>Residency (Homeowner/Renter)</u></b>					
• More than ten years ( <b>KH or KR</b> )	<b>KH</b>		<b>LR</b>	<b>KH</b>	
• Less than five years ( <b>LH or LR</b> )		<b>LR</b>			<b>LR</b>

---

**Strong (S)    Moderate (M)    No Evidence (N)**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Research Findings and Data Analysis

#### Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine from their beliefs and perceptions what influenced residents in an African American community to work collectively for the improvement of the lives of residents living in the community. In this chapter I provide findings and results on what influences the development of collective efficacy among residents in a contemporary urban African American community; what can facilitate collective efficacy, and whether the collective efficacy of residents can influence residents to develop partnerships with organizations that can lead to the improvement of student outcomes in a neighborhood school from the views and perceptions of the residents.

The following questions guided the study:

- (1) What do residents in an African American community perceive to be the variables that influence collective efficacy in their community (mutual trust, shared expectations and intervening on behalf of the common good)?
- (2) What strategies do community organizations and school representatives think contribute to facilitating collective efficacy in a predominantly African American community?
- (3) How do school leaders perceive the influence of collective efficacy on student academic outcomes?

Numerous studies have provided evidence which suggests that perceived collective efficacy may influence the development of children and their academic achievement. The data from this study was analyzed using the framework of collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997). The data

collected from participant interviews, written field notes, observations of community meetings, and documents, was examined and organized into the three measurements of collective efficacy: informal social control, social cohesion/trust and participation level. Characteristics and patterns of collective efficacy began to emerge and were identified and used to sort and categorize the data.

### **Participants**

A total of 20 interviews were conducted. The participants interviewed included 15 residents living in Eden and 5 representatives interviewed from community organizations specifically, the Assistant Principal and the Community Resource Coordinator in the neighborhood school; the Recreation Director and Program Manager of the community recreation center and a minister from a religious organization in the community.

Interviews with residents, community organizations and representatives from the schools, provided in their own words, compelling descriptive narratives of their experiences within the community, regarding the evolution of the community's perceived collective efficacy and the reasons why it has changed. Also revealed were the efforts that are being made to strengthen and in some instances regain some of the diminished collective efficacy of community residents, including taking in to consideration a thorough evaluation of what constitutes a community with the intent of re-establishing collective efficacy among residents that leads to the improvement of the academic achievement of children in the community.

For the purpose of this study the residents interviewed were divided into two groups. Long term residents were participants that lived in the community at least ten years. Short term residents lived in the community five or less years. All of the participants provided important factors that described components which either revealed increased collective efficacy or those factors that limited

collective efficacy. Included here are detailed case narratives of six of the participants in this study, because their interviews were rich and comprehensive, and their life epiphanies (Denzin, 1989) “illuminated my focus of inquiry” on collective efficacy (Patton, 2002, p. 450). Multiple case studies are often considered more persuasive and the study is then regarded as more substantial (Herriot & Firestone, 1983). Comments made by other residents are also included and provided important data for this study. Table 1, represents the participants and their years living in Eden or years serving the community.



**Table 1.1: Participants**

<b>Residents</b>		
<b>10 or more years living in Eden</b>		<b>Years Living in Eden</b>
<b>Name</b>		
Ms. Houston		56 years
Mrs. Macy		56 years
Mr. and Mrs. Willis		55 years
Mrs. Gilmore		51 years
Ms. Bean		50 years
Mrs. Johnson		49 years
Mr. Brown		48 years
Ms. Best		40 years
Ms. Wasson		38 years
Mr. Lyons		30 years
*Ms. Hubbard		11 years
<i>(*Ms. Hubbard grew up in Eden left and returned )</i>		
<b>5 years or less living in Eden</b>		<b>Years Living in Eden</b>
Mr. Waylon		5 years
Ms. Allison		3 years
Ms. Dana		2 years
<b>Community Organizations</b>		
<b>Representatives</b>		
<b>Neighborhood School</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Years of Service to the community</b>
Ms. Rosen	Assistant Principal	Three years
*Mrs. Buyman	Community Resource Coordinator	One year
<i>*Also a long term resident of Eden-30 years</i>		
<b>Recreational Organization</b>		
Mr. Paul	Director	One Year
Mr. Sims	Program Manager	Eight Years
<b>Religious Organization</b>		
Reverend Morris	Church Leader	Fifteen Years

***Major Findings of the Interviews regarding Collective Efficacy***

Through analyzing the case narratives of both long term and short term residents and the reflections of their lives in the community, I found that there were variations between the key components, characteristics, actions of the two groups. Common themes among the two groups of residents suggested collective efficacy and/or limits to collective efficacy. Table 2 depicts the components, characteristics and collective actions which comprise the collective efficacy framework and the limitations to its development.

***Table 1.2: Collective Efficacy Framework***

<b>Key Components</b>	<b>Factors/Actions that increase collective efficacy</b>	<b>Factors/Actions that limit or hinder collective efficacy</b>
<b>1. Social cohesion/trust</b>	<b>Mutual trust and building of social ties and shared norms, values and common goals.</b>	<b>Mistrust of neighbors, unwilling or unable to build social ties and no vested interest in the community. No shared values.</b>
<b>2. Informal social control</b>	<b>Resident’s willingness to regulate themselves through desired principles-to intervene on behalf of their neighbor’s good.</b>	<b>Unwilling to intervene and assume responsibility for the common good.</b>
<b>3. Participation level</b>	<b>Resident’s actual participation or interest in working collectively with organizations in their community to solve problems.</b>	<b>Uninterested in being involved in community organizations. Lack of knowledge of benefits for becoming involved in community organizations.</b>

## Case Narratives

### Eden Residents living in the community 10 or more years:

#### Mrs. Johnson

#### *Social Cohesion/Trust-Building social ties and mutual trust.*

Mrs. Johnson<sup>2</sup> was born in this Midwestern city and grew up in what has been called the “Western End” of the downtown area. For the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Blacks lived in segregation in the west end of this city. Mrs. Johnson and her husband moved to the community of Eden in 1961, as a part of a large migration of Blacks, when a new interstate was built in the West End which uprooted a number of residents in the western end of town.

She explained why she moved to this community,

My husband and I decided we did not want to rent anymore and wanted a place to have a yard for the children to play in and a house for them to grow up in. We decided on the community of Eden, when it was brought to our attention by Mr. Hines, a Black realtor. At that time it was still an integrated community, on my block about 75% of the residents were Black and 25% were White, and the houses on the street were beautiful and it was a very clean street.

Mrs. Johnson and her husband raised four children in the community of Eden, a community where on her street as she noted “everyone owned their own homes”. Home ownership for residents in this community was a significant achievement. Many of the residents were

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<sup>2</sup>Names of individuals, streets, schools and organizations throughout this study have been changed for anonymity and confidentiality

resourceful in developing avenues for maintaining these residences, in some circumstances that meant one spouse working multiple jobs, while the other spouse worked in intervals or part-time to keep their homes. Mrs. Johnson worked in between the births of her children. Having a home also strengthened the formation of social ties among the neighbors in the community and promoted the stabilization of the community. The investment of a home provided residents with an incentive to work collectively “to promote efforts to maintain social control” (Sampson et al., 1997 p. 919). Mrs. Johnson would stay at home for a few years until the children were old enough to go to school and then she would return to work. The jobs she held included waitressing at a local restaurant in the city and also as a dietary aid in the local veteran’s hospital. Her final job was working for the US Postal system from which she retired. Her husband worked as a baker at a family owned bakery in the city.

During the time that Mrs. Johnson stayed at home, she was supported by other neighbors, continuing to earn money doing odd jobs for people in the community which included doing their laundry, ironing, and babysitting for the neighbor’s children. As a stay at home mother for part of her children’s childhood, she planned activities for her children, taking them and other neighborhood children to ballet and scout meetings.

When Mrs. Johnson first moved on the street, most of her neighbors were around the same age as her and her husband and they all had school age children. Mrs. Johnson and her neighbors worked at developing congenial relationships with each other, this connectedness was established from common shared values, seeking to create a safe environment for their children. They trusted their neighbors and their neighbors trusted them to look out for each other’s children. This social

cohesion and trust grew out of their family being willing to take on this responsibility and being granted the permission to do it by other families in the community.

Mrs. Johnson explains,

We all had small children, and our kids played together, that pulled us together, we were mostly husband and wives and there was only one single person, on our street. Her husband was killed by napalm in the Korean War, she also later remarried. We use to take the kids from the Sunday school and vacation bible school and let them play at the park. We would have a picnic. I would get volleyball and horseshoes for the kids.

***Informal Social Control-Residents intervening on behalf of the common good of their neighbors.***

An important element of collective efficacy is the desire of residents to intervene on behalf of residents for their common good. Mrs. Johnson discussed the formation of Block Clubs and their purpose in the community.

We had a block club, if there was someone on the block that had a death in the family; we always took care of and handled the family's needs. If someone was sick, Ms. Murray would call us and say so and so is sick, we need to get together and see what we can do for them. We would go to see what it was they needed. If they needed, shopping done, food cooked, housework done we did what we needed to help out. The block club was started by Mrs. Murray and her husband John. John was a school teacher. Mrs. Murray thought it was important to bring the people together on the block. We use to get the city to block off the street from Cane to Rock Lane. Everybody would put up umbrellas and bring out their grills and the kids

could ride their bikes up and down the middle of the street we would cook and have music and dance and have fun with all the neighbors and their children.

Since most of her neighbors were families with children, Mrs. Johnson discussed how they would look out for each other's children: You use to be able to tell the children what to do, even if the parents were not there and the children were disrespectful. If one of my neighbor's saw my kids doing something wrong and they chastised my children and said "I am going to tell your mama", the kids would say, "Please don't tell my mama, she will kill me". You could say to them, you know you are doing something wrong. You need to go home. You need to stop doing what you are doing and tell your mama what you were doing, because we are going to tell on you. We looked out for the children, when school was out and we would walk to pick up the children, I would pick up your children and you would pick up mine. We watched kids as they were crossing the street, because Rock Lane was a main thoroughfare and before they built the highway, it was really dangerous. We had to always be watchful of small kids crossing the street getting to Eden elementary which was up on Anna and Rible. It was right there where the senior citizens' building is now standing. That's where our kids went to school. We had to make sure they crossed Rible and Rock Lane. We did not have cars to pick them up. We walked to pick them up and the kids did things together.

Looking out for children in the community also meant determining whether children were going to school, or violating the boundaries set by parents and informing the parents about these behaviors.

You told the parents first. I did it myself. I worked nights at the post office, so I was home every day. I saw everything. I was always out in the daytime. I would see some of my friend's children. I was always looking out the window, while I was cooking. If I saw a kid walking up and down the street and they are supposed to be in school, I would let my friends know. One girlfriend of mine, I saw her daughter Teresa and four or five little girls walking down the street. They passed my house. I wondered why Teresa was not in school. I called Rachel her mother and I said Rachel is Teresa supposed to be in school and she said 'she better be'. I told her I just saw Teresa pass my house with some other little girls. Rachel said "I am going to call the school" and she called the school and called me back to tell me that she found out that Teresa had not been in school that day. She asked me to let her know where they were headed. I let her mother know that she was heading toward the park on Anna. Her mother left the job and found her in the park with the other girls and made them go back to school and Teresa had detention for a month. I had another situation where I saw a friend of mine's daughter had skipped school and had people over to their house. When I told her mother, she decided to come home early one day and caught her daughter at home. She told me "if you ever see them again let me know". They always knew Ms. Johnson was watching everything and she would tell. Years later I saw Teresa when she was grown and she said 'Mrs. Johnson, use to see

everything, she told my mama when I skipped school'. We had a good laugh about it.

***Participation Level-Participation in community organizations.***

Mrs. Johnson is still an active participant in organizations in the community, including the neighborhood Block Club. The participation of residents like Mrs. Johnson in these organizations was not singularly focused-participating only to support their family's needs. Volunteering activities provided an opportunity for residents to gather together to work to solve problems which impacted the entire community.

Mrs. Johnson volunteered and partnered with the schools that her children attended. She became actively involved in the schools taking a leadership role in the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), serving as treasurer, and as a room monitor. All of her children attended schools in the community from elementary through junior high school. The high schools they attended were in the neighborhood adjacent to Eden.

She took her son out of public school because he was having a difficult time with his academics and "I wanted him to have a better education". When asked if she thought her children received a good education in the public schools she responded: "I think they did, it depends on the child. I had a difficult time with my son. He did not want to be taught. I had to put him in a parochial school, hoping that this environment would be better for him". She knew her children's teachers and worked closely with the school when one of her sons was having problems in school.

When my son went to St. Luke (a Catholic school in the community), I knew his teachers. I had to get off of work and go over to St. Luke and sit in the classroom, I had to make myself known and be noticed to help my son get his act together. They



wanted him to leave St. Luke and they told me that he would be better off in public school. I said no, he is going to stay right here. Out of all of those White kids up there, it was only six African American kids that graduated that year and he was one of the six.

Mrs. Johnson's actions of support on behalf of her son are an example of the residents of Eden's community characteristic of shared beliefs in the importance of education for the success of their children and the supportive control of the community (Brody, Burt, Cutorona, Simons, & Simons (2005); Rankin & Quane (2002).

Mrs. Johnson was also involved in the Community Council, mostly attending meetings around certain issues that would come up in the community. One example would be the time when there was discussion around building a new Recreation Center for the community and how they were going to deal with getting rid of the chemicals that were underground in gas tanks on the grounds of the old bus depot, where the new Recreation Center was going to be built.

Mrs. Johnson has retired, and her children are grown, yet she still manages to volunteer in the community. She is an active senior involved in activities for seniors at the Community Recreation Center and those involving the children at the Recreation Center.

Before the Rec Center closed a couple of years ago for renovation, me and the other seniors, would interact with the children at the center, watch their volley ball and basketball games, during Halloween we had a haunted house for the children inside the center and would enlist the children in helping us with the Senior Prom that was held at the center.

The refurbishing of the Rec Center has been completed and a new Director has been assigned to the Center. To date those programs which integrated seniors with the children of the community have not been re-implemented. Mrs. Johnson like so many individuals of her generation has been a long time member of her church which is an African American Baptist church located in the community. Like many individuals in African American churches, Mrs. Johnson is actively involved in volunteering in her church (Wesley, 2010). She has assumed volunteer leadership roles in her church including serving as head trustee, superintendant of Sunday school, and a member of the church board. Her church members, provide a food barrel, which distributes food to those in need in the community, they also offer meals for residents in the community.

***Factors that are perceived to limit collective efficacy.***

Over the fifty years that she has lived there, Mrs. Johnson has seen many changes in Eden. When asked why she thinks there has been an increase in crime and violence, social problems and the changes in the social cohesiveness in the community, she responded:

Single family households, the need for parental guidance and discipline and the children need attention and love. That is why gangs are formed because that is a family for them. It changed because you did not have the parents that were like us. Today, these young people now a-days are belligerent, they are not much older than their children. You can't tell them anything about their children. I wouldn't even try you can't even look at them and I wouldn't even try. I don't say one word. We were all so cohesive and tried to keep our kids in line and keep the homes straight. Many of my neighbors died or went to nursing homes and their children decided not to keep their houses. The people who moved into the houses either bought them or

leased them. They did not seem to care about keeping the houses up. The riots of the 60's also took away most of the businesses in the community. Many of the black owned businesses and the white businesses in the community were burned up. When the expressway came through the community that took a lot of the businesses away. We lost a lot of conveniences, the drugstore, the hardware store, our library, our dentist, beauty shops and our fire station-all gone. The economy has a lot to do with it also. People don't have the money, they have to work two and three jobs, the housing is terrible, the apartments that some of these people live in are ran by slum landlords. They don't do anything to fix them up. I was brought up with a mother and father. My dad worked and my mom worked and he said he wanted us to have a better life than he did. We all worked, had some kind of job and maintained our homes and our families and paid our bills. We also have tried to get the young people to come to church. We see the kids playing out in the street on Sunday. We tried to get the parents to send the kids to church. We offered to pick them up. But the parents would not do that. There is a lack of interest.

I could sense Mrs. Johnson's frustration at the changes which have brought a different way of life for the long term residents in this community. In 1970, 53% of the households were headed by two parent families with children under 18 years of age. By the year 2010, only 16% of the households in Eden with children under 18 years of age, are headed by two parent families and 36% are headed by single parent females with children under 18 years of age (City Planning Commission report, 1973 ) & (United States Census Bureau report, 2010). As referenced on page 46 in the methodology-description of the research, Eden also has a population of residents with an economic

income that is below the poverty level threshold; 22% of the single residents and 29% of the families in this community (United States Census Bureau report, 2000). The percentage of individual and families living below poverty in this community has been steadily increasing since 1980. From 1980 to 2000, the percentage of the population living below the poverty level in Eden, increased by 205% (City profile report to HUD, 2004).

In 1960 Eden's crime rate was lower than the rate of this entire Midwestern city, and lower than all of the surrounding communities (City Planning Commission report, 1973). In a 2004 report commissioned by the Ohio Service for Crime Opportunity Reduction on the top five high crime reporting areas in this city, Eden was listed as having four open air drug markets (Ohio Service for Crime Opportunity Reduction Report [OSCOR], 2004). The report noted that the most of the street dealers in the community are African –American males ages fifteen to early twenties. In 2007, Eden was ranked #9 out of 52 communities for Arrest and Calls for Service by the local police department (Police and Community Relations-Rand Report 2007, p. 8). In December of 2011, police officers uncovered drug trafficking occurring out of an apartment across the street from the neighborhood school, Eden Academy (Police Department Staff Notes, 2012, p. 6). The community is actively working with the local police district on this problem, through its neighborhood watch program, the opening of an Employment Resource Center that provides job search assistance for community residents, and programs with the juvenile community courts.

I asked Mrs. Johnson if she attends the Community Council meetings today, since there is an organization in the community working to improve the community, she mentioned that she does not drive at night and she believes the corner adjacent to the Recreation Center is not safe after dark. I also asked Mrs. Johnson her thoughts on what she believed would help individuals in the community

to work collectively to improve the community. She responded, “They have to be interested in getting something done and being involved. You also have to educate people. You can’t get people to work collectively if half of them are educated and half of them are not. The educated will have to educate the uneducated”.

**Mr. Brown**

***Social Cohesion/Trust-Building Social ties and Mutual Trust.***

Mr. Brown relocated to [this city] from Alabama after leaving the military. He moved to Eden with his wife in 1962. He chose to live in Eden for family reasons, his sister lived in a community adjacent to Eden, not only was it closer to her but he also stated “it was quiet with good neighbors”. I asked Mr. Brown to describe what he meant by good neighbors and he responded:

People that you could trust with your family and look after your children and you look after their children and you share different things. You just feel comfortable with them. When I first moved here, I was living in an apartment building with 12 units and 3 floors, 4 families living on each floor; I pretty much knew all of them. I did not know anyone when I first moved here, but I got to meet the neighbors in the apartment building. Seeing them in the yard, in and out of the building, plus the caretaker lived in the building also and that was also the way we met.

Mr. Brown lived in two rentals in Eden. When he moved into the community, he began to build ties with his neighbors by reaching out to them and using others in the neighborhood to help him build connections with his neighbors. The second rental that Mr. Brown lived in with his family, two years later; was in a two family house a few streets over from his previous apartment. After three years of living in rental apartments in Eden, he bought a home on the same street where he last lived

in a rental apartment. Mr. Brown's family had grown to two children with another child on the way. He began looking for a home and he and his wife bought the house next door to the building where they were renting a year after he moved on the street. When we discussed his transition from a renter, to owning a home, and his relationship with his neighbors, following that change, he said"

It did not change a lot. I already knew the neighbors on the same side of the street I was on, including the homeowners. It was a unique situation. There were three houses on the side of the street I lived on, right together and they were in between the corner store, and there was a nursing home. I moved in to the two family home. Naturally, the family that lived there I met them when I showed up to view the apartment and they had already been there, so it was easy to meet the other two neighbors on the same side of the street. However directly across the street from me there were two apartment buildings. But still the owners that owned those two buildings, also lived in one of the buildings themselves, so that made a difference. The biggest dynamic we have that is different today than when I first moved into the community is the owners of the property lived on the property. We have these absentee landlords. That is the problem we have today.

Mr. Brown raised four children with his wife in the community of Eden. His wife was a stay at home mom for a long period of time, eventually working part-time at their church. He worked as a laborer and then became a Supervisor at a transportation company. When that company went out of business, Mr. Brown took a job as a long distance truck driver. The company wanted to transfer him to Idaho, but he declined the transfer, he stated "I was not going to put my family through that I did not want to see my family once every two months. I took the layoff and went into business for

myself, opening an auto repair shop. I was a one man operation. The shop was open from 1981 to 2002”.

***Informal Social Control-Residents intervening on behalf of the common good of their neighbors.***

Mr. Brown talked about the ethnic breakout of the community, his relationship with his neighbors and how secure he felt in the neighborhood when he first moved into the community.

When I first moved into this community, especially, on my street Bern where I am living, there was a mixture of people, Black and White living there. From Bern to Mason road, it was all White, but from Bern back all the way to the graveyard, there was a mixture of White and Blacks. It was more Blacks. The house I bought a White couple lived in it. The two apartment buildings across the street, a White woman owned and she lived there. You could trust your neighbors. If I was out in the yard working with some tools, like gardening tools; I could leave them in the yard and did not have to worry if they were going to be there the next morning when I got up. Half of the time, I did not lock my door back then. I had conversations with them equally, Black and White. I am not a person to run in and out of neighbors' homes, but anytime I saw them I would speak to them and talk to them. It did not make a difference to me. When I moved in Blacks owned as many homes in Eden as Whites, maybe more. Because Whites had started, someone said in the late 40's and early to mid 50s fleeing from the area, Blacks started moving in. I know this from talking to people. The first Blacks did not move here until 1946. At the time, we (Blacks) had the mindset of owning property. Most of us were proud to own a home.

But now, people are not interested, they just want to live for today and not worry about tomorrow.

At the time that he moved into the neighborhood, Mr. Brown conveyed that neighbors could trust each other and helped each other. He relayed some personal examples and his concern about the community today.

I had a big German shepherd dog, and when I when I went on vacation. My neighbors would take care of him. I provided the food. My neighbors on each side and in back of me would make sure the dog had water and food while I was gone. If someone was playing loud music, or blocking your parking you could count on your neighbors coming out with you to help you take care of the problem. We had a rapport like that. Other neighbors reached out to help children. You would call a parent regarding a child, if they were causing a problem. If a neighbor needed a ride to the doctor or to the grocery store, they would help out. But now you are afraid, to let your neighbors know when you leave home, because you are afraid you won't have anything when you return.

Mr. Brown's community involvement came later, but he did offer that his wife was involved in the PTA at the children's schools. He lamented about the problem with bussing children out of the community. "That is another problem in the community, a big mistake, you don't have community schools anymore" This was a community where most of the children at one time, walked to school and attended elementary, middle, junior high and high school in this community or the community adjacent to Eden. Mr. Brown and his wife knew the teachers and the principal of their children's schools.



He discussed one incident which describes his involvement in ensuring that the schools knew that he and his wife were involved parents. His son was attending the public junior high/high school for outstanding academic students, this is a school that requires testing to enter and it is located in Eden. The Assistant Principal called his home and reported to him that his son had been skipping school. He and his wife went up to the school and he took care of the situation in the school right in front of the school administrator and said to the Assistant Principal in front of his son, “call me again if you see him doing anything wrong. The schools could count on me to leave work if my children had any problems in the school. My children received a good education in the public schools”. His last child however went to a private school. Mr. Brown explains that “his wife noticed that things were changing in the community” and she wanted him to attend a school outside of the community. All of Mr. Brown’s children are college graduates.

***Participation Level-Participation in community organizations in Community organizations***

Mr. Brown decided to increase his community involvement as a result of the rise of criminal activity in the community.

I got involved with the Community Council because I wanted to do something about the drug activity in the community. I had thought about moving out of the community because of these problems, but decided I would first work with the Community Council, that it was the best way to try to deal with it. I thought the best way to do this was to become involved with the Community Council. This was around 2000.

Mr. Brown currently serves as a member of the board of the Community Council and participates in the Citizen on Patrol volunteer group which patrols the neighborhood. They act as the eyes and ears of the community for the police and report to the police any problems or activity that could potentially be a problem for the community to the police. We discussed how the Community Council is viewed by the residents of Eden. In our discussion Mr. Brown remarked that there are some in the community who may not believe that the Community Council has their best interest in mind. He made the following comments, “some residents have the same attitude about the Council as a politician, they believe and say that “they are going to do what they want anyway, so why should I participate?” He explained “that many community residents don’t understand that problems cannot be solved overnight and that, “it’s a process and people are very impatient”. He added, “when I became involved in Citizens on Patrol, I found that people wanted us to solve problems immediately. They complained that they don’t come to council meetings because no one is going to do anything. They want instant results”.

Mr. Brown and I discussed who attends the Community Council meetings. I mentioned that from my observations of the meetings, most of the attendees tended to be fifty and older, with very few of the younger residents attending the meetings, especially residents who are not homeowners. He commented,

That many of those residents don’t feel that they have a stake in the community. Many of the renters are transient and are not in the community very long. Some don’t want to open up to you; they feel that we have some ulterior motive for wanting them to get involved in the community. “We don’t trust each other the way we should.

Mr. Brown mentioned that efforts have been made to reach out to non-homeowners in the community. Several activities that were championed by the Community Council's housing committee in partnership with the local district police. These efforts included Council members working with residents in one of the largest rental properties in the community and assisting residents in finding social service agencies to help them with some of their problems. Furthermore a partnership was formed between the local police district office's police captain and the community police liaison officer and the management of the building in an attempt to reduce crime in this building and improve the living conditions of residents living in the building.

The Eden Community Council also opened up a job center nine months ago that offers all residents of the community access to job coaching, personal computers on-site, assistance in finding a job and other social services that may be needed. The Community Council worked to get the Recreation Center, refurbished, and lobbied for a new swimming pool that was opened by the Recreation Commission for this community's children. The hope is that these efforts will help to encourage residents to become involved with the Community Council's efforts to improve the community and to show that the Community Council can be an effective resource for the community. Mr. Brown also offered that the Community Council has been instrumental in getting new housing built for senior citizens in the neighborhood and was a resource for the public school system in the development of a new school building for the neighborhood school.

***Factors that are perceived to limit collective efficacy***

Mr. Brown, like many of his long term neighbors, has seen the community change as the long term residents age and leave the neighborhood or die. He explained:

Most of the neighbors I had back then are dead and gone. The sad part about this is these are the people that owned homes when I got mine. When they passed away, their kids or grandkids, or nieces or nephews, they were not interested in living there. They just wanted to sell it and get the money. That is why we have all of these absentee landlords. The house right beside me, the one I use to live in as a renter, those people moved. It's just that people have no respect for their neighbors. No concern I mean, I have to go out and pick up paper with the store being on the corner, at least 3 times a day, if I want it to be presentable in the front of my house. People come out of the store, and they drop paper on the street. At one time if somebody dropped some paper coming out of the store, you could say hey man you dropped paper in front of my house and they would come back and pick it up. But these kids today, walk around here; you don't know what they will do or what they will have. People just don't have the same respect.

Mr. Brown also described other ways that he saw the neighborhood changing, At one time I didn't have to worry about locking my doors or locking my car. I had a situation that happened, this was back in, maybe I would say 1990, and I had 3 cars in my driveway. My work car I did not keep anything of any value, in the car. This was an old car I drove to and from work. I had two other good cars I kept locked. I began to see that I had little things missing out of the glove department. I found out a little boy was sneaking in my car and going through my glove department every so often. And just so happened, I started paying attention when things started missing. I

started looking out the window and saw it was a little kid, probably 8 or 9 years old. And another thing happened, I would go to church every Sunday and I didn't have to lock my lawnmowers, I had a place under the house where I could push it. It was enclosed. Until I found out that little kids were going back there and one day I caught three of them in my backyard. I caught one of them, just rambling through my stuff and taking things. I scared one of them so badly, that I made him tell me his phone number; I did not want to call the police on him. I spoke to his mother and asked her to come over, but she would not come. But she told me, she would make certain that he would not be in my backyard. She would not come and talk to me, and that was a sad thing. I could have called the police on her son, but trying to be a good neighbor, I called to talk to her. I have said this for the last 20 years; the biggest problem is the lack of parenting skills. Thirty years ago, there were more two parent families. If there are problems who is going to help you? Somewhere along the line, the value systems have changed.

Mr. Brown also believes that economic changes have had an effect on the stability of the community and households in the community. He explains:

When inflation set in both parents had to start going to work. That was another thing that helped to destabilize the community. Well you know everybody wants to outdo the Jones'. That was one thing and the next thing was when they brought that program out about 241-Kids. [This is the number that is used to report child abuse in the city]. That was a bad thing because I know a lady had a son 12 or 13 years old and she and her husband were divorced, so she would go to work and her son would

cut school and bring kids in the house, and when she would catch him they would get in a fight and the kid called the police and had her arrested. That is one of the biggest factors leading to these problems; they took away the parents right to parent; that is one of the worst things that could have ever happened. Also kids, hanging out on the street, skipping school, I use to call the truant officer and now I call the police. I tried to do something about all of the hanging, out on my street, every day when I got home from work, the first thing, I would do is walk in my house and call the police. They would just gather over there and do all kind of crazy stuff. I could hardly get into my driveway.

When asked what he thought could be done to encourage involvement of individuals in the community to work collectively, he commented.

The only way I think you can get it across to them is to educate them to think long term. They don't realize what they have in this community. The community began to change after the riots. When most of the kids and grandkids grew up they were not interested in living in the homes we bought. People got in this kick to move into the suburbs and this is what happened. They were brainwashed to move to the suburbs, and now they found out that in those suburbs they have the same problems we have in Eden. Another thing is this city is a closed city. You can't just walk into a job, that you may be qualified for and so many of the Blacks, college educated they had to go to other cities to get jobs that they were qualified to do. What is hurting the black community is that the affluent people have to go elsewhere to seek employment or to get decent employment. The way the city is structured there is no incentive for any

Black person to stay, because the city does not offer them that opportunity or the corporations don't. I do have one child that lives in the community. She just wanted to be back where she grew up.

**Mr. and Mrs. Willis**

***Social Cohesion/Trust -Building social ties and mutual trust***

Mr. and Mrs. Willis are a married couple living in Eden. He is 90 years old and she is in her 80's. Both relocated to this Midwestern city from the South. He came with his family when he was a small child, and she came when she was 22 years old in 1945, as her brother was living in this city.

They married in 1945, and moved to Eden in 1955. When asked about the reason they had for moving to Eden- Mr. Willis responded "we wanted to buy a house and specifically wanted to build a home". Mrs. Willis, added other reasons "the location of the schools and the bus line, and we felt it was an ideal place to raise our children". When the Willis' moved to Eden they had five children. She was a stay at home mom for 21 years. Mr. Willis worked for the Ford Motor company for 30 years. When the Willis' moved on their street, there were six other Black families living there. All of the other homeowners were White, however after five years by 1960, all of the White families had moved from their street.

Mr. and Mrs. Willis described what brought residents together when they first moved to Eden. Mrs. Willis said it was the social organizations that existed at the time, such as the Federated Colored women's organization, and described how neighbors would socialize around activities for their kids. She discussed events that these organizations would hold for the children in the community, such as classes on etiquette and how to dress and also her children's involvement in the cub scouts. According to Mrs. Willis, "you don't see these youth groups active in the community anymore". She

indicated that these organizations were important in building relationships with other neighborhood residents made a difference in reinforcing the values she and Mr. Willis tried to develop with their children at home.

***Informal Social Control-Residents intervening on behalf of the common good of their neighbors***

When Mr. and Mrs. Willis explained that, when they moved on the street, “there was a feeling of neighbors looking out for one another, one of our neighbors Mrs. Davis thought it would be a good idea to have a Block Club. So we got together decided to start a Block Club and invited four other streets in the neighborhood to join the block club. The reason for the Block Club was to bring out everything that was going on in the neighborhood”. The Block club meetings took place once a month; at each of the Club member’s homes by rotation. At the meeting they would discuss important community issues that the community would rally around.

***Participation Level-Participation in community organizations.***

Mr. Willis’ remembers how the community joined together to get the Recreation Center built for the community. He joined the Community Council and worked to provide the children in the community with a place where they could go, “other than standing on the corner”. Mrs. Willis’ involvement in the community was with the PTA at the neighborhood elementary school. This school remains to this day the only neighborhood school. When her children attended the school it was a K-6<sup>th</sup> grade school. Currently the school has a new name reflecting its ties to the community Eden Academy and a new building. It now serves children in the community from grades K-8<sup>th</sup> grade. In describing her relationship with the neighborhood school, her children were attending and her involvement Mrs. Willis said:



I just went up there and got involved. That had a lot to do with Mr. Watts the principal. They wanted parents involved with the school and I felt accepted. You also began to build relationships with the other parents, and we would get to know each other and then the children knew that you knew their parents. I think they were more respectful toward you.

***Factors perceived to limit collective efficacy.***

We discussed how the involvement of parents in urban schools has decreased. One of the reasons mentioned is that some parents in urban schools are not comfortable with coming up to the schools and talking to the teachers in order to build relationships in the school. Mrs. Willis offered this commentary, “When they started busing these kids to different communities that kind of destroyed the relationship between the school and the parents. You did not have the involvement like you use to have”.

Mrs. Willis has some understanding of this situation. When her children became a certain age, she went to work, becoming a teacher’s assistant in what is still the only neighborhood school in Eden today.

When describing what is different in the community today and whether they have the same relationships with their neighbors, they both commented. “Well today, it is a different community. You see less two family households and more mothers trying to raise children by themselves. The fathers are not in the homes and it makes a difference”. Mr. Willis’ explained in more detail:

There is not enough communication between the parents and children today and that is due to the fact that most of the parents are working. No one is at home to help children receive training. We use to sit down at the table and eat dinner all together.

They don't do that anymore. Married couples today don't sit down with the whole family to eat anymore. Kids don't get any basic training anymore. We don't see the same level of respect from the new people who have moved into the community.

You can't reach out to them like you use to. The values are different. When I was younger, we would be in church almost all day, and now you can't get young people to come to church. The church helped to pull us together.

When asked what they thought could influence the community to work together, Mr. Willis' said, "You can't keep moving from one community to another. You have to have a desire for a better life".

***A long term resident's perceptions on the limits and building of Collective efficacy***

In addition to the expanded narratives of three of the long term residents, this study, yielded more comments made by other long term residents that participated in this study. Parts of their stories and comments were included throughout the study. Mr. Lyons is another long term resident having lived in Eden for 35 years. Mr. Lyons is a realtor who runs a small business in Eden. He offered some insight on what difference can be seen nowadays regarding the transition into the community of the long term and short term residents. This insight shed some light on the perceived collective efficacy of the long term residents, the problems that have faced the new arrivals in the community and why these issues have limited their building of collective efficacy with the long term residents. During our conversation he discussed the problems that have led to strained relationships between the long term and short term residents, why they have occurred, what has contributed to those problems and some possible solutions that may help in building a more cohesive community.

All the old established neighbors never had any problems with each other, it is the new families that moved in, and their makeup is a little different for some. Those who fit in, they get in, and those who feel that the community is anti-them they did not want to conform to the neighborhood because they felt that they were being asked to lose their identity. Some people come in and feel any encroachment on what they are saying and doing is to deny their independence or individuality. That is not the case. When someone would say, would you do me a kind favor, don't throw the trash in front of my house, please respect my property. Some of the new residents resented that. You begin to watch the makeup of people then you find, investors beginning to buy houses, and they took away that across the fence thing. The investors are not living in the houses, and they are not taking care of the houses. They took away the across the fence relationship that was a part of the neighborhood. This was a community that treasured children. We looked at them as being the future the hope of the community. People, even families that were outside the family, would look at children and speak to their well-being. They were seen as a precious commodity, and even in recent times. When I was growing up, if my neighbor saw I was doing something wrong they could tell me and I would listen, but if you try to talk to somebody else's children today the reaction may be different. It is the old village concept.

We discussed how the community has changed from majority homeowners to one half of the population being homeowners and the other half now being renters. Mr. Lyons said "when people

find themselves renting a place, they are looking for a place to make a home. If not, it just becomes a place to live. A home says something different than a house”.

Mr. Lyons described what helps individuals to think of a place as a home and provides an example:

People who act like neighbors. I remember, when I lived in the community of Warren and a lady came across the street with little gifts, cookies and I thought what does she think I am going to do with that? She was part of the welcoming committee. This was my former boss’ wife. We are now great friends. We need a welcoming committee.

He also describes how people used to reach out to build relationships on his block and also some of the changes in the community today that are affecting relationship building in Eden.

I remember people coming across the street asking, ‘you just moving in’? ‘Where are you people moving from’ ? Then the next day, they are back across the street, and then they become neighbors. Today, people have become so individual and so self centered. If you ask someone today where they came from, you may hear why you want to know where I come from, it is none of your business. I look at my children; they were raised in an environment with a father and mother. What happened was a culture was allowed to grow and to flourish; a culture of people disrespecting people. That is one factor of many. The economic impact is another. When a mother has 3 or 4 children and she is trying to scuffle getting her rent, taking care of kids all of those kinds of things, sometimes things go lacking.

I asked Mr. Lyons to discuss what he thought would could be done to bring Eden residents together to work for the improvement of the community. He mentioned the importance of getting people together.

Have people come outside of their houses. What happens is that you see that guy over there and this woman over here, see and greet each other and then you begin to know people in the community. When you start getting people out, they speak and get to know how they can contribute to each other's well being. Dialogues start and I heard you do painting. I know how you can get hold of someone to do painting. Or I fix tires or I fix whatever. Wares you bring to the marketplace. That is how businesses start.

Mr. Lyons also championed the importance of networking:

That is what I am doing with an interdenominational minister's group. I am going all over. I am going to Columbus. You have to be a pied piper. You have to be a good news and glad news bear. You have to hold up a sign of hope. You have to look like hope. Stand where people can see you. My father told me a long time ago. I told him I when I started this business. These people don't want anything. He said what are you doing? My father said they probably don't know what you are doing. Tell them what you are doing by putting a sign in the window. We quit talking to one another. We quit putting signs in the window. Get people to put a sign in the window and they have to tell you about themselves.

## **Eden Residents living in the community Five years or less:**

### **Ms. Dana**

#### ***Social Cohesion-Limited/No building of social ties and mutual trust.***

Mrs. Dana is in her forties, she has lived in Eden for a little over two years, moving back in 2009, in her recent transition back into this community. She lived in Eden the first time in the 1990's for four years. She left the community when a home her family was renting went into foreclosure and she received her Section 8 status. Mrs. Dana, and has been in a partnership with her husband for 20 years, six of those as husband and wife. She has eleven children, and currently five children are living in her apartment in Eden. She mentioned that two of her oldest children, have returned home. When she moved to Eden the first time, she recalls she did so, because as she stated "I liked the neighborhood school and it was on the bus line". She also moved back to Eden, because the land lord of a house that the family was renting in a community that is right next to Eden, refused to make the necessary repairs needed on the home. She explained "I was familiar with the area; I knew the schools and some of the same people lived over here. I felt comfortable here and that I had been here, and some of the residents made me feel comfortable. Mostly the older residents, they make you feel good".

Mrs. Dana has ambivalent feelings regarding her neighbors in Eden; she has an affinity for the older residents but does not have the same level of trust or regard for the younger residents living in Eden.

I asked Mrs. Dana to explain why she is more comfortable with the older residents of Eden than the younger residents. Her reply was,

They are not loud and they are well mannered. They speak to you. You can have a conversation about the community and about the [my] kid's education. Their conversations are different. They are not on material things. They believe in their faith in hard work and they believe in the true values of life. They are just different than the younger generation and the younger people I speak too.

She offered additional differences: "the younger generation they only live from day to day, they just don't see life as a gift. They live it too fast. They are not trying to build anything and have anything; they don't think about having anything in the future".

I asked Ms. Dana, if she thinks the differences between the older generation and the younger generation could have something to do with the difference in how they were raised. She indicated that she is not certain if this is or is not a factor and further explained,

I am confused about that but once you get to a certain age; you know the difference between right and wrong. You know you have to pay your bills, you have to work. I don't know if it is TV or what the kids see on TV, what they see period, the fairness, the not fairness. I think it is what they see and what they do, because you have to be responsible for your actions.

They are totally different.

Mrs. Dana offered her own explanation regarding what she believes is the difference between the younger and older generation.

They are selfish. My focus is to raise my kids and to see them graduate. That is my main goal. My mother raised us. She did for her kids, always in our lives, always at the school, always buying something for us. She always worked and still works. She

threw herself into us. She always did a lot for her kids. For her it was working and us.

Mrs. Dana's mother became a single parent after she divorced her husband. They divorced as she explains "before I became a teenager". She lived with her parents and siblings in a home in a neighborhood that runs from middle to upper middle class. She said they had "the best life". After the divorce they moved out of that neighborhood into a predominately Black community, the next neighborhood over from Eden. Mrs. Dana describes how after the divorce, "our family moved a lot". She dropped out of high school and admits that was something that she regrets. She had children very early, the first at age 15.

We discussed how the community of Eden has changed since the 1990's. Mrs. Dana explained what has changed and she put it succinctly "the parents and the crime". More explicitly:

I don't see the same level of care for the children. I see the kids out late on a school night; I don't see the same level of responsibility for the children. I want to make everybody's schedule to be like my schedule for my kids. I know everybody is different, it is a school night, and my kids are in bed at 9 pm, not 9:05 pm.

When Mrs. Dana, talks about the community of Eden, back when she lived here in the 90's, she reflects on how the neighbors were willing to help each other, their friendliness and the involvement with the kids.

They participated in birthday parties for the kids, sports, when their kids were playing sports; they invited my kids to come over, it just felt friendly. When I stayed on Spokane I met a lady and she made apple pies. She showed me how to make apple pies. She stayed across from me. I did not know her, but she saw me with



the kids. Those were the good days. I didn't even know her. At that time, one of my sons was sick, he had a feeding tube, and I took him to the hospital. They were concerned about that. The store owners were concerned. The stores were owned by Black owners. That is different. They knew your kids by name.

Mrs. Dana, does not see the same level of outreach and interaction today, that was a once part of the community, yet she does not proactively become involved in community activities which would provide her with the opportunity to build networks that could alleviate some of the problems that are affecting the quality of life that she seeks for her family. An important resource for community safety and neighborhood networking is the Community Block club. I asked Mrs. Dana if she was aware of any Block Clubs in the community and whether she would consider getting involved. She replied,

Yes there is a Block Club on Williams and Dana. I am not sure how much longer I am going to be living here in Eden. I am torn about staying here and being safer. I am not a scarred person. I have my husband and my sons. But if you can avoid conflict you try to avoid it.

There is a contradiction between Mrs. Dana's desire for a safer environment for her family and her unwillingness to work on building social ties with other residents in the community in order to take action which could improve the safety of the community. The building of social ties in the community will take some time. Mrs. Dana's desire to flee the community to seek a safer environment her family, is an all-too-common occurrence for families who have the same socio-economic status as Mrs. Dana and are living in communities like Eden. According to representatives in the neighborhood school, the constant transitioning of these families in and out of the community

has a negative effect on the children as they move from one school to another school, sometimes within the same school year. The disruptions impact the children, the school and the community. For these families, even limited relationships that have developed are typically not sustained.

Mrs. Dana and I discussed why some of the changes have occurred in the community of Eden. I offered an explanation of how the economic situation may have brought about some changes in how individuals are treating each other in the community. Ms. Dana agreed only slightly and stated:

To a certain extent, this may be true, but you have your own mind. You can't let something dictate how you live. You make your situation how it is. If you want them to get better, your mind has to think how I can get out of this. You can't keep on blaming the economy. You have to think of things that bring you out of your problems. I am a positive thinker.

I discussed with Mrs. Dana, how fortunate she was to have had her mother as a role model, someone who supported her children and was interested in their well being. Others may not have been as fortunate, and this may have created some of the problems that the community now faces. She was unwilling to concede that this could be a factor, but she did state her belief that an important reason might be that young people in the community may not be exposed to behavior that could deter them from some of their problem behavior. She again stated the following:

I believe everyone has their own mind. You can have all of the money in the world, and still do drugs and get into trouble. I think it is the decisions that they choose and make. There are not a lot of role models. But you know the difference between

right and wrong. Don't make an excuse because I am young or didn't know. You know what is going to get you in trouble. You can say that if you are 4 or 5, but when you are in your 20's, you know the right thing to do.

You are setting values for your children. You have some parents that have their children in the bed by 9 pm, but you have other parents who are allowing their children to be out until 10 pm or 1 or 2 am in the morning. I believe you set boundaries and values. That is all you can do. You can talk until you are blue in your face. It is what you choose to do. I think parents need to be more responsible.

***Informal Social Control-Limited/No intervening on behalf of the common good of their neighbors.***

During our conversation on the impact of some of the crime and violence that has escalated in the community, Mrs. Dana discussed how it is affecting her children, but did not discuss what efforts she is making as a resident of the community to work toward solutions to solve the problems. Her response to these issues pertained to discussing how it impacts her family, what actions she takes to safeguard her family and what the community was like in the past.

My kids and grandkids they don't feel safe and they are by me all the time. I tell them when they go outside. You can't go past a certain area. And I watch to see who they are playing with; I only let them play with certain kids in the yard. There is no telling. People are crazy. I don't think our police are helping us. They should be helping us more.

This led to our discussion on the change in the type of households in the community. I mentioned that other residents, especially long term residents thought that some of the issues pertaining to their problem behavior of the young people in the community stemmed from the

increase in single parent households in the community-a parent raising a child alone, unable to share those responsibilities. Mrs. Dana did agree that this could be a factor.

I was a single parent with my first 6, and I think it impacted them. Communication and time spent with a kid will focus them on doing what they have to do. I think that stepping out of their life completely destroys a child. I have experienced that and I have kids that have experienced that. It plays a huge part, it is not about the money it is about time spent. A lot of these fathers don't realize that it is not about the money but about the time spent with their kids.

Ms. Dana acknowledged that she does appreciate some of the residents in the community. She indicated that some will offer her assistance and she tries to reciprocate. She also mentioned how she will assist some of her neighbors with carrying groceries into their home after they have been shopping, and how they will help each other out with a "few dollars from time to time". Mrs. Dana likes that some of her neighbors who are homeowners, will offer jobs to some of the individuals in the community that are having a hard time. She commented on how some of her neighbors will let her know when they see her kids doing things out in the community that go against her wishes.

An older lady the other day told me, "Your daughter was riding her bike in the street". I appreciated her telling me that. She knows that they are not allowed to ride out in the street. I will also tell the parents if I know them, when their kids are doing something wrong. I let a parent know when I heard her daughter cursing up a storm when I was walking with my children from school and she appreciated it. I do like

some of my neighbors. We look out for each other and help each other out if we need it.

I informed Ms. Dana that some of her neighbor's had expressed concern with talking to parents about their children, nowadays, even though they would not have hesitated to do so years ago. She responded,

Yes the young people will snap, but I am going to come at you parent to parent. But if you choose to snap, I am going to say what I have to say and I will move on. I am just telling you because I am concerned. Even though your child is your child, I would I hope you would be concerned about my child.

She discussed why this was so important to her.

I had these kids, and I am going to take care of them. I put myself in this situation, and I am going to get out of this situation. I want my kids to be like that too. Don't think you can't do something. I believe they can do anything you put your mind to.

***Participation Level – Limited/No participation in community organizations.***

Mrs. Dana has always taken an active interest in her children's education, and this is the focus of her participation in a community organization. She has always been a parent who visits the school to meet with her children's teachers, to find out how they are progressing in the school. When discussing her children and the challenges faced in working with public school representatives, she commented, "it was a struggle, [with her oldest children] and it is a struggle now". She is involved with the Parent Teachers Organization and volunteers in the lunchroom at the school. She has reason to be vigilant, since one of her oldest children graduated as she explained "without knowing how to read". "I can't fault the whole thing on the school system. I know that some of the fault is my son

and his willingness not to do some things, and he paid the consequences”. She however, has concerns that she is not getting the feedback from her children’s teachers and she is not satisfied with the Education that they are receiving. She offered further explanation:

It is not a structured school, with structured teachers. They are laid back. Some don’t care or just will not communicate. It is totally different when we came up. Our teachers were patient, and they would come to your house and sit with your parents. But some of these teachers today are scared to open up or speak out. It is just about business and this is it. They don’t have any passion, and no feelings, I am not saying all of them don’t have passion, some have passion. But what I have not felt is the passion for my kids.

I spoke with Mrs. Dana about getting involved with the Community Council or joining the Block Club which she is aware of as active in her community, to work on some of the issues that she was concerned with, like the crime and violence, or her concerns about the school her children attends. She responded that she has not become involved, because she does not think she is going to stay in the community. I asked her why she was considering leaving the community. She explained,

At my age, I like peace and quiet I don’t like the riff raff, I don’t like the traffic and the violence. I am looking for something quiet. I just don’t like the guys and girls standing on the corner. I don’t like the trash, drug dealing; right in front of my kids, across the street from me. I am torn between staying here and moving somewhere safer.

Yet, she did go on to say, that there are “certain parts of the community I would stay in, there are certain parts of the community that are very quiet”. Her lease was up in February and she expressed the desire to move at that point. Some of her frustration stemmed from having had to move back into an apartment for the first time in 15 years. She did not own the homes that she lived in, but has preferred living in a home rather than an apartment. She expressed some of her reasons for this preference: “I don’t like sharing an apartment with anyone and I don’t like trash and cigarette and debris in front of my house. I was living in a two family home before I moved here”. Mrs. Dana revealed her desire to own her own home. “My dream is to own a house. I know that is one of those things, I set a goal and before I reach 50, I will have a house as an owner. You can say more, you have more input. It’s your property”.

Mrs. Dana did express some ambivalence in terms of how she feels about the community. She spoke of liking some of her neighbors the older residents, and described how she heard the alarm of one of the businesses owned by a resident go off one evening and informed the owner that this had happened. This long term resident a realtor has also met with Mrs. Dana to discuss housing options for her and her family.

Mrs. Dana mentioned that as a child her family went to church, regularly; although at the time, she did not like it. She admitted her faith is what has sustained her. “My faith has got me through a lot of stuff. If you pray and believe in your faith, it will get you out of anything”. Suddenly with the enthusiasm that accompanies coming up with the ultimate solution, Ms. Dana states emphatically and enthusiastically, “that is what they are lacking, that is what the problem is with our youth”. Ms. Dana, however, does not currently attend a church, nor do her children regularly. She expounded,

They will go to church with my mother every now and then. I have been looking for a church, the right church. I watch a lot of gospel channels, I listen to gospel music and my kids love the gospel music I play on Sundays in the house. We were raised Baptist and that is how I am raising my children. It is what you believe in your heart.

**Mr. Waylon**

***Social Cohesion-Limited/No building of social ties and mutual trust.***

Mr. Waylon moved to the community of Eden in February 2006. He moved to this community after his wife died. He currently resides in a building that is a residence for senior citizens in the community. When asked why he chose this community, he mentioned that he moved into this building, after looking at other similar buildings that provide housing for seniors and this was one of the “nicer buildings”.

Mr. Waylon lived in the community of Eden before when he first left the army. For a short period of time he lived in his cousin’s apartment. He has been involved in community activities in the community where he grew up. “I coached baseball. I had a knothole baseball team for several years in Mills. I coached men softball and I had women’s softball team we played our games at Winton and sometimes at Hamilton Park”. He also mentioned his mother’s involvement in community activities as the reason why he understands the importance of becoming involved in the community:

My mother was a community activist. She had the first girls scout troop in my neighborhood in Mills. My mom she was also a Cub Scout leader. I was in her troop. She was my first den mother. She was in the community beautification club. She loved gardening and doing things in the dirt. My mom had a green thumb. She



was very good at that. She was athletic and she pushed us to be involved in sports. She worked for two social service agencies and started the first girls' softball team in Mills.

Mr. Waylon also acknowledges that his desire to get involved comes from recognizing the importance of giving back to the community.

I wanted some way to give back, because I had some good people that tried to help me along the way, not just including my family. My first hero was always my dad to me. He was a good man. My father raised us in the church, gave us morals, he taught us how to be men. I give all of that to my dad, he was a good provider. But I had a good mom also she was the neighborhood seamstress.

We discussed the community of Eden and whether he feels that people in the community are willing to help their neighbors. He noted that he could. "I see some form of that when I go to the Community Council meetings".

Mr. Waylon decided to attend a Community Council meeting. He admitted, he does not attend regularly, but decided to go to a meeting, because he did not just want to sit at home and watch TV. He has been motivated to participate, by some of the residents in the community and their involvement in the community. In his own words,

I see some of the Community Council members when I go to the gym at the Recreation center. They are always inviting other people to get involved with the community. I see those types of things. I have not gotten out and seen the neighborhood watch, (the citizens patrol group) how it works, but at least, I see how readily the police are willing to be helpful in the neighborhood. That does not happen

unless you have people who are willing to work with the police. Those are the things that make me believe that they are trying to change Eden for the better.

Mr. Waylon also offered his opinion on whether he thinks; Eden is a close knit community. In spite of the fact that he has lived in the community for almost five years, he still is unable to make that assessment. “It is hard to speak on that. I don’t think I have been here long enough and got enough information to make that determination. I think it is a community that is going in the right direction. I believe that”. He does however believe that for the most part people in the community generally get along.

I think the majority of people do. This building [the senior residence where he resides] is an indication of the community. You can use it as a good barometer to go on. You get participation from some and no participation from others. Some of the people that should participate are not and that is pretty much the way I have seen it in this community and my old community in Mills.

***Informal Social Control-Limited/No intervening on behalf of the common good of their neighbors.***

Mr. Waylon has noticed that there is an interest in the well being of children in the community and noted some of the activities and programs for the children. “They re-did Hoot Park and added a new swimming pool for the kids. The local pro-football team and baseball team got together and put money and time in re-doing the park”.

Mr. Waylon has little interaction with the youth of Eden, and was honest in his assessment on whether, if he were to see children hanging out and missing school, he would extend himself, and intervene in that situation in this community:

I possibly would. That is touchy. I would feel more comfortable in my old community, doing that today, because, the kids in Mills know me. If they don't know me some other kids they know me. I would feel more comfortable addressing those kids, but not in a neighborhood where I am not well known. I don't know the parents. I lived in Mills enough years out there I got respect. I don't worry about even the young thugs in Mills. But I watch my back here in Eden, especially at night; I do know some of the young guys in Eden, because I went to the barbershop in Eden before I moved here. I know people in Eden, but I don't know them enough that I feel that comfortable, that I would walk up to them, because kids curse grown folks out. They don't take criticism well. I love kids and I want to see kids progress. In spite of their living conditions, I know they can. I did not graduate from high school and I should have. There [are] some kids it is hard for them but they make it, I have seen it. I see these kids and they are doing well. But today, I have to watch my back; I don't know what young people will do. When I lived in Mills, you could go to sleep and not lock your doors and parents knew the other parents in Mills. There were some parents, depending on how close they were to my mother, had the right to chastise me. The other parents in the neighborhood had the right to chastise. I remember the things my mother and father taught me I tried to teach my kids the same way. My mother was a strong disciplinarian. The schools, the teachers paddled you. I remember we gave our elders their respect I remember how we use to move out off of the sidewalk and let them walk on the sidewalk, but today, you have

to remind them. We would tone down the language. You would not curse in front of them.

Mr. Waylon's, acknowledges that having a relationship with the parents is one of the most important factors for building relationships which lead to residents intervening on behalf of children in the community. Taking the opportunity to get to know them and establishing a mutually trustful relationship, would enable the parents to believe that he has in mind the child's well-being and he would be able to trust the relationship enough to extend himself to intervene on behalf of the children. Sampson et al., (1997) suggest that residents are unlikely to act to "intervene on behalf of the common good, if the rules are unclear and people mistrust or fear one another" (p. 919).

Mr. Waylon made additional comments concerning the generational differences.

With some of our kids we did not instill the same morals and values we had, we did not take our children to church as much. That is a big part of what is wrong. Fathers are missing from the homes. Also we did not protest when society was changing the good things about our society. We became a reactionary race. We don't want to get out front, and participate and prevent something from happening. We react after something has happened [and], then we get upset. When there was a chance to add your voice and try to change things and keep the good things we could keep in our society and we did not do it. My generation we are part of that. My parents raised me well, and I taught morals and values to my kids, the right way. The direction they chose to go down after they left my home I had no control over. But my parents always had that control over us no matter how old we got. Yes we had community support when it came to that and today we don't have a lot of that because most fathers are not in the

home. Back then they worked and took care of the family, and kids do emulate an older figure. You can't tell a kid do as I say and not as I do. You can't say that.

I asked Mr. Waylon, for his opinion on what was needed to change some of the problems in the community and he offered the following suggestions:

We need to mentor and talk to young folks. Some kids have enough strength to make it out and some kids don't and that is wrong. I want to see them survive and make it. The way to do that is education. We have to educate, communicate and participate with our young folks, I think preachers need to do a better job; churches are a big influence in the Black community. We need people who are willing to try, and then have patience. You are not going to turn this around overnight-enough patience to work at it. You have to put the work in. You have to be willing to put the work in.

Mr. Waylon has seen the community of Eden change for the better since moving here.

I see that they closed a club right up a street here, I don't know if the club was part of the problem. I don't hear about many shootings in our neighborhood, just right up the street here it was always something. I am also meeting people like Mr. Brown and Ms. Waylon, the realtor, I am meeting these people and we are talking more and I am finding out more and I will get around more and meet more people. They are doing some good things. I see participation-a community trying to pull itself up by its bootstraps.

***Participation Level-Limited/No participation in community activities.***

Mr. Waylon is currently not an active participant in community activities. After five years living in Eden, he is just now beginning to have conversations and build relationships with other community residents, specifically the long term residents that are already actively involved in the community. Through conversations, with residents that are more involved in community activities, he is learning about the various options that he can pursue so that he can also become involved. He has attended several Community Council meetings, and has begun to visit community gathering places, such as the community Recreation Center, where he is meeting other residents. He explains his efforts:

A woman I use to work with is on the Community Council, Ms. Long and she is introducing me to people in the neighborhood. I am getting around more. I see the basics of a community trying to pull itself up by its bootstraps. I know that you have to educate, communicate and participate.

We discussed how most of the involvement in the community seems to be from the older residents, and Mr. Waylon agreed and commented:

I would like to see more young people participating. I know I talk to them and try to get them to see politics is important and has an impact on their community and that it is important for them to vote and their vote counts. Your voice makes a difference and I try to talk to young and old people that this is important.

## **Ms. Allison**

### ***Social Cohesion-Limited/No building of social ties and mutual trust.***

Ms. Allison is in her 30's and she has lived in the community of Eden for three years. . She moved to this Midwestern City from another city five hours away. She has five children and is a female head of household. Ms. Allison is currently unemployed and is looking for employment. Her search has been difficult, due to her employment history, limited financial resources and her family obligations. Ms. Allison moved to Eden, when the home she and her family lived in went into foreclosure. The home was located in a suburban location 25 minutes from Eden. (She did not reveal whether she owned the home). Ms. Allison and her children are living in an apartment that is located in a home in the community of Eden.

Though living in the community for three years, she has made very few friends. I asked Ms. Allison, what she thought of the community and her neighbor's in the community of Eden. She responded:

I don't know that many people. Those that I know they seem friendly, they smile. I have become friendly with another woman up the street, and one of my male neighbors also talked to my son, when he was having some problems. There is also a woman who lives in the St. Eden [an apartment building in Eden] who braids my son's hair.

### ***Informal Social Control-Limited/No intervening on behalf of the common good of their neighbors.***

Looking to gain additional information on what life is like for her family in this community I asked Ms Allison again, how she feels about living in Eden. She answered the question with an

overview of the problems of Black communities in general that indeed are some of the problems in this community as well. “The Black community is suffering, lack of jobs, lack of resources in the community, grocery stores. There is a lack of values in this generation” [meaning the younger residents in the community]”.

I asked Ms Allison, if she had ever attended the Community Council meetings where she could possibly work with other residents on finding solutions for some of the problems that were occurring in this community. She stated that she had not, but mentioned that she will attend a meeting in the future. She discussed her past volunteer efforts in other communities where she has lived, participating in beautification campaigns; however she has not made the effort to volunteer in this community. She revealed an important reason why she has not made the effort to become involved: “I am not sure how much longer I will be living in this community”. She went on to say that she believes that there is “a lack of trust in the community”. I asked her what she meant by the comment and she explained that “when I was growing up people helped each other more; people don’t want to share and don’t want to work together. We had more role models and mentors”.

Ms. Allison discussed another reason that may be driving the decision she has made to leave the community. Her children currently attend the neighborhood school, however she does not volunteer at the school because “I am not happy with the education that my children are receiving and would like to send my children to St Ulysses [a Catholic school one community over from Eden], but I cannot afford it”.

I asked her to explain why she is not happy with the school, but she did not mention any specific complaints about the academic education that her children are receiving. Her complaint has to do with the lack of activities that are available for children in the school. “There are no sport



activities for my children at the school to participate in.” She also is not happy with how her children are treated by other children in the community.

***Participation-Limited/No participation in community organizations.***

During the rest of our conversation, Ms. Allison described what she believes are the problems in the community, but her comments, were all focused on what the community should be doing to support the residents. Ms. Allison did reveal that she has sought assistance from the new Employment Resource Center in the community which was established by the Community Council specifically to assist residents in finding employment.

Throughout our conversation, Ms. Allison did not suggest what role she could play in making the community better not only for her family but the other families in the community nor did she discuss any substantial contact with neighborhood residents. Ms. Allison’s lack of effort to integrate herself fully in the community seems driven by her own personal problems, financial difficulties brought on by a lack of employment, concern about the well-being of her children and it is perceivable that she was not sure where to turn or what could be done about her present circumstances. Ms. Allison is aware that there are resources in the community that may be able to provide her with some assistance with her problems, but she has not actively worked to seek out those varied resources. She appeared to be overwhelmed with trying to handle the day to day responsibilities of taking care of her children and unaware how exactly to pursue relationships with community residents through the aid of the community organizations. There seemed to be some hesitation in taking action which may be the result of a lack of knowledge on what is the right course of action to take to build those relationships. Ms. Allison’s lack of awareness is in part to blame for her being deprived of access to remedies that could alleviate some of her family’s problems.

Accessing these resources could potentially make Eden a community where her family could be comfortable living and shield her from having to again uproot her family.

### ***Summary of Major Findings of the Interviews regarding Collective Efficacy***

The case narratives, of the participants, provided qualitative data that revealed in their own words and actions their perceptions and beliefs of what encourages collective efficacy, and actions contrary to the factors that promote collective efficacy, provided evidence of what limits the development of collective efficacy (social cohesion/trust, informal social control and participation level) among residents in a community (Adams, Ghosh-Dastidar, & Pebley, 2003). Among the residents living in the community of Eden for 20 years or more, the results revealed a high degree or strong perceived collective efficacy. They were the following: ***Social Cohesion/Trust:*** 1.) Residents are homeowners; 2.) Residents trusted their neighbors to look out for them; 3.) Residents looked out for their neighbors; and 4.) Residents believed in the well-being of children, the importance of education for their children and taking an active interest in the development of their children. ***Informal Social Control:*** 1.) Residents cared about the well-being of children; and 2.) Residents felt comfortable in providing direction to their neighbor's children and were encouraged by these other parents both to take action if they saw their children in negative situations and also to inform if they saw the children behaving negatively. ***Participation Level:*** 1.) Residents volunteered in community activities; and 2.) Residents started clubs and activities that benefited the community especially the development of the children and actively volunteered in the neighborhood schools; and 3.) Residents became involved in community activities that were directed toward improving the quality of life for all residents.

The interviews conducted with residents of Eden who have lived in the community for less than five years, revealed that on average among those residents there was moderate or no degree of perceived collective efficacy and some factors that limit or undermine collective efficacy. (Bandura, 2001). These factors were the following: ***Social cohesion/Trust***: 1.) Residents are not homeowners- they are mostly renters; 2.) Residents had little contact with neighbors; and 3.) Residents were primarily concerned with the well-being of their own children and some parents did volunteer in the schools yet they were not involved in community-wide efforts on behalf of all children in the neighborhood. ***Informal Social Control***: 1.) Little or no effort was made to provide direction to other neighborhood children, primarily out of fear of reprisal from the parents of the children; similarly little or no relationships had been established with other parents in the community. ***Participation Level***: 1.) Participants did not volunteer in the community or their child's school or volunteered only in the school and did not participate or support organizations that serviced the entire community.

This section concludes with Table 3, which shows the cross-case analysis of the sub-groups (residents) level of collective efficacy. Using collective efficacy as a framework, the participants' responses to questions were designated as "S" for strong if an interviewee spoke in detail about a specific attribute of collective efficacy (attributes of the measurement) and followed up the question with examples to support the answer. Anything less was marked as "M" for Moderate. The responses of the participants that made no mention of any attribute were marked as "N" for None.

**Table 3: Collective efficacy Matrix-Cross Case Display**  
**Residents level of collective efficacy**

Participants	20 or more years living in Eden			Five or less years living in Eden		
	Mr. Brown	Mr. and Mrs. Willis	Mrs. Johnson	Mrs. Dana	Mr. Waylon	Ms. Allison
<b><u>Social Cohesion/Trust</u></b>	S	S	S	M	N	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident is a member of the neighborhood watch – Watching over each other’s property</li> <li>• Resident looks out for neighbors and provides assistance when needed.</li> </ul>						
<b><u>Informal Social Control</u></b>	S	N	*S/N	M	N	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident intervenes and contacts parents when children are involved in problem behavior or incidents.</li> <li>• Resident contacted(s) authority figures for disturbances by neighborhood children</li> </ul>						
<b><u>Participation Level</u></b>	S	S	N	M	N	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident is a member of the Community Council</li> <li>• Resident volunteers for community events or in the neighborhood school</li> </ul>						
<b><u>Education</u></b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High School Diploma (F)</li> <li>• Did not complete High School (G)</li> <li>• College Degree (I)</li> </ul>	F	F	F	G	G	F
<b><u>Residency (Homeowner/Renter)</u></b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeowner (H)</li> <li>• Renter (R)</li> </ul>	H	H	H	R	R	R

(S) Strong (M) Moderate (0) None

\*Mrs. Johnson noted that today she is reluctant to intervene when she sees problem behavior of children living in the community due to negative responses from parents.

## Answering the Research Questions

### Discussion and Analysis of Research Question One

**What do residents in an African American community perceive to be the variables that influence collective efficacy in their community (mutual trust, shared expectations and intervening on behalf of the common good)?**

#### Elements of Collective Efficacy

The data findings revealed variations between the perceptions belonging to Eden's long term residents and those belonging to short term residents, regarding what affects the development of collective efficacy and regarding the variables that drive and limit the development of collective efficacy.

***Social Cohesion/Trust.*** The first component of collective efficacy is Social Cohesion/Trust, neighbors' willingness to collectively intervene on behalf of their neighbors good. Social cohesion can be thought of as "the networks, norms and trust that bring people together to take action" (Lavis & Stoddart, 1999, pg 8). The emphasis is on the "quality and quantity of social interactions that occur in a community" (Bartley, Marmot, Sacker, & Stafford, 2003 p. 1460). In examining all the conversations with residents who have been living in the community of Eden for 20 years or more (long term residents), I found the dimensions influencing social cohesion included the following:

- Stability, having lived in the community for a long period of time
- Common acceptance of the norms and values of the community
- All were homeowners which gave them a stake in the community

- The residents reached out to their neighbors looking to build relationships and took actions that indicated they were interested in the well-being of their neighbors both children and adults and built social networks for this purpose.

When they moved to the community, these residents were first time homeowners, they bought or built homes in Eden, as stated by one of the residents Mr. Brown, “back then we were all of a mindset of owning our own property”. Furthermore, all of them still live in the same homes that they bought when they first moved to the Eden. Sampson, (2001) hypothesized that the financial investment of a home “provides homeowners with a shared interest in supporting the common wealth of neighborhood life, promoting collective efforts to maintain neighborhood exchange values” (p. 13). Networks developed among these residents as a result of shared experiences, all of the long term residents interviewed were married and raising families in the community. There was an unspoken alliance that they were responsible for looking out for each other. In one interview a resident expressed how, she learned that a major grocery chain had decided that they were now going to hire Blacks in their packing facility in the early years of living in the community. Ms. Bean, a resident of Eden since the 1950’s stated “when I got hired there I told every “Black person I knew that Kramens was hiring, so that they could come down there and put in an application”. Ms. Gilmore, when asked why she started a girl scout’s troop in the neighborhood, explained “I started it for my girls because I wanted them to be productive, and I thought it would benefit the other girls in the community”.

The value of the family, making sacrifices for the family, was an important theme that emerged throughout the interviews. Ms. Henning explained that “all of the families on the street [that she lived on] there was a husband and wife in the home”. Mrs. Macy worked part time but that was only until her children reached a certain age. “When my first son was born I worked until he was

maybe five years old. Then when my second son was born I guess he was four years old before I started back working. My husband was in business for himself so I could stay home”. Mrs. Johnson explained that she and her husband had decided that it made more sense for her to stay at home than to hire a babysitter for her children, especially since “my neighbors hired me to do errands and their ironing and laundry to help bring some money into the house hold”.

Looking out for their neighbors meant starting Block Clubs that was not only a means for ensuring the safety of the neighborhood, but they were also a way to provide interactions between neighbors. Ms Henning states,

We had a good neighborhood Block Club. At first it was only five streets, but it expanded. We really enjoyed being with one another. When I joined it was all Black, the White families on the street had moved out of the neighborhood. We looked out for one another. One lady Ms. Crawley, she started it. They named the club after her, the Crawley Block Club. We would mostly meet at her home, because she had a sick father. We took turns meeting at different homes; but mostly at her house. She always made us welcome.

One of the most important examples of social cohesion revealed from the data was the neighborhood’s rallying around its children. This included parents working together to ensure that children arrived to and came home safely from school, and to the development of activities for children. Ms. Henning remembers her husband’s involvement with obtaining funds for uniforms for their son’s team.

We felt like there was a need. We needed to help the children. When my boys started playing football, my husband when they needed help with things, like equipment and outfits for football, he painted helmets for the boys so they could have the same color helmets. And they would go to places like the Cadillac dealership and get donations for the football teams.

Ms. Rains a chair of a committee on the Community Council remembered how her neighbors were willing to sit with her son after school. “If I was going somewhere they were always willing to take care of my son and I was willing to take care of their children”. That same desire for the well-being of the children still plays out today, Mr. Brown, a long term resident and member of the Community Council discussed how the Community Council meetings in recent years, have been used as a forum, for discussions among community residents on issues pertaining to the children in the community. This has included discussions concerning the combining of the two neighborhood schools and the construction of a new school building as a result of the merger and the naming of the new school. He explains “Our Education chairperson on the council, (a long term resident of Eden) spearheaded arranging those meetings for those discussions”. As a result of the active voice of the Community Council who made certain that the community would be a part of those discussions, the community was actively involved in the discussions with the Public school system.

As Blacks started moving into the community in the late 1940’s, the community of Eden transitioned from a mostly white community to an integrated community. Because of real estate restrictions, it was one of the first communities in the city where Blacks looking to improve the quality of life for their families were able to consider purchasing a home. Some moved here because



they were forced out of the West End of the city as a result of the interstate being built through their neighborhoods, others moved because they saw that this “nice neighborhood” was now becoming integrated, and they liked the idea of living in this type of community.

In the midst of de facto segregation, communities such as Eden attracted a variety of Blacks from diverse socio-economic and professional backgrounds. Ms. Rains explains that her next door neighbors were educators,

They were concerned about the children, and they started seeing some things going on with the kids. One of them was a music teacher at a public school in another community, and she wanted to get the kids off of the streets so she started giving them piano lessons. Another neighbor’s husband started a baseball team for the children that lived in the community.

The results revealed that the residents who have lived in the community for five years or less primarily focused on the well-being of their immediate family. There was also an emphasis on only developing individual relationships in the community. I did not get from my conversations with these participants, that they felt a “sense of community”, McMillan and Chavis (1986) with their neighbors in Eden, a feeling of belonging, and a feeling that they mattered to the group and a shared belief that their needs will be met through their commitment to be together with the rest of the community. Unlike the long term residents, none of these participants, owned or rented their homes. They are not involved in community activities; however one parent has volunteered in her children’s school. Among these residents who have been living in the community for five years or less, two of the families are not happy in the community and voiced the possibility of leaving Eden over their unhappiness with their children’s experience in the neighborhood school and criminal activity in the

community. In their study, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) revealed that residents more than likely will not take action in neighborhoods in which residents mistrust one another and the rules for engagement are not clear. Yet the only male participant from the group of residents having lived in the community five years or less, Mr. Waylon has taken some actions toward reaching out to community members. His friendship with a long term resident in the community offers a strong possibility that he will stay in the community and build relationships that will lead to becoming engaged in community activities.

One of the participants, Ms. Allison, a three year resident of Eden, and a single female head of household with five children, discussed “acquaintances” that she has made, they included a woman who braids her child’s hair and a male neighbor whose conversation with her son, who was having some behavior problems was very much she appreciated. Yet, she has made little effort to become involved in the community and rarely participates in activities in her child’s school. Ms. Allison voiced her displeasure with the treatment that one of her children received from some of the neighborhood children and with the education her children are receiving in the neighborhood school. Mrs. Dana and her husband have lived in the community since 2009 and live in an apartment building where her rent is subsidized through the federal Section 8 program. Mrs. Dana returned to live in Eden after previously having lived in 1994. When asked why she returned to the neighborhood, she stated “because it was familiar”. She also provided some insight on why there is some hesitancy on her part in trusting her neighbors; she believes the neighborhood has changed. When asked to explain she offered the following succinct response “the parents and the crime”. As she explained in detail in her narrative on page 92 of the current study the residents living in the community, primarily referencing the parents, since she is a parent do not have the same perspective that she has on

parenting children. The residents living in the community today, who are parents, are younger than the parents who were living in the community when she first lived in Eden in the 1990's.

“The parents today, these younger parents they don't care anymore, I see the kids out late on a school night. She commented on an incident of a sign being tipped over by kids in the neighborhood and pushed down the street, late at night. Mrs. Dana wondered, “Where are the parents of the kids?”

Another resident of Eden living in a building for seniors, Mr. Waylon, has lived in Eden for five years. When asked if he trusted his neighbors and if he felt that the neighbors trusted each other, his response was “that it was still too early for him to make an assessment”. He moved to the community after the loss of his wife of 38 years. He spoke honestly about taking some time to get over his loss, and learning to live alone after all of the years they spent together. He is now getting out in the community; he has attended a Community Council meeting and he is meeting other community residents through the use of the gym at the community Recreation Center. In discussing the residents that he has met he commented, “Many of them are on the council and volunteering in the community”. He mentioned the names of residents that he has met at the Recreation Center, these individuals are long term residents of the community and either sit on the executive board of the Community Council or are involved with committees on the council. Mr. Waylon went on to say “I am finding out what they are doing and learning about what is going on in the community”. He informed me that he has always volunteered in other communities where he has lived and before deciding where he may best serve the community he is trying to learn what is going on through connecting with residents who are already serving the community.

***Informal Social Control.*** Sampson (1987, p. 104), suggest that a “ community oriented approach to informal social control rests on the assumption that the only truly effective means of

maintaining public norms is by neighbors assuming responsibility for one another” and “regulating itself according to desired principles” (Sampson, 2001 p. 8). Through examining the data that revealed the dimensions of informal social control, findings showed that the participants interviewed placed importance on explaining how the community, is now dealing with an increase in crime and violence, especially among younger residents. The longer term residents placed blame on the transient population that is coming in and out of the neighborhood, which they believe contribute to the problems in the community. Yet they all agreed that being able to ensure the safety of the neighborhood and taking on the responsibility of collectively shaping the behavior of children in the neighborhood is a communal neighborhood responsibility. Residents living in the community for 20 years or more discussed how neighbors had once banded together to control or prevent problems in the community through the forming of Block Clubs; they knew that they could count on neighbors, to support them if they needed to go outside to quiet loud music being played on the street and intervene when needed to monitor the behavior of neighborhood children in the absence of their parents. Ms. Macy’s talks about their Block Club:

We would meet once a month. We looked out for one another. If we saw strangers in the neighborhood, if you did not recognize who they were; you would find out whom they were and if anyone knew anything about them. We had a police watch. If you saw any problems we had a number where we could call the police. Mostly they were interested in taking care of the property, not letting children come in and tear up your property. Most of the homes were two family houses, so a lot of the people had part of their homes rented out. So that was one of the things you tried to do was keep

up with the youngsters in the neighborhood making sure they were not going around the neighborhood destroying property.

Mrs. Henning's describes how her neighbors strategically planned a maneuver to rid her block of a problem group.

I remember that once there were some young men on a corner and they were yelling and they were making a lot of noise and one of the neighbors asked them to stop it, and they would call the police. When we called the police they would leave and they would come back. What the six families did was get together, each one called the police over and over again. The police then came and made them move.

One resident Mrs. Johnson, related a story that revealed how the community looked out for the children in the absence of their parent(s), on behalf of their parents.

I had a neighbor across the street and I informed the mother that her daughter was home during a school day. The neighbor next door Miss Stevens she moved there with teenage children. She had one daughter who would go to school and come back before school was out and they would be out on the porch with her friends and they would be just having a high old time. I said to Ms. Stevens when I saw her, 'does your daughter go to school every day'. 'She said not unless she is sick'. I said 'has she been sick recently'? She told me no. I said I saw her home a couple of days last week, and I did not know if you knew that she had company. She said 'she is not supposed to be having any company. There is not supposed to be anybody in the house'. So one day she decided to come home from work early and she caught them

and she said to me ‘if you ever see them again, if you see any of the kids in this house when they are not supposed to be you let me know’.

Miller and Silver, (2004), made reference to Bursik’s (1988) argument that “informal social control must also include the capacity of neighborhood residents to participate in the socialization of local youth to instill in them a desire to avoid deviance” (p. 553).

Mrs. Henning’s describes how the neighborhood showed their love for the children of the community “Once a year our Block Club would hold a block party for the children. We would block off a street and play games and give out prizes to the kids, hot dogs, hamburgers and things like that, a community gathering”.

Mr. Willis also explained that the community worked with the Community Council to get a Recreation Center built in the 1990’s.

We saw our young people hanging out on the corners and getting in trouble, and we wanted a place for them to go. The city had denied us the funds before and we formed a committee and went down to the City Council meeting and again requested that funds be allocated for a Recreation Center in Eden, and we got a million dollars for it to be built.

In a study on Collective efficacy, Sampson and Groves (1989) found that expectations for informal social control; residents guiding the behavior of others, mutual support for children and local friendship networks worked against criminal behavior. Their data revealed that residents living in the community for a longer length of time are the most active in working to stem this type of behavior.

In the all volunteer Citizens on Patrol group in Eden, you have residents patrolling the community twice a month, providing information on problems they may see in the community, from

activity in vacant houses to loitering in the community back to the city's district police office in the community-the volunteers in the organization are primarily long term residents. The group is supported and trained by the city's police department. In our interviews, after raising their concerns about the criminal activity in the community, two of the short term residents living in the community, Ms. Allison and Mrs. Dana both mentioned that this was one of the reasons why they were thinking about moving out of the community. However, when I discussed becoming involved in the Community Council, simply attending a meeting to voice some of their concerns, both mentioned that they had been meaning to attend a meeting, and had been encouraged to do so. Still neither of them would make a firm commitment to attend; both only said hesitantly that they would attend a meeting in the future. This however is not an indication that those residents are not interested in the well-being of the children in the community. Ms. Dana discussed how she had informed another mother about her child's profanity as she walked behind this child with her own children on a walk from school. "This child was jus[t] cussing up a storm." She reported the child's behavior to the child's mother, who appreciated her intervention. She also said that she has asked certain individuals in the community to let her know if they see her children misbehaving. She stated "I want them to tell me if they see my children doing something wrong".

***Participation Level.*** Ohmer (2007) argues that "citizen participation is a potential mechanism for facilitating neighborhood collective efficacy by providing opportunities for neighbors to develop trusting relationships, which creates the foundation for shared expectations and behaviors" (p. 110). From my conversations with the residents of Eden the data revealed that the participation was higher for long term residents in community activities which would benefit their families and other residents in the community was higher for long term residents than short term residents. The longer term

residents, most of their children now grown, reflected on some of the ways in which they participated in the community when they first moved into the community and how they volunteer today. The activities ranged from volunteering in local civic organizations, the neighborhood school, the Community Council and Block Clubs which according to Chavis (1987), Block Club association members “are significantly more likely than non-members to have expectations of collective efficacy i.e., defined as thinking that they can solve problems by working collectively and expecting residents to intervene to maintain social control” (Ohmer & Beck, 2006, p. 183). Mrs. Willis a long term resident of Eden stated,

All of my 8 children went to the neighborhood school. There was a Mason in every class. When Mr. Davis became principal, I got involved in the school. They started involving parents; I started working with the kindergarten teacher doing little things that would help the teacher, getting the snacks, help in preparing the lunches and things like that.

Mrs. Bean a resident of Eden was involved in the neighborhood school as a PTA President, and was also involved in local organizations that served the community such as the Urban League, the NAACP, and the Black Women’s Federated Club. When asked why she thought it was important to participate in neighborhood and community organizations she stated “because we had children and I wanted things to go well for my children in the community and wanted them to know and people in the community to know that I am interested in my children and what they are doing”.

Many in the community have also given to the community through their involvement in the church. Ms. Wasson a current chair of one of the Community Council committees remembers “we all went to church on Sunday morning; everyone had their bibles going to church”. All of the long



term participants discussed their involvement in the church in the community and how they have been able to “give back” through those efforts. In her study, Wesley (2010) reveals a promising link between religious institutions and collective efficacy within a community. Ms. Houston a long term resident discussed her volunteer activities that include teaching vacation bible school, and heading the youth council in her church. During our conversation she explained how one particular young woman was so impressed with her volunteer activities she asked to participate with her. Ms. Houston mentioned that the young woman stated “I want to be just like you. Ms. Houston continued; “Now she is in college and she writes me all the time to tell me how she is doing.” I mentioned to Mrs. Houston that there is a perception by some in the community that the young people seemed not to care as much about the community, that they don’t get involved and that they did not appear to appreciate help that is provided to them. She remarked that she did not feel that way and explained why:

I have always wanted to help people, young people or old people, and I don’t want to get something back. We have a youth program in my church and we come together and ask them to tell us what they want. I have met and been out with a lot of young people and I have learned to really respect them and have learned a lot from them. Some don’t appreciate it when you try to help them, but I don’t feel that way with all of them. I think my generation, most of us, I am included, when we talk about the church and we talk about the fellowship with young people we have to know what to say to them. They have to see something good in us. I have quite a few young people, that have come back to me and said Ms. Houston, ‘I am so glad that you did this’. Because I gave a little bit and they gave a little bit. We have to learn about

them a little bit and give in. Through my church, I work as an advocate for people, I also chair, and teach vacation bible school and we get a lot of kids that attend from the community. I also have served as the President of my building's council, [referring to senior citizens building where she lives]. I serve as an advocate for organizations that lobby for low income housing for seniors. If I see resources in the community to help people in this building, I let them know about them.

When discussing why and what has influenced them to volunteer and give back to the community, many of the participants, explained how they saw their parents go through hard times and they wanted to help others in need. All of the long term residents were at one time young parents and they bought their first homes, because they did not want to raise their children in an apartment. They made an investment in the community and they knew they were responsible for ensuring that the quality of life that they wanted for themselves and their kids was in their hands. Today, they still believe that it is their responsibility to work to maintain the quality of life that they sought when they moved into Eden- creating a safe haven for themselves their neighbors and the children in the community. Other residents of Eden believed that it was part of their spiritual responsibility; their faith moved them to reach out to the community to help their fellow neighbors in need especially since this was part of the mission of the religious organizations that they attended. Yet still others became involved in the community, because they reflected on their own past childhood experiences, and they appreciated neighbors coming together to help their parents when they were in need. They felt obligated to do the same thing in a community that now was their own, paying it forward. What influenced them to get involved with the neighborhood school in the community had not only to do with the fact that their children were attending the schools, certainly that was an important part of it,

but also as many stated during the interviews, the schools welcomed them and encouraged their involvement.

There is a renewed interest in the reformation of Block Clubs in the community, and residents have begun to re-organize those clubs. Most of those initiatives have been championed by long term residents. Ms. Wasson, chair of the housing committee on the Eden Community Council, discussed the reason for starting the Block Club,

My neighbors were older, they were retired school teachers and the next block down there were retiring professionals. And when they were passing on, a new generational type was moving in, they were not extending themselves, they were isolated, and some were renters. They were not involved, so another neighbor suggested that we start the Block Club. What we do is have a meet and greet your neighbor and yard sales to connect. We gave out free hot dogs. One resident her father did a fish fry and it was free. The things we discussed, with residents, were things to help them such as; do you need help paying your utility bills? I had resources from the local Social Service agency, show what services they offer and this is what they can do for you. We wanted to let them know that we were concerned about them and provide resources. If you have problems paying your mortgage, these are the resources that we provided. We had a senior citizen that lived on our block that we were concerned about, so we called the Council on Aging to get her some help and she was a renter, but she needed some help. People joined the Block Club. They said it was best thing, because we did not know each other-they welcomed that. We said that every time we saw someone new that we should extend ourselves, just so that they could feel a

part of the community and know what was going on in the community. We wanted to show that there was unity in our community that pride.

Ms. Wasson's mentioned in her comments the extended efforts to reach out to residents who are renters in the community. The 2000 census records on Eden showed owner-occupied housing units at 66.2 % and renter-occupied housing units at 33.8%. The 2010 census shows that owner-occupied housing units at 44.0% and renter-occupied housing units at 56.0% (United States Census Report, 2010). There are now more renters in the community than homeowners. With over 200 empty homes in the community, Eden, is also a victim of the national foreclosure epidemic in this country. In Eden there is a building right in the center of the community an apartment building that is the largest rental property in the community, with over 80 rental units, where most if not all of the tenants rent is subsidized by the federal program known as Section 8. The building has become a hot spot for criminal activity, not only by residents, but it has become a meeting location for individuals coming from outside of the community to use it as a center for criminal activity. According to the Community Council over 90% of the occupants that live in the building are female headed families. Two years ago, the community police officer, an officer assigned to the community to build better relations between the residents and the local police district decided to reach out to residents in the community so that they could help him to assist the residents of this building. The officer serves as the liaison to the Eden Community Council. The officer according to Ms. Buyman, a long term resident of Eden, a former chair of the Education committee of the Eden Community Council, and now serving as the Community Resource Coordinator, for the neighborhood school in Eden, reached out to her and asked her assistance in work that he wanted to do for the residents. The "residents need positive role models" he remarked to her. Ms. Buyman, and Ms. Wasson and the community

police office in partnership with a local social service agency, met with the owners of the building, and they agreed to form a group that would meet with the owners to discuss working collaboratively to assist residents in their building. The owners agreed to a program that was started by the Community Police officer, Ms. Buyman and Ms. Wasson, with buy-in from the management of the building to come into the building and meet once a week with residents. According to Ms. Buyman,

It was open to any resident. We had two men who participated. We had to build their trust. We asked them what were their needs, and what kind of assistance did they need. We had to be there at all times. If they needed assistance of any kind, I did it. I developed a relationship with the owners of the building. I attended the meetings, along with the police captain of the district and Ms. Wasson. I shared the concerns of the residents and what was happening in the building with the owners, built trust, helped them to get assistance in obtaining their GED, assisted them in finding jobs, and helped them to set short and long term goals for improving their lives.

Ms. Wasson mentions that they also discussed with the management of the building, improving the security of the building for residents, and establishing a play area for the children living in the building. Ms. Buyman worked with the residents until 2008. When a new police captain was assigned to the community and according to Ms. Wasson no new meetings were scheduled to continue the program. Because of the condition of the building, the Community Council has worked with the city in developing a plan that calls for the refurbishing of the building. The community is waiting for the city approval to start the renovation of the building.

## Summary

### **What influences the development of perceived collective efficacy (mutual trust, shared expectations and intervening on behalf of the common good) in a predominantly African American community?**

The constructs of collective efficacy mutual trust and shared expectations to create an environment where actions can be initiated on behalf of the common good, (social cohesion/informal social control and participation level), occur as the participant responses reveal from the long term residents, from individuals beliefs in their abilities to take actions that improve the community which in turn enhances their lives. (Bandura, 1993). The journey into Eden according to the long term residents interviewed was due to their interest in seeking a better life for their families. They moved into a community that was undergoing a transformation. When many of them moved into Eden, they were moving into a community that was just becoming integrated, in some cases; they were the first or second Black family on their block. They were first time homeowners and made great personal sacrifices to stay in those homes. They wanted the best education possible for their children, so they made themselves accessible, to the schools, trying to be there when needed and worked to develop relationships with school representatives. Mr. Brown and Ms. Best will tell you with quiet pride how all of their children are college graduates, children that grew up in the community of Eden. The residents became feverishly protective of their community and the people in it; they wanted to protect their property and the lives of the individuals in this community in which they had made an investment. They knew the struggles of their neighbors, because they had the same struggles, hopes and dreams. When they needed help they could turn to their neighbors knowing that they would receive assistance if it was ever needed-building a reservoir of trust. As a result of segregation, many had previously lived in communities where everyone in those communities looked like them. They

knew and understood the adage, if we don't do it for ourselves, it will not get done. Their personal efficacy, their belief in their own ability to make the community better for all of the families of Eden, greatly contributed to the "group directedness" (Bandura, 1995 p. 34), the perceived collective efficacy of the community. Consequentially, they came together, through volunteering and forming groups, and Block Clubs, in an effort to secure their community and to find ways to get together with each other. They fought for facilities for their children for recreation and to keep them safe from negative influences. Many of those same individuals are still in the community of Eden, and they are still taking the lead to revitalize the community and to bring it back to where it once was, a safe haven for them, the new "immigrants" into the community and now their grand and great grandchildren.

The issue the community struggles with is how to adapt and integrate the present day new "arrivals" into the community and to make them feel welcome, and included, while still holding on to the same values and feeling of community that once marked the community as a "good community to raise a family". These new residents do not have a long history in the community, and few are homeowners, so there is the perception that they don't have a stake in the community. Many are single family heads of households, where the household income is at or below poverty level. They are living in subsidized housing. They have moved numerous times, not always because they wanted to leave the community, but sometimes because problems arose and instead of staying in that specific community to try to overcome those problems they chose to leave. Many if not most wanted a better community for themselves and their kids that is why they chose this community. Some others lived here before or this was where they could find housing that they liked. However, they still have not found that sense of community that can ignite the same level of commitment to this community that moved earlier stakeholders to become involved in finding solutions to the problems that have befallen

the community. I could sense in their frustration with the problems in the community that some want to contribute; yet they seemed unaware of where to begin to look for a place or someone who could provide guidance on what their contribution should be. Instead of being judged as outsiders, it will take someone or an organization, willing to help them to discover what contributions they can make to the community and offer resources that will also serve them and their children. They are looking to be welcomed and accepted. Admittedly with that acceptance comes a responsibility that they must be willing to accept, to look beyond their own needs and to consider the needs of the entire community. Their willingness to take the actions required will reward them and their children with the quality of life that many of them have been seeking.

## **Discussion and Analysis of Research Question Two**

### **What strategies do community organizations and school representatives think contribute to facilitating collective efficacy in a predominantly African American community?**

In this study, the data revealed that the Eden community organizations and school representatives are dealing with what some have called a shift in citizens desire to work collectively in civic activities in their communities (MacIndoe, Mc Adams, Sampson, & Weffer-Elizondo, 2005). There is dissent among scholars on whether individuals in communities throughout America have reduced their participation in civic activities. Putnam (1995; 2000), argues that Americans have become more disconnected from their families, neighbors, and communities. Ray (2002); Skocpol, (2003, 2004) and Wuthnow (1998) believe that Americans have not reduced their civic activity; instead, they have changed how they participate in civic engagement.

However, in my discussions with representatives from organizations and schools in the community of Eden, they all voiced their concerns at the decreased collective efficacy among



residents in the community. This state of facts has contributed to the dramatic decline of residents' participation in their organizations when the problems in the community so urgently require the collective assistance of neighborhood residents helping to solve these problems. This concern has led community representatives, to look at the reasons causing this lack of collective efficacy among residents, and the lethargic response to appeals to become involved in the improvement of the community and what actions can be taken to reverse the decline. The representatives also explained what they are doing to try to increase residents desire to work collectively in the community, actions that include, greater outreach to residents, increased communication, hiring someone in their organization to champion and recruit community residents as valuable resources, and partnering with other organizations, that can help in training residents in the skills needed to be advocates for the community.

***Eden Community Council.*** In my interview with the President of the Community Council, Ms. Best a forty year resident of Eden, we discussed the issues that the community is dealing with and how the changes in the community have affected citizen participation. Some of her comments reflect views expressed by other residents in the community.

When I moved into the community in 1971, there was more of a village concept, people helped each other. My block was mostly older residents. Everyone looked out for each other. Everybody knew about each other's whereabouts. The community started changing once the expressway came through the community. It split our community, displaced our businesses and our residents. People started moving to the suburbs. We had more of a transient population that came into the community; they didn't stay 25 and 30 years like earlier residents in our community.

Yet Ms. Best remains passionate about the community of Eden, so much so that she ran for and won the position of President of the Community Council, three years ago. She is working in a community where the older residents passed their homes to their family members and some of those individuals walked away from those homes. Eden has become a community where there are younger parents who are raising their children differently than how she and other long term residents raised their children. It is a community where there is blight and increased crime. However she and the Community Council knows one of the things that has always been important to this community is coming together to ensure a quality education for the children of Eden. This remains an important community initiative.

Ms. Best is a former public elementary school teacher, of over 30 years and a parent who has seen all of her children, educated in schools in Eden, become college graduates. The council that she oversees with the help of the community has led the charge and partnered with organizations in the community in order to brand the community of Eden as the “Educating community”. Their motto is you can live in this community and have your child start their education and finish their education in Eden. This community has educational options that run from pre-kindergarten to college for the children that live in this community. It is a fortunate community that has within its borders schools that have academic rankings of Effective at the elementary, junior high and high school level. Moreover, the community has one high school that is ranked as one of the best in the nation and a university that is also ranked as one of the best in Midwest. As a parent in the community, Ms. Best served as the President of the Parent Teachers Organization in her children’s school. She describes the parent organization in the school.

We had a large representation of parents in the PTO, and diverse parents. We were a dedicated committee and the school had dedicated teachers with high expectations of their students. At that time it was a parent, student and teacher relationship. The parents, the teachers and the kids worked together. The teachers had respect for the parents.

We discussed how the schools have changed. In many urban schools, students attending these schools at one time had teachers that looked like them and many of these teachers became role models and mentors to students. Ms. Best concedes that “role modeling plays an important role in children’s lives”. She is also aware and stated that “some teachers lack an understanding of the cultural differences of the children that they teach”. Still, she believes that mentoring and role models can come from anywhere as long as they put the interest of the children first. Ms. Best believes that it is important for the parents and the teachers to become “more community minded, so that the students will see and hear about the importance of education, of acquiring certain skills and tap into their interest early in their school years. She explains, “We are responsible for tracking and cultivating that interest”. The Eden Community Council has a number of committees toward to support their efforts toward improving the quality of life of all residents living in that community. Ms. Best stated that,

The Community Council makes no distinction between those that live in the community as renters or those that own their own homes. We don’t want to get rid of people. We just want to create a community where all the residents feel safe and have the mindset that they should live in a really nice community.

The Community Council committees include Education & Youth, Safety, Housing, Beautification, Athletics, Business, and Seniors. I have attended the Community Council meetings for over a year and through my observations, and conversations with those in attendance most of the residents attending the meetings are older residents, mostly homeowners. The average attendance from the meetings that I observed over the past year attendance was typically 20-25 residents out of community that has over 4,000 adults between the age of 20 and 70. (United States Census Report, 2010). The Community Council has been proactive in reaching out to the community making efforts to increase attendance; they have ensured that the council's newsletter goes to every household in the community.

An initiative called Eden Now was started by the Community Council, in partnership with a Center that is affiliated with the university located in Eden. This organization that works to improve communities in the city and one of the Methodist churches in the community that focused on increasing the membership of the Community Council and increasing the volunteerism in the community. Meetings for this initiative were held in the Methodist church which was able to garner some funding. This initiative did succeed in increasing the number of resident names in the Community Council database and recruited some additional volunteers, but the effort was not sustaining as the funds for the initiative could not be maintained according to the leader of the Methodist church where the meetings were held. Ms. Best discussed the difficulty in getting individuals involved in the council. "It is difficult to get residents involved, yet we have and still make every effort to reach out to the community-it is challenging". Ms. Best mentioned that one of her priorities was to "educate our residents as well as our children".

The Community Council from what I have observed does continually make an effort to encourage involvement of the residents, through the community events, Block Clubs, citizens' group patrol for safety and recently the development of a Career Resource center, for residents that are looking for jobs. The resource center offers career counseling, access to computers, college counseling for residents that are interested in pursuing a post-secondary education. Ms. Best explains "we have started Block Clubs, and we hold events in the community, to encourage residents, to increase their volunteerism, it is an ongoing challenge for the Community Council". When I discuss the difficulty in getting individuals involved with the community with another member of the executive committee of the council Mr. Brown, he remarks, that some of the difficulty has to do with individuals working during the time the meeting is being held or a feeling that if they voice their opinion, "it will not be heard so why come to the meetings". He commented: "people take the same attitude of the Community Council as they do with a politician why should I vote, since the politician is going to do what they want to do anyway". The comment was made to illustrate that he understands their frustration, however, he also understands, the residents lack of knowledge of the process of change. He went on to voice his concern that residents seemed not to understand that change is a process and it does not occur always on their timetable.

The absence of residents that are renters in the community is also profoundly obvious when you attend the meetings. Through my conversation with residents, that are renters, they have expressed that they do not attend the Community Council meetings or maybe have attended one, but not on a continual basis. When the subject was discussed in the interviews I held with several short-term residents, they mentioned that they were aware of the Council meetings, but I did not get a sense that this was a priority for them. They both voiced some frustration with their housing situation and also

the educational concerns of their children in the neighborhood school, mostly discussing those issues as it affects their families. When it was suggested that they attend the council meetings to make their concerns known, they did not appear to see this as a viable option for dealing with their concerns. I am not certain if this was as a result of a lack of knowledge of the role of the Community Council in the community, disinterest, or feelings as expressed by a Community Council member, of “a lack of trust of the community organization and uncertainty whether they have their best interest in mind”.

In their study, MacIndoe, McAdam, Weffer-Elizondo and Sampson (2006), suggest that there is a decrease in membership in group membership organizations, including parent-teacher organizations; “Americans have turned to looser but still effective associations in the form of social support or self-help organizations” (p. 674).

I also noticed through my observations at the meetings, that attendance increased when there were certain hot button issues that were to be discussed. One such issue concerned some boundary changes in the community. That issue brought an increase in attendance as some residents, hotly contested a decision that had been made on the change and how they perceived it would affect their property. The Community Council has made an effort to look at alternative options for helping residents outside of the Community Council meetings. Two years ago, Ms. Wasson, chair of the Housing committee, in partnership with the Education chair of the Community Council was asked by the community liaison police officer and the police captain of the district office for the community to work with them in partnering with owners of a large apartment complex in the community, to offer assistance to the residents in the building (see page 129). I asked the former Education chair of the council, Mrs. Buyman, why she thought this type of outreach to the residents of this building was

working? Her response was, “the tenants appreciated that we held the meetings in their building and how coming to them, they began to trust us”.

***Religious Organization – Methodist Church.*** One of the most important organizations in any community and this has been especially true in African American communities is the church. Movements that supported the evolution and elevation of the quality of life for African Americans in this country started in Black churches. They were the havens that Black residents looked to for the start of “political and social revolutions and moral guidance” (Chappel, 2002 p. 581). In the community of Eden the options for religious choice is broad. One of the most involved church denominations in the community is a Methodist church with a predominantly African American membership. This church has a history of partnering with Eden’s Community Council, and another church, an Episcopal church with a predominantly African American membership sponsoring events and hosting activities that provide spiritual support and also economic and social support. The Episcopal Church runs a food pantry and also supports activities for the community that includes partnering with the Community Council and the Methodist church on a large school supplies giveaway for the community. This church also has a history of reaching out to the community and working to develop opportunities to enhance the African American community. In recent history in the community of Eden it has been this Methodist church existing in the community since 1967 that has been involved in more activist oriented activities focused in the Eden community.

In my discussions with Reverend Morris, the leader of this Methodist church, he mentions that his church has had to overcome a reputation of not being welcoming to Blacks in the community of Eden, when it first relocated there. He has been reminded since he started his stewardship of the church, starting in 1996 by some Blacks in the community of how Blacks were not allowed to use the

facilities within the church when it first relocated to this community. Yet, the church was also instrumental during the Civil Rights movement in working to register Blacks to vote. Reverend Morris has worked diligently in the community for the residents of Eden. He is very knowledgeable of the social history of African Americans in this country, and discusses that history as he talks about the changes that he has seen in Eden. One of the most significant changes has been the decrease in two parent households, the shift in the socio-economic level of residents in the community, and reduced affiliation with a religious institution; this has affected the membership of his church, especially among young people. He sees a membership of older residents, many from outside of the community of Eden. Reverend Morris has also seen that interdependence decrease as there is less cooperation between community residents interested in maintaining the viability of the community. With the help of mainly volunteers and partners, Reverend Morris' church runs a food and clothing ministry. He also served on the neighborhood schools, decision making committee, which is responsible for working with the school principal to administer the school. In discussing what he sees as some challenges to influencing collective action among residents, he explains that,

We are dealing with a number of issues. Many people don't have the time, and don't want to give the time and many have the attitude that people should learn how to help themselves. And others who feel that they can't understand the people in the community especially the young people, so that is a problem.

Reverend Morris spoke of the lesson of the social gospel, "not just preaching and teaching on Sunday and forgetting about the lessons of the church when you get home, but the importance of emphasizing them on an ongoing basis. It is not enough to just worship God, that we service God by serving our neighbors". Yet he realizes that it is difficult to get this message out to the population



that he and the community, sees as an important missing link in their efforts to transform the neighborhood, the involvement of young people in the community and his church. The 18-29 age group, according to Kinnamon (2011) is the “least religiously active” (p. 1). Reverend Morris suggests that if we are to reach young people in hopes of having them contribute to our communities, “we have to take the time to listen to them and find out what are their needs. Even if he says, “I might feel a certain way, I have to respect how others do things differently and try to respect their perspective. It takes respecting one another”.

Reverend Morris also explains that the respect goes both ways. He states,

That our young people in the community are also not learning very early as they once were, of the importance of respect and appreciation. I hear among my older members, that they don't see any appreciation, in their giving and that is a part of what brings them joy. They understand how when they were coming up in the community and they were supported, in difficult times so they want to give back, but they are also at a loss as to why when they give support, there is no desire of young people to be a part of the spiritual life of the church.

Reverend Morris, explained that he sees some of the difficulty of the young residents in Eden, since some are without jobs and under educated.

I see their pain and their anger and they need to know that somebody cares. We need to engage the parents. Many don't see a need to get involved and some only want to be involved on the receiving end. We have to work to make certain that our community sees the value of giving back to the community as a priority. This has to start very early in a child's life. I believe we have to develop more community and

mission projects for community residents. At one time we had a community initiative called Eden Now. That was an arm of the Community Council. The meetings were held at the church. The objective was to reach out to people, especially new residents and young families who were not involved in the community to encourage them to join the Council and become involved in the of the Council committees. We lost funding for the initiative.

Reverend Morris and other ministers in the community are considering the development of a consortium group consisting of ministers in the community, that would work together to help meet the concerns of residents in the community. He states, “We have to look for ways to provide support for families, we need families to work together, and the need is too great for just one or two churches to get involved. Our hope is to revive the Eden Now type initiative”.

***Community Recreation Center.*** One of the long term residents I interviewed Mr. Willis, explained that the community fought for the recreation center in the community “because we wanted a place for our children besides hanging on the corner”. Wilson, (1987) has suggested that as basic institutions decline in urban communities, places for engagement in these communities, erodes “causing a loss of a sense of community” (p. 39), and “ positive neighborhood identification and the reduction of explicit norms and sanctions against aberrant behavior” (p. 138). The Recreation Center in this community is run by the city’s Recreation Commission, and its purpose is to provide residents in the community recreational, cultural, leisure and educational activities for residents in the community. The Eden Recreation center is a refuge for the children and the adults that live in the community. It is located in the center of the community; everyone in the community knows where the “Rec Center” as it is called is located. The Rec Center has become the town hall of the

community. It is also where the office of the Community Council is located and where the monthly Community Council meetings are held. Recently, the community's Art Center which provides art classes for children and adults in the community has temporarily relocated to the Rec Center. A new Art and Music center is being built. This is a jointly managed project by the community of Eden and the University in the community's Center for Neighborhoods, and it is being financed by the city. The Rec Center also houses a tutoring center. In my conversation with Mr. Sims, a Program Manager who has worked for the Recreation Commission for over 20 years, six years at this Recreation Center, a known entity not only inside of the Center, but throughout the community, we discussed the Recreation Center's tutoring center and its partnership with the neighborhood school. He explains,

We partnered with a tutoring center, because we realized that some students in the community schools were slipping through the cracks. We also have an after school program where I personally do homework with the children. I am also part of the local school decision making committee at Eden Academy (the neighborhood school) where we discuss how to lift the children up academically and I serve as a community advisor. I work with the school's Community Resource Coordinator, on a program helping the kid's transition to the next level, through career information. We are trying to create an image of success for the kids.

The partnership with the local neighborhood school has meant that Mr. Sims sees the impact of what this type of relationship produces, "when the kids start doing well in school their personalities change, they become more attentive, concentrate better and they get a sense of pride".

We discussed why the community and the residents of the community have embraced the Recreation Center. According to Mr. Sims,

Our market is mostly single parents with children. The word of mouth about what goes on in our center is very strong. We get parents who bring their kids to this center from other communities, because we “serve the community”. It is not just about recreation, throwing the basketball or baseball, it is about achievement”. We have started a library here, from donated books; we have a summer program here at the center that provides learning opportunities for the children. This summer, we had park board representatives come and provides lectures for the children, Nature next Door, history lessons for the children taught by a Ranger that serves a local center that was the home of the former President William Howard Taft. We provide opportunities for the kids in our center to play games with other centers, so they will understand how to play with others creating character and learning self-control.

Mr. Paul, the new Director of the Center who has been at this location, just about a year, comments on why the Center is an important entity to residents in the community especially after it was renovated.

The success we have had is that we have gotten people here. In large part we are in a nice facility, a facility that people are proud of and they are proud to come into the building. There is a certain pride about this building. I don't know how much success you can attribute that to what we do, but when they come, we do everything we can do to make them feel welcome and to want to come back. I guess the village approach. People come through here; it is like Floyd's barber shop. We do take the time to talk to people and listen to what they have to say and sometimes it is a reunion as well as a connection. You will hear from the residents, I know so and so

from way back, when I was living in the West End or I grew up with so and so. I can't count the number of times I heard people in conversation will say so and so passed away and someone else will say. 'He did, I went to school with him'. We have become a part of the community in our own kind of way.

In serving the adult population in the community and the seniors, the Rec Center offers a fitness room and the community's senior group which meets at the Rec Center holds their monthly meetings here. The senior group because of the activities they offer this age group has attracted seniors from other communities outside of Eden. The Center has a Program Manager who is dedicated to working with the seniors group, and provides them with direction and speakers that come in to discuss topics that address their specific needs. The seniors in this group look out for each other according to the Program Manager, including visiting members in the hospital, dropping off food at the home of a sick member and sending cards. The Center also provides exercise classes that serves this specific group and works with them to plan social activities away from the Center. The senior's group also has a committee member on the Executive board of the Community Council that represents them. Mrs. White attends all Community Council meetings and works the registration table at every Community Council meeting.

The Rec Center also holds seminars which offer assistance to residents in the community on how to better organize their lives, post activities that are being held throughout the city and provides facilities to hold job fairs for residents. The Center also brings in a local service agency which offers parenting skills classes for residents.

The Center however does struggle with parent participation. Mr. Sims explains that "some are involved, but many of our parents don't have the time, they are working". Also, the attendance at

some of the seminars directed at the adults may not have the number of participants especially parents, that the Director of the center would like to see. Mr. Paul states,

You have to have some buy-in from the parents to affect the kids. Which is why we run the seminars like Organizing your Life. We see in our kids, a lack of understanding of structure. They will sign up for a class and don't show up, or leave the class early. We are guessing that they might not have much structure at home. We know that kids understanding the importance of having and understanding structure will be of use in their life in all kinds of areas, including helping them to learn better.

We talked about the parents and even grandparents that do get involved and why they get involved. Mr. Sims explained,

Some come to see what we are doing up here. They see a change in their child and they want to know what is happening to bring about the change and that gets them up here. The kids also go home and talk about the things that they do at the Rec Center and especially the Rec Center staff. You have these young parents, and they see the love that their children are getting here and the children pass it on to the parents.

They will tell people, 'Yes my children go to the Center over there. They are starting to get back a community attitude.

***Community Resource organization-University Center.*** The community of Eden has developed a partnership that has proven invaluable to the community, with the University that resides within the community. The institution has proven to be an interested and involved partner in the revitalization of the community. They have provided representatives from their own campus Center, which focuses on working with neighborhoods, in determining what can be added to the neighborhood in

order to improve the quality of life for all of the residents. They guide the residents in discovering what assets they have and can use to help solve problem areas in the community. The Center has worked with residents on getting resources from the city and federal government to champion their goal to improve the quality of life of residents in Eden. The Center works closely with the President and the Board of the Community Council, on how to build collaborative partners with the city, federal agencies, community organizations, the community's residents and its university on the goal of making Eden a premier neighborhood in the city. This certainly benefits the University its constituents, the students who attend and live in the community and it helps create a good neighbor relationship with the community of Eden. The University Center in partnership with Eden and an adjacent community received a grant in 2005, from Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a community outreach partnership center grant to prepare residents of Eden and this neighboring community on how to develop leaders that would work in the community on behalf of the community residents. A number of Eden residents were selected to go through the training that came out of this grant at the University. Out of this training grew leaders in the community who would eventually fill leadership roles on the Eden Community Council and one resident that participated in the training worked with the council on the implementation of a new Education committee for the Community Council. The community liaison for the University Center that serves Eden, is on the board of the Community Council.

The partnership between the University and the community of Eden has produced resources for the neighborhood school in the community, including providing guidance for the Education committee of the Community Council on certain initiatives. The University provides scholarships for children living in the community, and has developed a program that involves the students from the

neighborhood school doing campus visitations to familiarize those students with campus life. The University also provides students that tutor children in the neighborhood schools, and this partnership has produced internship opportunities for students from the University.

The University Center is also working with the community of Eden on the new Art and Music Center that will be built in Eden, providing technical expertise. The funding for the new Center was provided by the City through the efforts of the Community Council. This venue will be an educational center and will also showcase the legacy of this city's rich musical heritage. This new center has been championed by the President of the University and will be located in close proximity to the university. The hope is that this Arts and Music Center will be a centerpiece that will draw economic development to this centrally located neighborhood in the city, that has close accessibility to a major interstate, and is less than 20 minutes to the downtown area of the city; thereby producing needed jobs for residents in this community.

The relationship between the community residents and the University has not always been harmonious. Residents in the past were suspicious of the university taking over the community and some of that still exist. At a Community Council meeting I attended about a year ago, some of the capital improvements the University was making were discussed. I had a conversation with a long term resident after the meeting, who did express this type of sentiment. Overall however, through the work of the University Center, University representatives, including the President of the University, and Eden's Community Council there has been an understanding that it is important to make the partnership one in which there is equal benefits for the community of Eden and the University. It is not always a perfect relationship, but the University has worked to make an investment in



empowering the residents of Eden to take control of the destiny of their community by working with them to use the assets of the community to ensure a better and safer community for all residents.

The neighborhood school's current Community Resource Coordinator, Mrs. Buyman is a long term resident of Eden and has lived in the community for over 20 years. She was the former chair of the Education committee of the Community Council and led in developing an effective partnership with the neighborhood school and the University that has created opportunities for academic tutoring and college preparatory experiences for the students in the school. She assumed this job a year ago, after volunteering in the school for two years and chairing the schools decision making committee. The principal recognized that the school needed someone in the role of Community Resource Coordinator and decided based on her prior work experience, and knowledge of the community and the school, that Mrs. Buyman was the right person for the job. In this role, the Community Resource Coordinator, helps assists the principal in developing short and long term goals for the academic enrichment for students, develops programs for the students, and writes grants to fund the programs. This year the Coordinator has also assumed the Parent coordinator duties to increase parent involvement in the school, which was formerly the responsibility of the in school social service agency.

This Agency has a satellite office in Eden Academy. From 1999 to 2003 the Agency originally had a satellite office in one of the two schools that were merged in order to form Eden Academy. After the 2003 merger, the Agency continued service to the students and has supported the neighborhood school for twelve years. The Community Resource Coordinator is the liaison and a partner to the school's social service agency resource center. This Agency resides in other public neighborhood schools in this city, where a significant part of the population of the school receives

free lunch. The Agency works with families of children attending the school, identifying the needs of family members and providing guidance and solutions that will assist in establishing better lives for parents and the children. Workshops are held for parents on various topics including financial literacy. A social worker does home visits to families in the community to assist them in obtaining social service resources. A spring break retreat is held for parents and children together, where information on how to work effectively with their children is provided to parents. Also offered are activities that help children to develop skills on how to work effectively with other children and to encourage them to think about their career aspirations. This Agency also provides an after school tutoring program to help improve student's reading and math competencies.

*The Neighborhood School.* The recruitment of community residents to engage in involvement in the school to champion the academic success of children in the school is an important and critical goal of this neighborhood school. Bowen and Richman (2002) define community as “the proximate spatial setting in which schools are located and in which students reside” (p. 68). In describing her efforts to reach out to the community to bring parents and others in the community to volunteer in the school, Mrs. Buyman, the Community Resource Coordinator describes the effort that she has made, “I have spoken about our need for volunteers at the Community Council meetings, the seniors group in the community, and to parents, former principals, teachers, who live in the community but our number of volunteers from this community is low”. I could sense her frustration and maybe disappointment, from someone who has worked diligently in the community to support residents throughout this community, many that were in need of assistance and sometimes using her own personal funds. When we discussed what may be some of the challenges to recruiting residents in this community, she relates, how she is confused that she is able to recruit more volunteers from

the neighboring community than from her own community. What is also revealing is that in a neighborhood school where the majority of students are African American, the numbers of non-African Americans willing to volunteer in the school is much higher than African American volunteers. She welcomes and is very appreciative of all volunteers and is very grateful for their contribution but states,

I also would like our students to also be mentored by individuals who look like them. We have a young Black male attending the local community college and he is from another community and comes and tutors the children and the students love to see him coming. They are very glad to see him. Why can't we get the Black males in Eden to come in to volunteer? I see so many of them just hanging out on the corner.

We discussed the socio-economic ramifications of this type of circumstance. She explains that she is aware of the economic hardships of many individuals in the community. "Many of our parents here they are in survival mode. How am I going to put food on the table? How can I judge them?"

She has been able to recruit some parents of children that attend the school and is pleased that this includes parents from one specific rental property in the community where most of the residents are single heads of households and have unstable economic situations. These parents built a relationship with Mrs. Buyman, when she worked as a volunteer in the building supporting a program that assisted in finding resources for the tenants. She also acted as a mediator between the landlord and the tenants over the living conditions of residents in the building. We discussed the approach that she used in recruiting these specific parents,

When I moved into this role, I would see the parents when they came into the school, and they recognized me. It is important to establish a deep relationship with these parents and to get them to trust you. You cannot judge these parents or you will lose them. When I recruited one particular parent every time I saw her I asked how she was doing and would mention to her how much we really needed her. I did this continually, and she finally felt comfortable to let me know that she had some ideas. I asked her to write her ideas down and come back to me. I let her know that we can work together. You have to make the parents feel wanted. I see sometimes in the community that they are being judged and they don't want to be judged. You have to take time with parents because of the difficult issues many are dealing with.

Ms. Buyman also discussed the issue of socio-economic and class issues that can arise. She explains,

I had one parent say to me, you live in Eden, but you are not like us, you live on the other side. You don't even sound like us. I had to work with that parent, there are a lot of parents that are dealing with some difficult issues, but you have to take your time with these parents and let them know that you are concerned about them and that the school needs their help.

Mrs. Buyman recognizes that she also has to work to develop different strategies for raising the awareness of residents, to harness the level of community involvement that will have an impact on the educational achievement of the students in the school. Before the merger of the two neighborhood schools into the new single neighborhood school, there was solid community involvement at the school which was closer to the heart of the community. The new merged school is

now in that same location in a brand new school building. There is hope that this will renew the community involvement garnering that sense of ownership that helped galvanize the resident's engagement in the old school. Mrs. Buyman has also sent surveys to parents to find out what they believe is working in the new school and to find out what new activities they are interested in seeing in the school. She is working to develop recruiting materials that will outline the needs of the school and how community volunteers can service those needs admitting that she needs to provide "information that residents can take with them", when she makes presentations to community residents and organizations. The school has also been designated a community learning center, "an entity within a public elementary, middle or secondary school building that provides educational, recreational, health, and social service programs for residents of all ages within a local community" (Department of Education, 2011). Workshops and activities for both parents and children and for the general population of community residents are being planned for the Community Center.

### **Summary**

#### **What strategies do community organizations and school representatives think contribute to facilitating perceived collective efficacy in a predominantly African American community?**

The theory of collective efficacy explains that group member's belief in or judgment about their ability to intervene and take action on neighborhood issues will enable them to maintain social control and solve problems (Bandura, 1993; Sampson et al., 1997; Wandersman & Florin, 2000). Bandura, (2005) suggested that the levels in which individuals cultivate collective efficacy stems from their "shared belief in their collective power to produce results" (p. 316). However in determining the efficacy of the group, it is important to determine how effectively those within the team can fulfill their roles and responsibilities (Bandura, 2005). Resident's belief in their individual

and collective competencies can influence their willingness and ability to take on difficult problems in their communities (Bandura, 1989). In urban communities where residents are dealing with challenging economic realities and the consequences of circumstances that leave them mistrustful, overwhelmed with the responsibilities of their daily lives, under educated and under prepared, there is a need for partners that can work with residents to build their trust and encourage and educate them on how working collectively can bring results that will improve their community. These partners can help them to identify the assets that they bring to any collective effort. In Eden, a community organization through a short term funded grant prepared some residents through training to recognize the skills and abilities they could use to support the community. The training enhanced their knowledge on how to work together to use the assets of the community to seek sources that could bring needed resources to their community. This training also prepared them on how to use the power of the community in a productive way to garner change and potential economic development. Yet this is not an ongoing effort. The community recognizes that there are challenges to re-claiming the level of collective efficacy of the past. The socio-economic and demographical profiles, norms and customs of the residents are not as homogenous as they once were, with the percentage of younger residents under 30 increasing and percentage of residents over 60 declining (United States Census Report 2010).

In order to encourage a greater number of residents of Eden to become more willing to contribute to the community and to become advocates for improving the quality of life of all residents in the community, different strategies are required. Specifically partnerships that include the immediate community and those that go beyond the immediate community, that will bring in needed resources to help the residents to alleviate problems, economic and educational. There is a

movement to develop a consortium among religious organizations in the community to work collectively with neighborhood residents to provide these types of solutions. This will involve reminding the residents that they themselves need to be more inclusive and remember that there are young people in the community that need their voices heard; along with respect from the young for those that have come before them and have wisdom and knowledge that is worth hearing. Letting their apprehensions about each other subside and developing a willingness to trust and recognize potential lessons to be learned from each other could bring unlimited benefits that may result in a strengthened community wide movement that may result in actions which will serve the entire community. Community residents also need safe and welcoming places to gather, to encourage other residents to share what is going on in their lives and to share their knowledge among themselves in order to build goodwill towards the community. One of the residents Ms. Wasson told a story of how she was walking down the street of Eden and she remarked to a young woman standing near her how disturbed she was at how dirty the streets were and the young resident said to her “ This is Eden, what do you expect?” This is the type of apathy that will settle in a community if residents are not encouraged to develop respect for their community.

Concerned community residents, recognize that more residents must become involved to ensure the stability of the community. This is even more critical for the neighborhood school, where a small group of parents and residents from the community are involved, but their numbers are eclipsed by involvement from residents from a neighboring community, children in the neighborhood school, should see mentors from the residents that live in their community. School representatives also recognize that the new school may spearhead increased involvement, since it is closer and more central to the community. The school also has hired a new Community Resource Coordinator, a long

term resident of Eden and a former Community Council member. She has been asked to develop opportunities that will re-establish that prior feeling of ownership that was once accorded to the neighborhood school by community residents. The school will also be gaining a community learning center which will create opportunities for learning for community residents and will serve both adults and children. The Community Resource Coordinator is also making an effort to increase community outreach with the development of strategies that emphasize better communication with the residents on the needs of the school. Hopefully as the former teacher and current President of the Community Council suggested work will be done to help the teachers, parents and students to build a foundation of mentoring and an exchange of knowledge so that there can be meaningful and respectful dialogues that will champion the most important outcome, the academic excellence of the children.

### **Discussion and Analysis of Research Question Three**

#### **How do school leaders perceive the influence of collective efficacy on student academic outcomes?**

The data partially confirms what Eccles and Gootman, (2002), have suggested that children's well being is "consistently correlated with their affective ties to their communities (as referenced in Cumsille, 2007 p. 423). Conroy, Dugay Fowler, Pretty, and Williams, (1996) and Bauman, Bearman, Blum, Harris, Jones and Resnick (1997) suggest that "when children believe that there are adults and community institutions that they can count on negative outcomes are lessened and they feel a sense of well-being and competence" (as referenced in Cumsille, 2007 p. 423). However, what was also revealed in this study is the difficulty in measuring the influence of collective actions by the community on behalf of the academic improvement of children.



*School and Community Partnerships, influences perceived collective efficacy.* Eden Academy's school's ranking fell from Effective to Continuous Improvement, this year. Math and Reading Scores in grades 3, 5 and 7, did not meet the states required percentage of 75%. The school also did not meet the federally mandated Adequate Yearly Progress index for students with disabilities. The school is led by a proactive Principal and through her leadership Eden Academy was brought up two rankings within three years from the lowest academic ranking that referenced a school in academic failure. This was achieved through the diligent work of the administrators, teachers and community partners. These partnerships have included parents, corporations, small businesses in the city, community residents and local universities. These entities have provided volunteers needed for tutorial assistance with students, speakers for school clubs and some funding for school projects for students. A partnership with the university that is located in the community of Eden has resulted in the development of a college incentive program that provides students in every grade, attending Eden Academy the opportunity to visit and take part in campus activities and to have programs and activities brought in to the school by university departments.

The Principal of Eden Academy is now considered a Lead Principal which means that she is responsible for mentoring other principals in the public school system. Much of the day to day administrative activity of the school is the responsibility of the Assistant Principal. I was asked by the Principal to meet with the Assistant Principal to discuss the relationship of the school with its community partners. A prior teacher in the public school system, who has been with the school system for 20 years, Ms. Rosen has served as Assistant Principal at Eden Academy for three years. When describing the relationship between the community of Eden and the school, she begins by first informing me that the school has a resource person who serves in the role of Community Resource

Coordinator, responsible for building partnerships in the community for the school. She proudly mentions that “Mrs. Buyman is a community resident of Eden as well”. Ms Rosen states, “She can identify with our parents and partners, because she not only works here, she lives here. It helps her to help us”. Mrs. Buyman recognizes the challenges and the rewards of her new role, encouraging her neighbors in the community to renew their commitment to the neighborhood school that has been an important legacy of the community of Eden. She discusses the issues that she is facing in this role on pages 148-154 of this study. She admits that her work is helping to build a foundation for change that will eventually have an impact. However it is still too early for her to see a significant change in the academic improvement of the children as a result of collective efforts of community residents.

I asked Ms. Rosen, the Assistant Principal, to discuss the vision of the school, and what it considers, when seeking to build a partnership with the community for the academic success of the children and why it is important. She explains,

I am going back to the success of the students. This can mean different things for different students. There is no one overarching umbrella. We have students with autism that need something different than students in the general education program. Our goal is to make sure that their individual needs are met, because we are a part of the community. Our goal is to make certain that our students are ready to become active participants in the community. We want them to develop the skills that the community needs, so they can one day come back to the community to work here and live here.

In addition to serving in the Parents in Action group for parents interested in volunteering in the school, many community residents also serve as tutors in reading and math for the children that

contributes to the academic success of the students. According to Ms. Rosen they contribute in other ways aside from volunteering in the school.

We have a very big push for fathers, males, and brothers to come in to the school and the interest is growing. We have a program called Boys to Men, where men come into the school from the community to mentor boys in our school. The Boys to Men program is growing. Members of the community are now coming in. I had a father here yesterday, who had issues with some kids coming into their house uninvited. He came in and he was telling them about the streets and how you do not do this, because something could happen. His story was incredible it was great, he went to a private school here in the city, had started college, and had some problems and he discussed what could happen to young people. He came into the school to talk to a group of kids about his experience.

During our discussion I asked Ms. Rosen her impression of whether there is enough support for the school from the community. She stated,

Many do support the school; they have children here or have had children here. Many long time residents, their kids are here, they know each other's families and they are not always visible in the school, but they are supportive. They are helping children with their homework, they contact the children to find out what is going on, and they take calls from the school about the children. There are a lot of different things you can do to support the school and that does not always mean giving money and being at the school. We also have parents that we would like to see more. You have some parents that can do and will not do.

I asked Ms. Rosen, to discuss what could be some possible reasons for the limited community participation. She discussed that parents are sometimes unaware of what they could contribute and some feeling intimidated, doubt their ability to make a contribution in this collective environment.

Ms. Rosen commented,

For many of them, now we see a second and third generation of this problem. Many did not see their families in the school or the building and that is not a natural thing. My parents were involved with the school. Here sometimes, our kids, if they see their parents they think they are in trouble. We can always get the parents to the school, when I have to get the kid removed. We don't want it that way. We want them to be here, we have an open door policy, we invite them in to the children's classroom, and we invite them to have breakfast or lunch with their children. We ran into a problem recently with parents coming in, but they were hanging out together, on their phones and texting, so they were not really involved with the kids. They were upset when we said they cannot do this. We explained they could walk with their children and help them with their trays in the cafeteria. That was an awkward conversation. They were not happy with us. We tried to get the point across, we want you here, but you can do that outside. That is not sending a good message to our kids.

We also discussed who in the community is coming in to volunteer in the school. Ms. Rosen admits,

I am finding grandmas. We have Ms. Reed, who is an integral part of our school. She is the grandmother of one of our students. She is here whether he is here or not. She is committed to the school. She talks to classrooms of kids about behaviors and expectations. She will go into our 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, everyone knows her around the building. She is part of our Parents in Action, she does the box tops, she is committed to the school and she is here every day. We have another grandparent, this is her first or second year, but she is here almost every day this year working in one of our primary rooms helping the teachers. She is in her grandkids room helping out. There are a couple other grandparents. We have parents but I am really finding more grandparents willing to volunteer. I think of Ms. Reed she is a long term resident and I think the others are as well. And you know a lot of our children live with their grandparents. The parents are out and the grandparents are taking care of the children.

***Challenges to the building of Collective efficacy to create school and community partnerships.*** Schools that have developed strong supportive resources for their schools are more likely to exist in school communities with strong perceived collective efficacy (Allensworth et al., 2006). The school representatives do face challenges in reaching out to community residents to become involved in the school. Ms. Rosen explained,

We have residents, they want to come in and they have their own agenda. They want to help us with whatever they want to do. They may want to come in and do a group on knitting. That's nice but right now it does not fit in on what is right for our kids. They have other more pressing needs. Sometimes what they have to offer is not

what we need right now. We don't want to turn anybody away, but sometimes, and it does not happen often, that we turn people away. Sometimes, this message may not appear to be positive, but we have to do what is best for the students.

Another challenge faced by this school and other schools in urban public school systems, is that many of the families in this and other communities don't stay very long in these communities. Many of these families move numerous times from community to community, sometimes it is their frustration with what is going on in the neighborhood with crime, problems that their children may be having in the neighborhood, in the school, housing issues or just not feeling welcomed in the community. This can limit the participation of parent involvement in the school.

Ms. Rosen states,

The hardest part of this community is the changes. Families move frequently, at such a rate that they don't have a chance to feel a sense of ownership for what the community has for them or to set down roots. They are living week to week and month to month. There are evictions. They are all over the place. They get tired of here and they jump to a new community, instead of trying to work out problems. I don't think that all members of the community are welcoming to new members. I think there are a variety of reasons. Some of the new members coming to the school, they have a hard time before they are accepted. Sometimes they leave without being here for a long time. Sometimes they will stay and I know the school is a microcosm of society. From what I can gather there can be some difficulty with those who have lived in the community for a long time and the newcomers to the community. I think that some of the newcomers that come in they don't own property. The upkeep and

the care you take in the community is not the same if you are not a property owner. It is not the same, but we know that the students that are new to the community and the school are different than the kids who have lived in the community for a long time. Because we know them well and we know their needs. But the new kids we have to get to know them and their strengths and weaknesses. Some kids will come this will be their 7th or 8<sup>th</sup> school. The number of schools that they will go through because of the change of communities is incredible, and it is so sad. Because school is our community, it is where we go from when we were a young age. I did not leave my elementary school and go somewhere else. We stayed there in that community and you were all together. You played together. They were extended family and now that is not what is happening with these families.

Ms. Rosen recognizes that the challenges that she and other administrators in public education deal with are different types of challenges than when she was growing up and attending public schools. Residents feeling a sense of belonging in the community, mutual trust in the community, connectedness, and the capability, will have a stronger desire to build collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Bowen, Bowen & Rose 2005). Ms. Rosen explains,

That is the essence of what I am looking at, how do you take a concept from one time and bring that concept to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to the needs and concerns and challenges of families today, different today than we were growing up. How do you educate individuals to accept the differences of the individuals in communities today? How do you help people reach out to individuals who may be different but need their help.

*Measuring the affect of perceived Collective efficacy on academic achievement.* Studies have suggested that the perceived collective efficacy of teachers in a school can increase the academic achievement of students in schools (Goddard, 2001). In the past, the “task of creating a productive learning environments has rested heavily on the talents of teachers” (Bandura, 2005 p. 11). However with the increasingly complex dynamics of the lives of the children entering public schools today, the children come into the schools with even more demanding, personal, and social issues that affect their desire and ability to learn. Placing the responsibility only on teachers to ensure the academic success of children in public schools, will not meet the academic and social development required for the academic success of the students. Forward thinking schools have enlisted partners from the community, academic institutions and the business sector to assist them in their goals of preparing students not only academically but as Ms. Rosen explained “when we think of our students achieving success we look at not only the academic achievement but also the social advancement of the children”. Eden Academy has made significant efforts to make community engagement an important mission of the school, by developing partnerships that provide academic and social services to the students. The most important question to consider is what the impact of the collective effort on the academic success of the students in the school has been. I posed this question to Ms. Rosen and her response was not surprising and mostly anecdotal.

It is hard to say. We are working this year on measuring what the success has been.

I am not going to take the credit away from the teachers. Our teachers are some of the hardest working staff I have ever seen. They are dedicated and will do whatever it takes to make sure that our students achieve. It’s that little extra push [referring to community involvement]. It could be psychological, but knowing that somebody



cares, it may increase their participation in school. There are a lot of things that may happen as a result of the partnership. We are working on it; one of our partners is collecting data on their activities with the students. I see confidence, that is a big one, because when you are working one on one in a small group, you are able to experience success at a much higher rate much more often and you are given encouragement one on one. Their teachers encourage them all day long, but they get one on one encouragement with the tutors. There is nothing like the small groups. When they come, they know the tutors are going to ask them “Have you done your homework? “How did you do on the test”? So they know that they have somebody that they are accountable to someone else other than their teacher, or parent. There is that other layer now, the working together. So that has to make an impact, I just don’t know what exactly. It is the working together. That truly is the best.

Scholars have shown through studies that perceived collective efficacy can increase the academic achievement of students. Detailed studies also suggest that the involvement of parents with incomes at the poverty level, in their children’s schooling results in improved achievement outcomes (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Egeland, Englund, Luckner, & Whaley, 2004; Fendrich, Izzo, Kaspro, & Weissberg, 1999). However effectively measuring that impact still remains elusive, the data from this study confirms that issue. Eden Academy and the community organizations that support this school, and other schools and their community partners throughout the country, have not developed tools for measuring the effectiveness of their partnerships on the academic achievement of children in their schools (Dearing 2011). There is little data available other than anecdotal to determine the impact of these types of relationships on the achievement of students (Sanders, 2008).

Dearing (2011) has called for “standardized practices that are proven to promote engagement and, in turn, child achievement, so that we can determine what is and is not working, and we can begin to empower (school) districts—particularly those that are economically disadvantaged—to invest in promising and proven practices that engage families and communities in their children’s education in ways that will ultimately improve life chances” (p. 1). Determining the effectiveness of actions taken through community engagement on behalf of children in schools should be an essential component of the engagement process. This can only be accomplished through the collection of substantial data through quantitative and qualitative research. To get to this point there is a need to determine effective approaches to school and community relationships. Dearing (2011) suggest two approaches to consider:

- (1) Family and community engagement is approached through a standardized set of practices that purposively foster collaborations centered on an individual child’s strengths and needs.
- (2) Second, rather than an extemporaneous process, establishing connections between family, school, and community is a fundamental and core aspect of the school’s mission and functioning as an institution (pg. 2).

Sanders (2008) also recommends using broad data research confirming the importance of using standardized assessments, but also emphasizing the importance of stake holders’ perceptions of the value and effectiveness of these school and community partnerships. She suggests that schools seek assistance from external organizations in the accumulation of this type of data and remember the importance of making the data “accessible to a broad audience, allowing it to be used for diverse purposes and audiences, making it an important tool for educational reform” (p. 544).

Byrk (2010) has suggested that communities with low levels of collective efficacy, and few social connections beyond the community are likely to have weakened essential support in their schools. Eden Academy has made the investment in building multifaceted relationships with the community by hiring a Community Resource Coordinator responsible for developing and raising interest in the community, on the importance of working together to support the community and the schools in the community and by improving internal community relationships with parents and the university in Eden. Eden Academy has seen the value of going beyond the immediate community of Eden reaching out to other nearby communities for volunteers, partnerships with colleges and businesses and having an in-house social agency that provides home visits to students and their parents. The agency assists parents with issues concerning their children and offers guidance to improve their lives. They are all working diligently in the strengthening of school-community partnerships. The school has to work with its partners to develop a process for measuring the effectiveness of everyone's hard work; determining if the fruits of their labor, is accomplishing their end goal, of increasing and improving the academic and social development and enrichment of children attending this neighborhood school.

Ms Rosen recognizes the value of community resident's involvement and explains why it is important,

They absolutely, have a vested interest. Grandparents, Aunts, we are good with anybody showing an interest in the school. Their support for the school goes a long way with the kids. If the parents will support the school, the kids will support the school. If the parents are not committed to their education, how are the kids going to be committed to their education? If there is not someone at home asking them, how

did you do today, what did you learn today? What kind of homework do you have? Make sure you get it done and you are not going outside until you get it done. We are seeing more parents, and our Community Resource coordinator is working hard to get parents involved. Hopefully it will make a difference. I know it will make a difference, I am not sure on what scale.

### **Summary**

#### **How do school leaders perceive the influence of collective efficacy on student academic outcomes?**

Historically, Eden's neighborhood school has played a pivotal role in building the collective efficacy of the community; it was one of the key gathering places for the building of collective efficacy in the community. Most of the neighborhoods' residents were parents and the school was a place where they would meet each other and volunteer for their children inside of the school and meet outside of the school to continue that relationship. Throughout the years as the community changed, so did the school structure. As the neighborhood school merged with another temporarily until a new school could be built, some parents found the change disruptive to their children's routine and, many parents took their children out of the school. This caused a rupture in the perceived collective efficacy of the community; since many believed that their neighborhood school no longer existed. As the transition to the new school occurred, the Community Council rallied parents who were willing to send their children to the new school, to make certain that they would be a part of the process and have a voice in activities surrounding the building of the new neighborhood school. Their efforts resulted in the new school being built in the old location of the former neighborhood school

central to the community. The new school was also named after the community. Additionally, the new Community Resource Coordinator is a long term Eden resident.

Eden Academy representatives believe in the importance of community involvement and they are working actively to get residents involved, but there are challenges. They are dealing with a new set of parents now living in this community and educating those parents on the importance of building collective efficacy with long term residents. These are the parents in the community that have in the past made the neighborhood school, a recipient of the benefits of having strong community support for their students. Education is also needed for these parents that have a longer history of living in Eden to move toward the acceptance of the new members of the community and share with them the history of the community's relationship with the neighborhood school. The school leaders have wisely sought a broad support of community organizations in their mission to develop a resource pool needed by the children of the school, for their academic and social well being. The school leadership has realized that the constructs of collective efficacy, mutual trust, a willingness to work for the common good of individuals has no boundaries. They have brought in resources from within the immediate community moreover they have looked beyond the neighborhood out of necessity. The needs of children in this type of urban community are complex and require knowledge and financial support that exceeds what this community alone is able to offer. Collective efficacy is defined by Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls (1997) as a "collection of people and institutions occupying a subsection of a larger community" (p. 918). The school leaders have taken an innovative approach in not only acting as a catalyst in the re-building of collective efficacy in the community of Eden, and as a resource for the school, but they have also insisted that collective efficacy be created within the school among the individuals and organizations entering into the

building that support the children within its own walls. School representatives have also recognized their role in re-building collective efficacy in the community through the addition to the school of an in-house agency that provides assistance to the entire family, striving to make it a stronger entity for helping children improve their educational outcome. They have asked for a commitment from parents to consider volunteering in the community in some capacity if they cannot volunteer in the school. The next step is to ensure that the work that is done as a result of the collective efficacy that is created and the support given by individuals working for the betterment of the children in the school, is examined through an evaluative process to measure the effectiveness of those collective actions.

The school leadership team at Eden Academy, as leaders in the community, sees the importance of being advocates for both the students and the families of the students in this community. They know that when the children in their school, see residents from their community in the school and community organizations bringing in new ideas that help the children to learn and they are both championing their success, Collective Efficacy, becomes a key factor for purposeful educational reform that is required in 21<sup>st</sup> century focused schools.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary, Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter provides a summary of the research that includes an overview of the problem, the purpose statement, and a summary and discussion of the findings related to the conceptual framework of this research study. Additional sections discuss the implications for practice as a result of the findings and recommendations for future research.

#### **Summary of the Study**

##### ***Overview of the Problem***

As stated in chapter one, there remains a continuing disparity in the educational achievement of Black and White students according to national standardized test scores (National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], 2011). This achievement gap is a prelude for many students in educational environments unequipped to assist them in overcoming their deficiencies to an existence of limited opportunities and a life of unyielding inequality (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The challenge of finding solutions that will bring about results which lead to a significant closing of the gap and eventually its eradication remains fleeting. This is largely due to the complexity of the problem and a persistent effort of the public school system to develop strategies for resolving it from within the system. This study focused on how urban school systems might consider external resources to help in solving the achievement gap. One of the most important external resources that could assist in supporting the school system in this effort is the community where the schools are located. Historically, urban schools in African American communities have been strongly supported by these communities, since the residents saw them as a resource in helping to prepare their children for a

better life and worked collectively to provide economic and social assistance (Anderson, 1988, 2006; Cecelski, 1994; Cornelius, (1991); Siddle-Walker, 1996; & Webber, 1978; Sibley- Butler, 2005).

African American's saw acquiring a formal education as important. As a result of the "experience of enslavement and legalized oppression and discrimination in the United States attaining an education became a "core value" in the African American cultural value system" (Franklin, 2002, p. 176).

### ***Purpose Statement and Research Questions***

The overarching purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions and beliefs of African American residents on what variables influenced collective efficacy (mutual trust, shared expectations and intervening on behalf of the common good) to encourage a collective effort to partner with community organizations for the academic success of children attending neighborhood schools.

The literature revealed that certain variables influence collective efficacy and community organizations can help in the establishment of opportunities which can create "collective capacities" (Ohmer & Beck 2006, p.110). The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What do residents in an African American community perceive to be the variables that influence collective efficacy in their community (mutual trust, shared expectations and intervening on behalf of the common good)?
- (2) What strategies do community organizations and school representatives think contribute to facilitating collective efficacy in a predominantly African American community?
- (3) How do school leaders perceive the influence of collective efficacy on student academic outcomes?



### *Review of Methodology*

The study site was a predominantly African American urban community. This community has gone through several racial and economic shifts. Originally an all White community, it became integrated in the latter part of the 1950's as African Americans moved into the community. The number of African American residents grew as a result of an urban renewal project in the downtown area of the city, which forced the migration of Blacks into this and other communities. As the Black population increased, White residents left, leaving a community that was predominantly Black. These residents were primarily homeowners, with diverse socio-economic status- lower, middle and upper-class incomes. They moved to the community seeking quality housing and a safe community in which to raise their families. According to my interviews, there existed among these residents shared values and goals, a safe community for themselves, and their families and a desire for a better life for their children. This shared goal ignited a collective willingness, a mutual trust among residents, reciprocal relationships to look out for one another's well-being. This perceived collective efficacy among residents was central to their outreach to the children of the community, where residents saw it as their responsibility to intervene on behalf of their common good. This community has always had neighborhood schools and the residents had been active volunteers in the past in these schools; participating in activities that would enrich the school experience of their children.

There have been significant changes in the community brought on by the elimination of a vital business district that provided necessary resources to the community and a change in the demographics of the resident population of this community. Both were affected by the building of an interstate highway which ran right through the community splitting the community; forcing businesses out and also many of the middle and upper middle class African American residents.

Today, this largely African American community's residents are lower and middle income, with 30% of the residents having incomes at or below the poverty level, and fewer homeowners, with the majority of the population now living in rental housing (United States Census Report, 2012).

This study focuses on current residents in the community and community organizations that support and service residents and their perceptions and beliefs on what could influence the development of collective efficacy among the residents to encourage the building of partnerships between residents and community organizations to improve the educational outcome of children attending neighborhood schools. The residents who participated in this study were divided up into two sub groups, long term residents living 10 or more years in the community and short term residents residing in the community for less than five years. Additional interviews were conducted with representatives from educational, religious, and recreational community organizations.

Through semi-structured one-on-one interviews, I gathered perceptions from participants on whether they were familiar with the concept of collective efficacy and the components that define collective efficacy, social cohesion/trust, informal social control and participation level. The questions asked in the interviews provided data to determine their perceptions regarding the degree to which collective efficacy existed today, or not, if it ever existed and to provide their perception of why it may or may not have existed and if it does not exist, if they thought it could be developed and how that could be accomplished in the community today. In past studies to determine collective efficacy, researchers have used only survey instruments that measured collective efficacy using scales (Ohmer & Beck 2006; Quane & Rankin 2002; Sampson et al., 1997, 1999). The criticism of this approach has been the lack of follow up with qualitative methods of interviewing to get greater detail in the answers provided by a survey (Pebley & Narayan, 2003). The qualitative methods, used in this

study was an ethnographic approach immersing myself in the community (Patton, 2002) and allowing participants to discuss their personal history in the community and multiple case studies, which provided rich details of real-life phenomenon (Yin, 2009) that were pertinent to my area of study (Yin, 2003). Community organizations agreed to observations of their community meetings and the review of historical and census data was also utilized.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The findings revealed from the study are summarized by the three research questions:

**Research Question 1:** What do residents in an African American community perceive to be the variables that influence collective efficacy in their community (mutual trust, shared expectations and intervening on behalf of the common good)?

To answer this question, the researcher used the components that define collective efficacy, social cohesion/trust, informal control and participation to gather participant's beliefs and perceptions of variables that increased or limited collective efficacy and the study revealed the following:

#### **Increases collective efficacy**

- (1) Residential stability-residents long term tenure in the community.
- (2) The acceptance of the common norms and values of the community.
- (3) Owning a home.
- (4) The building of relationships with neighbors and social networks, taking actions which exhibit an interest in the well-being of all community residents.
- (5) Participation in community activities.

### **Limits collective efficacy**

- (1) Short term residence in the community.
- (2) A lack of understanding of the norms and values of the community.
- (3) Little effort extended to build relationships and social networks among neighbors- relationship building is limited to individual relationships that meet the individuals' needs only and not the common good of the community.
- (4) Limited or no participation in community activities.

**Research Question 2:** What strategies do community organization representatives and school representatives think contribute to facilitating collective efficacy in a predominantly African American community? This research questions examined, how community organizations might play a role in developing ideas that would help in the facilitation of collective efficacy to build collaborative relationships with community residents. The study revealed the following as factors that representatives of organizations believe help facilitate collective efficacy in a predominantly African American community:

- (1) Building trust among residents through active engagement with community residents.
- (2) Ensuring that all residents are stakeholders in community initiatives by identifying their interest, raising their awareness of community organizations and working with them to become connected to community activities.
- (3) Continually develop community engagement opportunities which offer all residents the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and abilities to become proficient contributors.

- (4) Target under-represented (i.e., single parents, youth) in the community to encourage their involvement in community engagement activities.
- 5) Establish partnership consortiums among community organizations that help train residents in identifying the assets that they bring to collaborative community initiatives.

**Research Question 3:** How do school leaders perceive the influence of collective efficacy on student academic outcomes? The study revealed from the perceptions of school representatives that collective efficacy does have some influence on student academic outcomes, but fully measuring that outcome remains elusive these factors were revealed as outcomes in the study:

- (1) Increased confidence in the student's perception of their ability to do their school work from the encouragement and assistance received through collaborative efforts of community organizations, parents, teachers, and school administrators.
- (2) Increased interest in completing school work by students from collective support which stresses accountability and expressed interest by collaborative community partners.

## Discussion of the Findings

### *Variables which are perceived to influence or limit collective efficacy.*

The findings from this study provided evidence of variables that are viewed by community representatives as linked to the increase and limits to the development of collective efficacy supporting the conceptual framework of collective efficacy, and limits to the development of collective efficacy. These findings were consistent with the literature (Bandura, 1993; Bursik & Grasmic, 1993; Korhauser, 1978; Tittle and Paternoster, 1988; Sampson et al., 1997). However, the data revealed that contrary to earlier literature which showed that the development of collective efficacy need not be tied to network ties and a connection to others or dense social networks (e.g., neighborhoods, schools, organizations), ( Fisher 1982; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Sampson et al., 1999; Wellman, 1979), many long term residents believed that their perceived collective efficacy, mutual trust, willingness to work together and look out for the common good of their neighbors grew out of the strong relationships and ties that they developed. There still exist among the long term residents a network of close ties, kinships and relationship; albeit among a much smaller group; and they are the individuals leading the efforts to improve the quality of life for all residents in this community.

The data also revealed that among short term residents, there appeared to be a lack of the same social support networks and kinships and willingness to build collective relationships with neighbors, relationship are focused on the forming of individual relationships only. The data indicated that this may be attributable not merely to a lack of interest in building broader relationships, but also a lack of knowledge of what process or steps should be taken to do this effectively and what would be the benefit. This absence of collective relationship building among short term residents with their

neighbors has resulted in the lack of a “sense of community” among these residents, McMillan and Chavis (1986) a perception that their needs and concerns are not being considered by the community. The findings also showed that there is a belief among the long term residents that the newer arrivals to the community do not share the same norms and values and that they are not committed to the viability of the community evidenced by their lack of commitment to participate in community organizations that help sustain the community or to stay in the community. The transience of the newer residents is a serious concern of the longer term residents since many believe this has contributed to a reduction in the quality of life in the community.

Though not directly related to this research question in the study, an ancillary finding that was uncovered as a limit to the development of collective efficacy is the generational issues that were indicated between long term and short term residents. The long term residents suggested that the difficulty in bridging a relationship with the newer residents, many whom are younger was the perception that they would resent any intervention from them based on previous actions they had taken to extend assistance and guidance, which they believed was met with hostility and unappreciated, this was especially true when it pertained to dealing with issues that involved the residents children impeding one of the central constructs of collective efficacy, informal social control.

***Strategies community organizations and schools think contribute to collective efficacy.***

The data collected suggest that community organizations and schools can play a critical role in working with community residents to develop strategies for collaboration and facilitating collective efficacy. The literature and this study suggest the outcome of this kind of intervention may lead to improvement in the quality of life of community residents (Bandura, 2005; Chinman &

Wandersmann, 1999; Ohmer & Beck 2006; Sampson et al., 1997; Wandersmann & Florin, 2000).

The data indicated that added resources can provide communities with expertise unavailable in their community and opportunities for training that can increase the skill level and knowledge of community residents leading to increased competence to work on improving their community along with empowering leaders in the community.

***School leaders' perceptions of how collective efficacy influences student academic outcomes.***

The data in this study revealed that collective efficacy as perceived by school leaders does influence student academic outcomes, which is consistent with past findings (Bandura, 1995, 1993; Goddard et al., 2004; Goddard et al., 2000; Hoy et al., 2002), however, strong evidence measurable evidence was not found in this study. The limited evidence was anecdotal, with the school leaders indicating that what they saw were children with increased confidence in completing their school work as a result of encouragement and assistance from community representatives coming into the school working consistently with the children and establishing a level of accountability with the children which encouraged them to do better in school. The lack of measureable outcomes for this question, leads to an opportunity for future research on how to develop practices for collecting outcome data to measure the effectiveness of school partnerships on the academic achievement of children in schools (Dearing 2011).



## **Implications and Recommendations**

### ***Implications of These Results***

The value of this study is found in the evidence which supports the use of qualitative methods to determine collective efficacy and neighborhood effects. A major limitation of these studies has been the use of surveys without the collection of the perceptions of the individuals living in these communities or visits to these communities to conduct interviews to obtain their observations (Pebley et. al, 2003). Using an ethnographic approach that involved immersion into the community, and provided participants the opportunity to tell their stories, beliefs and perceptions of what influences the development of collective efficacy, allowed for the gathering of rich details and the opportunity to follow up on those details which provided variables that validated past studies; (Bandura, 1995; Sampson et al., 1997;), and revealed new variables to consider.

Also revealed were a number of practical implications which would benefit community residents, community organizations and the schools on how to work collectively for the academic achievement of students in neighborhood schools. The findings suggest that the development of collective efficacy among community residents should be approached by looking at targeted groups in the community and determining specific strategies for multiple audiences. The study revealed that long term residents, that are older and short term residents in a community that may be younger, may require different strategies to influence collective efficacy. Past studies have noted that urban residents, no longer need social networks and social ties to build collective efficacy, yet it was revealed in this study, that longer term residents, believed that this is important, since this is how they

have historically built relationships in their community to get things accomplished. It would be important to do further research with short term residents to assess if this is also true for those residents.

According to data in this study, the value of community involvement, why and how residents should become involved, determining what they can contribute to the community, and how to prepare them for involvement, which may increase their collective efficacy, requires further study. Many residents' especially low income residents have daily personal obligations and challenges, some are educational which leave them underprepared and without the knowledge needed to determine what could be the benefit to their families to become involved. Other residents believe that issues important to may not being considered, as part of the community agenda and see no reason to become involved in community activities and still others may not be certain that they have anything to contribute. This is a critical concern for urban community residents with children attending schools in urban communities; their input is needed on issues that affect their children's education. These parents also must be prepared to participate effectively in decision-making pertaining to the outcomes of their children's education. Developmental experiences for these parents, whether they are offered in schools, community centers or by local universities, may help ensure that parents are a part of the collective efficacy needed for the children living in urban community's to have academic success.

The study has significant implications for determining the effectiveness of perceived collective efficacy in influencing the academic achievement of students. The results of the study indicated that community organizations and representatives working collectively with school administrators and teachers in schools to increase academic achievement has an effect, but the data provided was minimal and anecdotal. Determining who has the responsibility for accumulating this

type of data and what research tools should be utilized for this purpose should be of interest to educational leaders (Dearing, 2011).

The findings from this study will add to the research on whether collective efficacy, community residents acting collectively for the well-being of the children in the community could have an effect on their educational achievement (Bandura, 1993; Goddard et al., 2000).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study has shown the value of qualitative research in determining what influences collective efficacy and opened a path for future research on how perceived collective efficacy may influence student's academic achievement.

- (1) Replicate this study using a larger population of community residents with equal number of long term and short term residents. It was difficult to get short term residents to participate in the study. There may be variables which enhance the development of collective efficacy that are different for these two populations, this includes whether social networks and ties and relationship building is an important influence on the development of collective efficacy for these groups, and if generational perspectives impact the development of collective efficacy.
- (2) It was proposed in this study that collective efficacy can influence student academic achievement, future research is needed on how it influences academic success and the development of a reliable and valid measure to assess its impact. To date no effective process has been devised (Dearing, 2011).

- (3) If a partnership is developed between community residents and school representatives, to encourage student achievement, an investigation of how collective efficacy can be developed within the school to ensure that it is a welcoming environment for community residents should be explored.
- (4) Future research is needed on what inhibits and prohibits low-income residents in urban communities from becoming involved in community activities and what type of intervention is needed to encourage their participation possibly increasing their collective efficacy (Ohmer & Beck, 2006).

### **Conclusion**

The focus of this investigation was to examine the belief and perceptions of African American residents on what variables influence the development of collective efficacy in their community to encourage the forming of partnerships between the residents, community organizations and the neighborhood schools which could lead to increased academic achievement for students attending these schools. The challenges that many students attending neighborhood schools face are complex, and the resources that are available in the communities in which they live are not adequate to provide the substantial assistance that is needed.

Using qualitative methods, it was important for me to gather the “voices of the community”, their beliefs, insights and perceptions about what influences the development of collective efficacy in their community. The criticism of using surveys only for the collection of data to measure collective efficacy, has been the lack of follow-up questions that allow for the collection of data which can provide residents the opportunity to provide a thorough observation of conditions in their neighborhood (Pebley & Sastry 2004). In this study, in their own words residents, described their

perceptions of what enhances and limits the development of collective in their community, giving what (Burton, 2003) calls “nuanced valuable insights on neighborhood processes” (p. 151).

The qualitative interviews revealed through participants descriptive responses, their beliefs and perceptions of the ways in which they bonded, organized, and initiated the building of collective efficacy (social cohesion/trust, informal social control and participation level) in their community through actions to ensure the safety of their community, protection and development of their children and participation in activities and community organizations to sustain a rich quality of life and stability for their neighborhood. Also identified in the study are the perceptions of residents in what inhibits the development of collective efficacy in the community among some residents, an unwillingness to build relationships with other community residents, out of a lack of desire or a lack of knowledge of the value of relationship building and how to begin the process.

The data in this research study revealed that there are diverse populations within African American communities with diverse needs, and suggests, using a singular approach to encourage the development of collective efficacy in these communities may not be appropriate. Instead considering multiple strategies that benefit the various entities within these communities may be more effective. This was evident in one of the most important findings from the study. The data suggest from the perceptions of the residents that the development of collective efficacy can be tied to network ties and a connection to others or dense social networks (e.g., neighborhoods, schools, organizations), this is contrary to other findings (Fisher 1982; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Sampson et al., 1999; Wellman, 1979). Many of the long term residents in this study believed that their collective efficacy, mutual trust, willingness to work together and look out for the common good of their neighbors grew out of the strong relationships and ties that they developed as residents of the community sharing a

common goal of working to ensure a safe and quality haven for their families. There exist among these long term residents a network of close ties, kinships and relationships and they are the individuals leading the efforts to improve the quality of life for all residents in this community.

This study also examined whether collective efficacy impacts school achievement from the perspective of school leaders. The data revealed that there is some impact, but additional research is needed to determine fully what is the impact and a viable and reliable measurement process needs to be devised to measure if it leads to academic improvement for children. Collaborative community partnerships will need to be formed to close the academic achievement gap, it cannot be left up to educators and policy makers alone. Community organizations can be effective partners with viable ideas, resources and knowledge to encourage the development of collective efficacy among community residents, as revealed in this study.

Community residents must work collaboratively to seek a decisive role in demanding greater accountability for student performance from school leaders in their community to ensure that the children in their community are receiving a quality and equitable education. The consequences for inattentiveness and lack of action by community residents on this issue will lead to dire circumstances for children living in urban communities. Communities need continuing research by scholars on this issue to ensure that workable solutions are generated that will aid in the development of a sustaining effort by community residents to become effective advocates for their children with the capability of influencing education policy and practices in their neighborhood schools that lead to academic excellence for their children and their long term success.

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## APPENDIX A

### Community Resident Interview Guide

This interview guide contains an index of topics that will be discussed with residents from the from the targeted community.

(1) Biographical Information

- a. Birthplace?
- b. Marital Status?
- c. Years living in the neighborhood?
- d. Number of children?
- e. What type of work did you do?
- f. Where was your job located?
- g. High School graduate? Education beyond high school?
- h. College graduate?

(2) Describe the Community when you moved there.

- a. Ethnicity of Residents?
- b. Homeowners? Renters?
- c. Can you describe the type of employment of your neighbors?

(3) Describe the relationship between community residents? (**Collective efficacy/Social Cohesion/ Trust**)

- a. People in this community were willing to help their neighbors?
- b. This was a close-knit neighborhood?
- c. People in this neighborhood generally got along with each other?
- d. People in this neighborhood shared the same values?
- e. People in this neighborhood were close and willing to work together on an issue if a problem arose in the neighborhood?
- f. People in the neighborhood felt responsible for the well-being of children in the neighborhood?

(4) Would you have notified some authority or intervened if you saw or were aware of the following in your community? (**Collective efficacy/Informal Social Control**)

- a. Children skipping school and hanging out
- b. A neighborhood swimming pool for children was going to be closed
- c. Children painting graffiti on a local building
- d. Children showing disrespect to an adult

- e. A neighborhood school was about to be closed
- f. A fight broke out among children in front of your house

(5) Community Organizational Activity/Participation (**Participation Level**)

- a. Did you participate in any community organizations, activities and meetings?
- b. Did you volunteer to be a part of a team in planning any activities, or events for an organization?
- c. Did you serve or lead any committee in any neighborhood organization?
- d. Did you hold a leadership position in any of your community organizations?
- e. Was anyone in your household active in a community organization?
- f. Were you willing to volunteer to work with a community organization on a neighborhood issue?
- g. Did you attend a church in the community? Was the church involved in community activities?

(6) Describe the schools in the Community when your children attended school

- a. What were names of the schools in the community?
- b. What types of schools were in the community?
  - Elementary
  - Junior High School
  - High School
- c. What schools did your children attend in the neighborhood?
- d. As a parent were you involved in the schools that your children attended?  
How were you involved?
- e. Did Community residents support the neighborhood schools?
- f. How did they show support?
- g. What was the relationship of residents with schools administrators and teachers?
- h. Do you think your children received a good education in the neighborhood schools?  
If yes, why? If no, what were some of the problems?

(7) **Describe the Community today?**

- 1. Has the Community changed over the years? If so how?
  - a. Ethnicity of the Residents?
  - b. Homeowners vs. Renters?

- c. How well do you know your neighbors?
  - d. Can you describe the type of employment of your neighbors?
  - e. Describe the relationship between community residents
- .. (8) Do you agree with any of the following (**Collective efficacy/Social Cohesion/Trust**)
- a. People in this community are willing to help their neighbors?
  - b. This is a close-knit neighborhood?
  - c. People in this neighborhood generally don't get along with each other?
  - d. People in this neighborhood don't share the same values?
  - e. People in this neighborhood may not be close, but they are willing to work together on an issue if a problem arises in the neighborhood?
  - f. People in the neighborhood feel responsible for the well-being of children in the neighborhood?
- (9) Would you notify some authority or intervene if you saw or were aware of the following in your community? (**Collective efficacy/Informal Social Control**)
- a. Children skipping school and hanging out
  - b. A neighborhood swimming pool for children was going to be closed"
  - c. Children spray-painting graffiti on a local building"
  - d. Children showing disrespect to an adult"
  - e. A neighborhood school was about to be closed"
  - f. A fight broke out among children in front of your house
- (10) Community Organizational Activity/Participation (**Collective efficacy/Participation Level**)
- a. How often in the past year have you participated in any organizations, activities and functions-including attending meetings?
  - b. Did you volunteer to be a part of a team in planning any activities, or events for an organization?
  - c. Do you serve or lead any committee in any neighborhood organization?
  - d. Do you hold a leadership position in any of your community organizations?
  - e. Is anyone in your household active in a community organization?
  - f. Would you be willing to volunteer to work with a community organization on a neighborhood issue?
  - g. Do you attend a church in the community? Is the church involved in community activities?

- (11) Describe the schools in the community today?
- a. What types of schools are in the community?
  - b. Name the schools?
  - c. Are you involved with your neighborhood schools today?
  - d. Do community residents support the neighborhood schools? How have they shown their support? Have community residents worked collectively on activities to support the neighborhood school? Please describe those activities.
  - e. What is the relationship of residents with schools administrators and teachers, in your neighborhood school?
  - f. Do you think children in the neighborhood school are receiving a good education? If yes, why do you think so? If no, what do you believe are some of the problems?
  - g. Is there a community group focused on the educational success of children in the community? Please describe the group and some of their activities. If no, would you be willing to participate in a group focused on the educational success of children in the community?



## APPENDIX B

### Community Organizations Interview Questions

**This interview guide contains questions that will be discussed with participants from Community Organizations that serve residents in the targeted community.**

- (1) What strategies has your organization developed to encourage residents to become involved in efforts to ensure the educational success of the children living in the community?
- (2) How is your organization viewed by the community?
- (3) Has your organization been successful in recruiting residents for your programs activities/initiatives? If yes, what do you attribute your success?
- (4) What challenges have your organization encountered in working with residents to become involved in community activities? How was the organization able to overcome those challenges?
- (5) What kind of activities/initiatives have community residents participated in to support your organization?
- (6) Describe the community residents that have volunteered to support your organization?
  - a. Mostly Parents?
  - b. Long term residents (30 to 40 years in the community ) or Short term residents (less than five years living in the community)
  - c. Age ranges (21-40) or (50 +)
- (7) What have been the benefits or impact of volunteering with your organization on the community residents?

- (8) What have been your organization's efforts on behalf of improving the educational achievement for children living in the community? How have community residents supported your efforts? What have been the achievements of your initiatives?
- (9) Why do you think community residents have volunteered to support your organization?

## **Appendix C**

Interview Questions - Neighborhood School Assistant Principal and Community Resource Coordinator

**This interview guide contains questions that will be discussed with the Principal of the neighborhood school that serves children living in the targeted community.**

- (1) Does your school have as a part of its vision for the academic success of the children in your school a committed interest in forming school-community partnerships to support the achievement of students attending your school?
- (2) As the administrator of the school, what actions have you taken to reach out to community residents to build a partnership with your school?
- (3) Why was it important for the school to partner with community residents?
- (4) Has the school faced any challenges in its effort to outreach to community residents for increased involvement in the school?
- (5) What efforts have been made by the school to overcome those challenges?
- (6) What if any specific actions did the school take to educate community residents on the role they could play in supporting your school?
- (7) What kind of activities has the school-community partnership generated that has been instrumental in improving the academic achievement of the students in the schools?
- (8) Describe the community residents that have volunteered to support the school?
  - a. Mostly Parents?
  - b. Long term residents (30 to 40 years) or Short term residents (less than five years)

c. Age ranges (21-40) or (50 +)?

(9) What community organizations have the school partnered with to support the academic goals of the school? Are you aware if any of the community residents are volunteers with these organizations?

(10) Have any of the efforts developed as a result of the school-community partnership had an impact on the academic achievement of the students in your school? How have they impacted the achievement of the students?

## APPENDIX D

### Community Organizations Observation Guide

#### Observational Guide Questions for Community Meeting(s)

**This observation guide provides descriptive questions as a framework for a field observation) in the targeted Community.**

- (1) Where is the meeting being held?
- (2). Describe the set-up of the meeting (chairs, tables) and the meeting room
- (3) Who greets the attendees of the meeting (what resources are provided to attendees before the meeting-where are they located?)
- (4) Do the attendees have to sign in?
- (5) Describe the attendees (age, sex, race). Where do they sit? Do they sit close to one another?
- (6) Is there conversation among the attendees or do they go directly to their seats?
- (7) Does the meeting start on time?
- (8) Who opens the meeting and sets the agenda? Who presents at the meeting? What topics are presented?

- (9) What questions are asked by residents and by whom? What concerns are raised by the residents and what discussions take place during the meeting? Who provides answers to questions or concerns raised by residents-Community Council Leadership, other Community residents?
- (10) How long is the meeting? Do all of the attendees stay for the entire meeting?
- (11) After the meeting do the residents stay around for continuing conversations?
- (12) How many residents attended the meeting? Are they typically the same residents attending these meetings?

## **APPENDIX E**

### **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CONSENT FORM**

**Consent to Participate in a Research Project  
University of Cincinnati  
College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services  
Division of Human Services  
Research Study: Collective Efficacy**

**Researcher**

Vickie Mc Mullen, Principal Researcher  
University of Cincinnati

**What is the reason for this research study?**

Before you agree to participate in this research study, we want you to know the reason for it. We would also like you to know exactly what to expect if you decide to participate. Being a part of this research is entirely your choice. You are free to stop at any time. There are no penalties. Feel free to ask questions about anything you do not understand.

The reason for this research study is to understand how members of communities and agencies can work collectively to build partnerships with their neighborhood schools to increase the academic achievement of children in their neighborhoods. Your feedback may be used to improve how children can excel in their school environment.

Vickie Mc Mullen a third year doctoral student at the University of Cincinnati will direct this research under the guidance of her faculty advisor Dr. Lionel Brown.

### **What will happen?**

You will be provided with a letter and this document that will provide a brief explanation of the reason for my research. You will need to sign this form to give us your permission to be involved in the research. You will be asked to share your experience as a community resident, parent, administrator or teacher in the community and your involvement in working to assist neighborhood children in attaining academic achievement in school. Approximately 10-15 people will be asked to participate in this study. This discussion will be audio taped. During our interview session, if you are uncomfortable with responding to any question, you can refuse to answer the question. Please let me know and I can skip that question and go to the next question or I can halt the interview session. You can let me know what you prefer to do.

All interview participants will have the opportunity to review transcripts of the interview and to decide if there is any information that they find embarrassing or harmful upon review; the option to request that it be changed. If this option is chosen, the information and any other identifiable distinctions that were revealed during the interview process will be changed. These changes will be permanent and will be reflected in the research study and presentations and publications that may be produced from this research study.

### **How long will this take?**

The discussion with you will last about one hour and a half.

### **Are there Risks/Discomforts?**

I do not see any expected discomforts or significant risks to participants with this research study. *You have the right to stop answering questions or leave the discussion without any penalty.* You may discuss discomfort and risks with the investigator Vickie Mc Mullen. You may also share any concerns with Ms. McMullen's faculty advisor Dr. Lionel Brown, at (513) 556-6000 or by email at [Lionel.Brown@uc.edu](mailto:Lionel.Brown@uc.edu).

### **Will I be paid for my participation?**

You will not receive any payment for your participation in this research study.

### **What will you gain?**

You will not benefit directly from this research. But your feedback will contribute will be valuable in my effort to provide information that will be used to benefit communities that are working to ensure academic excellence for the children in their community.

### **Is this research confidential?**

The records of this research are confidential. Each volunteer will be given a number. We may write about what we discover but your name will only be used with your approval and you will be contacted concerning the use of your name, before it is used in any publication. Your information will stay confidential unless we have to reveal it based on the law (for example: mandatory reporting of child abuse or immediate danger to yourself or others). Access to your comments from our discussion will be limited to the principal investigator and co-principal investigator. The taped discussions will be typed onto paper. All notes, audiotapes, and records will be kept in a locked file cabinet and will be destroyed when the research is over. Consent forms will be stored in a secure place for three years after the end of the research and then will be destroyed.

### **Can you quit anytime?**

Being a part of this research is entirely your choice. If you take part, you may choose to stop at any time. There are no penalties for requesting that the interview be stopped. This research will not affect any involvement that you may have with the (Community Council, Public School system or Named Community Organization).

### **Who do you call if you have questions?**

Please call Dr. Lionel Brown at (513) 556-6000 or by email at [Lionel.Brown@uc.edu](mailto:Lionel.Brown@uc.edu) if you have any questions about this research. The University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board all research projects that involve human participants to be sure the rights and welfare of participants is protected. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board at (513) 558-5259. If you have a concern about the research you may also call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or you may write to the Institutional Review Board, Suite 300 University Hall, ML 0567, 51 Goodman Drive, PO Box 210567, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0567, or you may email the IRB office at [irb@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:irb@ucmail.uc.edu).

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to have my name used in any publication in which information from this interview is used. Participant will be contacted before the use of their name in any publication.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not want my name used in any publication in which information from this interview is used.

**Signature**

The information in the Consent form has been discussed with me by the Researcher. I have read this permission form, which explains the reason and details of this research. I have had time to review the information. I have been encouraged to ask questions and have received answers to my questions. If I do not participate or if I quit, I will not be treated any differently and I will not lose any rights. Being a part of this research is entirely up to me. I give my permission to be a part of this research. I have received (or I will receive) a copy of this form for my records.

_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Date
_____	_____
Signature and Title of Person Obtaining Consent	Date