JFDE

Journal of Family Diversity in Education

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Focus and Scope for JFDE

The Journal of Family Diversity in Education (JFDE) is hosted by the Institute for Community Justice and Wellbeing (ICJW) at Miami University's College of Education, Health & Society. In order to enact the mission of the ICJW to cultivate mutually beneficial, ethical, and transformative relationships among diverse community allies, this journal offers a rigorous exchange of new ideas, pedagogy, curricula, and activism in and around education endeavors.

The JFDE is committed to decolonizing and disrupting oppressive, deficit and racist ideologies by focusing on work that prioritizes schools, families, communities, scholars, and activists seeking to establish liberatory and humanized spaces.

The JFDE commits to:

- Featuring critical scholarship and the voices, experiences, and liberatory acts of historically marginalized families and communities with an emphasis on issues and concerns that impact the educational experiences of educators, students, families, and
- communities (i.e., anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies, racialized [i.e., anti-blackness] discipline and policing practices, housing insecurities, etc.)
- Creating and sustaining a JFDE leadership model that is inclusive of critically engaged, diverse scholars and community stakeholders.
- Supporting educators, community stakeholders, organizers, scholar activists and public scholarship by publishing and promoting timely work that advances social justice agendas.
- Offering a peer review process that is rigorous, transparent, and honors community voice.

We are pleased to offer a fully refereed, online journal that welcomes a wide range of innovative theoretical approaches. To support public scholarship, we are committed to providing accessible multimodal content. We encourage diverse scholarly and community contributions including research articles, podcasts, digital stories, essays and interviews, practitioner and community perspectives on practice, book and media reviews, and other interdisciplinary forms of scholarship or creative works.

History of JFDE

The Journal of Family Diversity in Education was started in 2014 by the Family Diversity Education Council. Under the leadership of the founding editors Dr. Tammy Turner-Vorbeck and Dr. Monica Miller Marsh the journal was initially hosted at Kent State University.

The founding editors developed the JFDE to honor those whose work attempted to shine light upon and oppose limited, hegemonic conceptions of families, particularly in the domain of family-school-community partnerships. The journal provided a much-needed outlet for scholars and practitioners working to analyze, critique, and redefine notions of family and the resultant implications for those partnerships.

The current editorial team seeks to carry on this legacy and commits to furthering this mission as outlined above in the focus and scope of the journal.

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We are pleased to share with you the Spring 2023 volume of JFDE (Journal of Family Diversity in Education). The JFDE is currently hosted at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Miami University maintains a strong reciprocal relationship with the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma. What follows is Miami University's Land Acknowledgement:

"Miami University is located within the traditional homelands of the Myaamia and Shawnee people, who along with other indigenous groups ceded these lands to the United States in the first Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The Miami people, whose name our university carries, were forcibly removed from these homelands in 1846.

In 1972, a relationship between Miami University and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma began and evolved into a reciprocal partnership, including the creation of the Myaamia Center at Miami University in 2001. The work of the Myaamia Center serves the Miami Tribe community and is dedicated to the revitalization of Miami language and culture and to restoring that knowledge to the Myaamia people.

Miami University and the Miami Tribe are proud of this work and of the more than 140 Myaamia students who have attended Miami since 1991 through the Myaamia Heritage Award Program."

Miami's land acknowledgement exists to reaffirm the Myaamia people's deep connection to their homelands and a shared commitment to each other. Over the past year, Miami University and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma have been celebrating 50 years of partnership. This partnership is expressed through a shared commitment to *neepwaantiinki*, which means learning from each other. Learning from each other requires a willingness to challenge ourselves, engage in difficult discourse, and be open to change.

It is in the spirit of *neepwaantiinki* that we present to you our most recent issue. It includes Part II of a special issue edited by our colleagues Dr. Ann M. Ishimaru and Dr. Megan Bang.

In Part 1 (Vol. 4, no 1) readers were introduced to The Family Leadership Design Collaborative (FLDC), a dynamic group of researcher, family and community leaders, and educators who, "came together to codesign a transformative research-practice agenda that would center families and communities in envisioning and leading racially just education (Ishimaru & Bang, 2022, p. 133). The two featured articles explored "two distinct immigrant codesigns that opened new conceptual and relational possibilities for change as participants grappled with tensions of identity, relationality, and complex personhood amid profound historical and sociopolitical challenges to raising and educating their children" (p. 138). These powerful articles featured co-design efforts that took place in context of a contentious 2016 presidential election and Muslim ban, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the emergence of culture war legislation. The work continues to resonate with readers who face their own ongoing and evolving challenges.

This issue starts with Chin, Ishimaru, and Bang's article featuring the work of CADRE in South Los Angeles. CADRE already had a long history of successfully organizing Black and Brown

families, but inequitable power dynamics continued to persist. This article speaks to the need to address both specific issues of community concern while also challenging systemic oppression.

Next, Ishimaru, Bang, Montaño Nolan, Rajendran, and Chen utilize an analysis of 10 different co-design projects from across the country to share implications of this work for theories of change. Of particular interest is how the FLDC approach appeared to create opportunities for new and innovative thinking that disrupted and transformed status quo thinking across geographically, linguistically, and racially diverse communities.

Finally, the special issue concludes with Khalifa and Abdi's commentary where they discuss the implications of "Solidarity Dreaming" for educators and schools. They note how important it is to look back and critically examine colonial logic embedded in schooling practices, even those that claim to be socially just. They argue that this is necessary work if we dare to dream forward. The authors write, "Solidarity Dreaming requires community-led educational leadership; it requires centering Ancestral knowledge; it requires a removal of school histories as a starting place of dreaming; it requires a constant renewal and creativity around decolonization; and it requires a collaboration of people with varied backgrounds, roles, education and wealth backgrounds, but who are all committed restoring/preserving the humanity of communities and places in which they are located" (Khalifa & Abdi, 2023, p.126). Through this framing we see deep connections between Solidarity Dreaming and *neepwaantiinki*.

To conclude this issue (but not affiliated with the special issue), we are also pleased to share our most recent community conversation with the National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement (NAFSCE). This feature is a part of our continued commitment to bring readers of JFDE timely content. NAFSCE recently completed a three-year effort to develop Family Engagement Core Competencies for family-facing professionals. In contrast to previous work that has centered the voices and experiences of educators, these competencies frame family engagement as a matter of equity and challenge traditional notions based on what Khalifa & Abdi call "colonial logic". We hope you find this conversation meaningful and consider engaging with their work.

In Solidarity,

Michael P. Evans & Érica Fernández
Co-Editors JFDE

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Special Issue Part II: Co-designing Educational Justice and Wellbeing with Families and Communities:

Community Conversation:

Realizing the Future in the Present: Parent Organizing as a Practice of Solidarity

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Maisie Chin
CADRE

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Abstract

Imagining systemic change can be a lot to ask of Black and Latinx families in urban communities in light of long, sometimes intergenerational histories of marginalization and dehumanization in schools. For twenty years, CADRE (Community Asset Development Redefining Education) has been building the power and leadership of Black and Brown families in South Los Angeles "to protect and promote children's dignity, opportunity to learn, and self-determination, by being at decision-making and policy-making tables and having the tools to monitor accountability in policy implementation." When the community organizing group first engaged with the Family Leadership Design Collaborative (FLDC), CADRE had already successfully gotten the district to adopt new school discipline policies to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and had continued to monitor implementation (CADRE, 2017). However, the fundamental relationships and interactions between families and teachers in schools continued to reflect racist, dehumanizing ideologies entrenched in inequitable power dynamics. Maisie Chin, the Executive Director of CADRE, facilitated a series of codesign sessions with CADRE parents between 2017 and 2019 to not only surface these dynamics but to re-imagine *how* parent-teacher conversations and interactions might be different. CADRE co-designers undertook role-playing and collective reflection to intervene in moment-to-moment interactions as a way to change broader systemic dynamics.

Keywords: parent organizing; leadership development; educational justice; school-to-prison pipeline; humanizing; solidarity; codesign; community-based organizations

Imagining systemic change can be a lot to ask of Black and Latinx families in urban communities in light of long, sometimes intergenerational histories of marginalization and dehumanization in schools. For 20 years, Community Asset Development Redefining Education – better known as CADRE – has been building the power and leadership practice of Black and Brown families in South Los Angeles "to ensure that all children are rightfully educated regardless of where

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they live" (CADRE, 2022). Through parent organizing, CADRE works to "challenge schools' beliefs and practices that criminalize children and parents and violate their human rights to a quality education, dignity, and participation in our current public education system" (CADRE, 2022). When CADRE first engaged with the Family Leadership Design Collaborative (FLDC), the community organizing group had already successfully lobbied the district to adopt new school discipline policies to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and was continuing to monitor the implementation of these policies (CADRE, 2017). However, the relationships and interactions between families and teachers in schools have fundamentally continued to reflect racist, dehumanizing ideologies entrenched in inequitable power dynamics. Maisie Chin, the Executive Director of CADRE, facilitated a series of co-design sessions with CADRE parents between 2017 and 2019 to not only surface these dynamics but to re-imagine how parent-teacher conversations and interactions could go differently. CADRE co-designers engaged in role-playing and collective reflection to intervene in moment-to-moment interactions as a way to change broader systemic dynamics.

CADRE's original plan had been to invite teachers into design circles to cultivate solidarity between families and educators. However, when Black and Latinx families shared their ongoing negative interactions with teachers in the first design circle, CADRE co-designers realized that putting families into such power-laden and potentially confrontational situations without having first designed generative ways into these conversations could lead to re-traumatization (Ishimaru et al., 2018). Thus, the subsequent design sessions focused on rehearsing the kinds of changes families wished to see in their relationships with teachers and finding ways to humanize both families and teachers. Through this practice, Maisie facilitated the co-design of prefigurative everyday leadership moves with organizers and parents to cultivate a proleptic politic (Cole, 1998) that, in Maisie's own words, "realizes the future in the present." That is, the design work became a process of collective learning to change every day, powered interactions in ways that centered the solidarities families sought to build and realize in their schools, lives, and world.

This edited interview with Maisie Chin situates CADRE's co-design and role-play practices within the broader landscape of racial-historical movements, the organization's overall work in Los Angeles, and Maisie's own positionality and learning. As an Asian American woman in South Central LA, she experienced the LA riots of 1992 and recalls images of Asian business owners pointing guns at their Black neighbors. For Maisie, this singularly clarifying moment catalyzed her commitment to *live* solidarities with Black and Brown communities. She explained, "I tell people a lot that what I do at CADRE is really my AAPI politics. You know, I picked a side, and I made sure that whatever privilege I had was funneled into changing the conditions for Black and Brown folk – in particular, trying to create a world that wasn't at the expense of their humanity."

In what follows, we share Maisie's reflections and insights about the arc of CADRE's work in relation to the complex theories of change that layered into co-designing solidarity practices with Black and Brown parents in their schools. We first explore her own consciousness regarding the racialized carceral dynamics in schools and link that to CADRE's focus on behavior and discipline as a kind of crucible for anti-Blackness and dehumanization in schools. Maisie situates the demonization of behavior as part of a broader settler colonial project, the unsettling of which demands no less than a project of decolonizing, not only of schools and educators but of everyone, including Black and Brown parents and communities themselves. In a system that works to pit Black and Brown parents and communities against each other, Maisie unpacks CADRE's focus on building cross-racial solidarities and using the co-design role-plays as a way to develop solidarity as a lived practice. We close the article with Maisie's reflections on what it means to enact a pedagogy of love as a way forward for learning solidarity and building a different society.

Behavior as the Crux of Anti-Blackness, Colonization, and Dehumanization in Schools

Maisie narrates how, as an Asian American in LA, she came to her understanding of the need to decolonize the idea of behavior as a metric of worth. The conflation of behavior and worth are deeply embedded in the racialized institutional scripts (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017) in schools, a dynamic that reinforces anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity towards young people and their parents. She argues that only by "deprogramming" our notions of behavior can we begin to truly center and humanize Black youth and parents.

When I started working in education, I realized that the commodity of behavior, this thing called "behavior," was being leveraged in a way that I probably didn't even realize before I started working in education. I realized that people saw me and actually assumed I'd be against Black and Brown people and based on perceptions that my people care about education. So, any behavior that didn't work at schools was presumed to be something that I would be against, period. And so, when teachers, white teachers in particular, said all kinds of dehumanizing things about Black and Brown children and then approached me as if I was going to be some co-conspirator, that's when I started to totally dismantle that. That's why I started to reorient it completely.

Behavior is the most egregious form of meting out dehumanization – to police behavior, to judge behavior, to assign properties to behavior that somehow justify the dehumanization. And so, when I realized how outrageously poorly people were talking about parents, the way that they talked about them – it didn't make sense. How do you actually care about their kids? You can't possibly care about their kids in spite of their parents, right? What kind of care is that? Whereas you care about *me* because of my parents? You don't know anything about me, but because you stereotype my parents, you care about me. I could be the worst at everything, and you would think I still care about education just because of that. So, it is a sort of a binary, but it's a flip of the script. It is kind of an inversion – okay, you think that's what I care about? Well, I actually think behavior should not be leveraged and wielded like that on people in judgment of behavior.

And so, for the sake of centering Black folks, everybody is decolonizing for the sake of humanizing the behavior of Black students and parents and not using it to wield punishment. That means we all got to decolonize how we all got programmed to use behavior as the metric for who was worthy and who was not. And so, it ends up being a whole unraveling of a moment to challenge a lot of our beliefs. So, certainly, it challenges how I was raised culturally. So that's why I say, I think everybody could do that if they actually looked at the political properties of behavior and how it's being used on this land for this settler colonial experiment. Which is why I stayed in the Family Leadership Design Collaborative space. There's this whole link because a project of settler colonialism is based on demonizing behavior.

But we never talk about that in the debate around education, that it's still a project of settler colonialism. So, therefore, this was actually the first place, to be honest, that made that whole link. And that, to build cross-community solidarity, you actually have to decolonize what you think about behavior. Because that's literally how the notion is used. So, to me, it's the heart – there's no way we could do this work a different way. Because it would totally undermine anything we're trying to do if we didn't build solidarity. We're not perfect at it. We don't ask people if they want to build solidarity; we just do it. We're literally trying to be the opposite of real life out there, which is "everyone for themselves."

Cross-Community Solidarity to Tackle Racism

Discussions of solidarity and organizing can easily slip into romaticized notions of collectivity and common cause that belie the complexities of hierarchical power and normative judgments of worth within and between non-dominant parents and communities. However, Maisie points out that such flattened constructions, especially when invoked towards short-term transactional wins, do little to shift the undergirding frameworks that animate systemic harm. She narrates how even within Black communities and between parents, forms of lateral violence can play out dominant white supremacist settler logics in ways that function to enlist parents of color in the system's task of dehumanization. Thus, CADRE has aimed to "live" solidarity beyond the logics of "good or bad" parents and divide-and-conquer tactics premised on which community of color is in the majority. Rather, the organization has intentionally sought to create the conditions for people to center Black families with historical roots in South LA and humanize each other in the day-to-day practices of the organization.

I think we landed on the fact that if you have to tackle racism and in a Black and Brown space, you need to have solidarity. But you also can't have that solidarity mask over tensions, and you can't have solidarity still cover up anti-Blackness underneath. And so, when you watch what was happening with school staff and parents, it was often pitting everyone against each other. So, the "good" and "bad" parent paradigm was still being used to divide and conquer. Whatever we did at CADRE, we weren't going to do that. And it was hard to figure out what to do *instead* because all the reasons the schools wanted the parents were predicated on good behavior by parents and solidarity with the school. It was like, "You help us, and then we will give you the credibility of being this 'good' parent. If you challenge us, we're gonna call you a troublemaker, and everybody's gonna think you and your child or children are problems." So that's not a lot of wiggle room for parents. Especially if you're trying to challenge that, if you're conscious, and you want to challenge discrimination or dehumanization.

It was hard because even parents do that with each other, as we've all been conditioned to do. Trying to get parents to build solidarity around other children's behavior, the children that they don't want their kids to hang out with, the children that they don't want their kids to be friends with – that's not easy. Even some Black families look down on each other, they meted out that stuff on each other. And this really isn't about just the racial aspect. It was also this notion of decolonizing and deprogramming the things that people assigned to behavior into parenting and the lack of compassion that we are all conditioned to not have for parents. So, it's almost like it just furthers the whole dehumanization of US schools, because you already have the parents doing the work – you have the parents dehumanizing other people's kids, and judging others, fellow parents, based on that.

And if the only thing you come together around is maybe removing a principal or responding to some crisis at the school, once that's over, there's nothing to fall back on. It's all purely transactional. There's nothing really solidarity about that. And then, you look at all the existing frameworks for parents to be engaged. It precludes any solidarity between parents – about understanding each other's experiences as humanizing. It's all based on being both good soldiers and students as servants at the schools.

I dare say that we are not perfect at solidarity. I think we just know that if we didn't aim for it, we wouldn't even come close. We wouldn't have a shot. Because you could be one way in CADRE and not quite that way outside of CADRE. We totally know that. So, we don't have a Pollyanna version of solidarity. It's just, we know it's a practice, and if you don't have the conditions to even practice it just a little bit, then we have no chance. I don't think solidarity means you necessarily have to be a good person. You just need to practice solidarity. The assignment of good and bad is not part of it. And most of the time, solidarity is built when there's nothing at stake except a feeling – a

feeling in the moment. Like you want the Kumbaya, so that's the thing that you aim for, right? But then you're not testing it, and you're not building it around the thing that actually divides you.

So that's how we counter the school environment. My little mantra has always been, we have to be better than the school, whatever we do. We have seen what schools do with parents: we just gotta be better. It's a small thing, but parents know that we give them excellence. We create the conditions where they don't have to compete about who's getting treated better because we are hyper-conscious of favoritism. And it's 50–50. I don't care if there's one Black parent and 15 Brown parents – it's 50–50. We're going to translate everything; it's going to be bilingual. Most of the time, the school just goes with the majority, and that's the language they conduct the meeting in. We might not have any Black parents, but we're gonna have Black staff. They're gonna build with Black facilitators. We're gonna talk about the history of Black folks, even if there are no Black folks in the room. It didn't matter if they were in the minority in the schools and in the community. They were in the center.

Whereas if you go to a school site, it's all demographics. It's all numbers. Everyone just starts to fall into the habit that's really brought about by circumstances, but not intention. So, if you don't have any Black bodies in the room, or any Indigenous people or whoever aren't in the room, you don't feel the need to serve them. And then we're doing parent engagement in that context. So inherently, it's going to be divisive. There's no way it couldn't be. And so, the practice that we do – people think we have a training – we don't really have a training. We started doing political education way after we did solidarity. We just did it. We just try to live it.

Latinx parents who are kind of curious might ask, "Okay, when do we talk about us?" Because they're just looking at the fact that in South LA, Latinx students make up like, 90%, 95% of the schools now. And so, it is gonna be hard for us to do what we're doing. It means that we need staff who are, even if they're not Black, able to hold this line. So, things like the role-play and people practicing a different response is, to me, the only way I know how to interrupt the defaults.

Solidarity as a Practice of Interrupting Dehumanization "When no one is Looking"

We foster an environment where Black parents work with each other to help see the need for solidarity. I think all of our parents are probably anomalies in their respective environments as a result. But then, CADRE becomes a place where they know how to take that stand. And our goal is that when nobody is looking, they have solidarity that is not performative, that when you're in the school office, and you see the school staff totally harshly punishing another child that isn't your child, that you are concerned, and you will leverage your voice and your power to intervene. And you won't let that school talk badly about their family or their parent, even if their parent needs some support, and isn't coming in the way that we need them to. But that you'll stand in between that dehumanization; you'll interrupt that. Then you'll stick up for them as human beings and their children. And the school staff are not expecting that because they're expecting most people to just dispose of these children and to want them out of their environment.

And so that's what disrupts the normal school culture, which is that you have parents standing up for the "kids that nobody wants," that other parents want removed. And I often tell people that we have to work hard to get people to buy into our work – it's not easy, and we never take it for granted. "You want me to stand for the kids that I think are ruining my child's school experience and disrupting their learning?" That's not an easy sell, to be quite honest. So, if we didn't have the solidarity practice and the bottom line, we wouldn't even be able to interrupt that. Maybe it wouldn't even be on the table, because it doesn't really have to be in most places. It doesn't have to be on the table. The

world just hums along, and they're training all of us to take each other out, and that's kind of what they want. So, the solidarity is the *only* way that we can even attempt to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. So, it's not the issue of the school-to-prison pipeline. I think people over-associate us with the issue. But the issue allowed us to uncover and deal with the things that haven't been dealt with.

Role-Play as Practicing Solidarity

For their work with the Family Leadership Design Collaborative, the CADRE parents and organizers role-played educators and Black and Brown parents acting out scenarios drawn from their lived experiences in school settings regarding student behavior. Parents re-imagined a scenario in which they interacted as they typically would with a teacher or principal, engaged in critical reflection to make sense of specific well-worn dynamics, and identified potential new ways of interacting. They then role-played possible interventions to shift the conversation. Black parents experienced particular forms of anti-Blackness in school discipline conversations, so the group role-played ways to intervene in these emotionally tense, trauma-infused moments. Rather than making participants relive the trauma, though, CADRE organizers sought to disrupt those interactions and open them up as opportunities for Black and Latinx parents to practice how to move in solidarity with one another and how to humanize their relations and actions in these crucial interactions. Thus, the practice of role-playing enabled co-designers to practice intervening in the day-to-day micro-moments that constitute and enact the layered systemic dynamics of anti-Black racism in schools (see FLDC Practice Brief for more details on the practice itself). For Maisie, digging into role-play at this level sat at the heart of an organization that has always sought to model how the world could be if we refused anti-Blackness and lived in solidarity, especially with Black and Brown parents. CADRE itself has thus sought to embody a kind of meta-role-play as an organization working to "live" a different world.

In role-plays, parents advocate from a different place. They advocate from a more self-determined place, as opposed to a reactionary, "wait-til-everything-happens" kind of place. This complicated issue of standing up, advocating for the implementation of a different kind of discipline that was humanistic and humanizing, and not punitive – I realized that all those things happen behind closed doors. And when parents are pulled into those meetings, nobody else is there but them. And that's the moment they have to interrupt. There's no amount of training we can give them that would prompt them to realize that right then and there is where I practice the thing that I learned how to do. So that's kind of what we had to bring to life.

A conversation with a teacher about your child's behavior is even a bit harder. So what we did with the design circles in the first part of this project was, how do you talk to them about your childhood? How do you proactively talk to them about your child's behavior? So instead of, "I really want my child to go to college, he was really interested in X." And, you know, "this is his favorite subject, how's he doing? What is he struggling [with]?" – that's a normal expectation for a conversation with your child's teacher. It's rarely proactively like, "Oh, my child is a little hyperactive. I need you to know that. Do you know how to deal with that? I find that this works with him or her, or Papa does X, so can we…?" It's often more the case that parents wait until they get the phone call, and they get pulled into the conversation retroactively. So that's the first thing we try to do: how do you initiate the whole conversation? And it's hard because some parents don't want to talk about that. They don't want to hear that. It's hard. It's not automatic, not an easy conversation. And our goal was to help them realize that nobody but you, the parent, can initiate that conversation. So, the first thing was just role-playing, the same thing you do around academics, just do that for behavior. That's it – try it.

So then in real life, all this stuff that we talk about – the school says they support those kids, but it's a shambles in real life, in all these situational moments. The politics all just disappear because the power dynamics of a school and the culture of "good versus bad," and the ranking of people

according to that logic just takes over subconsciously. And as a parent, you don't realize that you could say you want to end racism, but then you inadvertently – even sometimes without knowing – you participate in a practice of it. You just view behavior from a lens of, bad behavior is associated with certain people. And you're just looking out for, who are those kids? And you think you're helping your kid because you're looking out for those kids and trying to identify who they are. So, you end up participating in all that, then you think you're trying to end racism, right?

So, the role-plays were almost out of necessity because all these situations are really where it has to matter. If we don't give parents a chance to practice in these situations, the situations become all these missed opportunities. So we were trying to help them shift how they observed a class, to be conscious of how they're observing a classroom. They could shift or realize, "you know, I fell for it." Even them admitting that they fell for the program. That's okay. At least you know now, because there's a kind of place where we help you become conscious of that. The school would not want you to do that, right? The school wants you to play into that hand. Same thing with these implementation committee meetings for the discipline policy.

So that's how we started using school discipline policy committee meetings in the context that led to the role-play that we shared with FLDC. Let's role-play a very dysfunctional school committee meeting – which is very typical – where they're tokenizing the topic; they're putting on an agenda because they have to, but they're not really having a talk about it. And if you ask a hard question, they're going to dismiss you. And what are you going to do at that point? We were trying to figure out, how do we train parents to intervene when they're dismissing the question? When they're tokenizing the parent. And they're the only parent in the room, but they literally have the most power to raise that issue and raise that question. *No one else* can ask that question but the parent, actually. If you're questioning our policy implementation, you as a parent can ask, "Aren't you supposed to be doing X, Y, and Z? Why is that not on the agenda?" No one else is gonna say that. The parent, though, can say it. And we had to role-play that for them to realize, no, you can actually say something. And they had to make the connection between how most meetings happen, where they didn't question those dynamics, and then coming to realize, "Oh, it's a place for intervention." And so, we had a role-play for that.

Facilitative Capacities to Use Role-Play to Practice Solidarity

In 2019, CADRE engaged FLDC partners from multiple collaboratives in this role-play practice as we sought to learn from and evolve our practices across communities and contexts. The resulting role-play was emotionally tense and transformative for both participants and observers at the convening, as Roslyn (a long-time CADRE parent leader and Black mother) role-played a distraught parent who showed up at a school discipline policy implementation meeting to seek support for her son. Other members of FLDC role-played the principal, teachers, and other Black and Latinx parents with different perspectives (for example, the Latina mother who had been hand-picked by the principal to be on the committee). As she did with CADRE parents, Maisie stopped and restarted the interactions to help the FLDC participants to notice particular scripts and power dynamics, to name the tensions and emotions in the room, and to invite us to imagine and try out different ways to intervene and redirect the interactions unfolding in the moment. For instance, she invited a Latina mother to step up in solidarity with the Black mother and speak back to the principal in a way that sought to center the other parent's needs and priorities around her son. Maisie unpacked the facilitation and capacities that made that role-play such a powerful learning experience.

The hard part is that we always need to cultivate staff capacity to run these role-plays. And so, if our staff have never gone through a role-play, then it's really hard for them to facilitate it. So we didn't do it that often. And then we need parents who know how to play the parts in the very deliberate

ways to bring all of that out. And so, if the parents weren't there to do that, we didn't mess around and just didn't do it, because it has to be deliberate.

Roslyn has to play a very specific role for all the stuff to come out. We can't role-play a representational meeting. We have to role-play that moment when all this stuff comes out: the parent is speaking truth to power, and the parent is getting rebuffed. The parent is trying to figure out how to intervene and fight back. That's what they need to see. So, you actually need a parent who can consciously role-play that, and that is an outcome of a process of development as well because you have to be able to be outside of yourself to know what you're experiencing in this meeting. You have to be able to look at yourself while you're in the meeting and what happened. And most parents are just engaged with it, or they're listening.

That was the challenge – that we needed to do it enough to where all the parents could make the journey where the role-play wasn't just a reenactment. The role-play was actually the experimentation. "Okay, what if I were to say this?" And then someone else will be role-playing an organic response of defensiveness, of dismissiveness, of dehumanizing – someone has to role-play that then for you to learn. What would I do in that instance? How would I leverage all this stuff that I know?

If we could have created a school where I could train and everyone knew how to do this, it would have been lovely. I think the one you saw up in the last FLDC convening was probably the best one we had, but that a lot of it was because other people helped us out, and they had school experience. And they could fully live into playing those roles. But we have a lot of people who have been programmed to not see those things. And so, I don't think the role-play just works if you just set it up. I think you have to cultivate the consciousness and the self-awareness and the self-empowerment, if you will, to say that "I want to practice being uncomfortable and hone my skills of how to respond in those situations." It can bring up a lot of stuff because we humanize parents. We know that's the other thing – we don't assume that parents want to role-play those kinds of traumatic experiences. So, it's not something we force people to do. We don't do it all the time to where we gloss over those possibilities. A lot of times our parents' relation with their schools is an extension of their own relationship with the school when they were children.

So that role-play that you saw us do at the FLDC convening – not every parent could have done that. Some parents would have fallen right back and would have been triggered in the same way they were triggered before in real life. And it might have even created harm, to be quite honest. So, the role-play was only possible because we had developed Roslyn and any other parent who was able to play that part. But I would say not many people can play that part. So, we did role-plays, but then we couldn't do them as much as I hoped we could do them because it took a lot of development of each person in order to create a role-play that it would reflect the actual dehumanization that we know goes on.

A Pedagogy of Love for Learning the Practice of Solidarity

Too often, efforts to address racial inequities and systemic harm in schools take the form of panels or listening sessions in which youth or parents of color must replay their trauma for the benefit of (mostly white) educators' learning. Not only does this constitute a form of "trauma on display" that can cause further harm to families, it frequently reinforces the existing dynamics of hierarchical power by situating the agency to address such inequities solely as a matter of professional expertise in institutional decision-making. That is, it positions educators as the decision-makers about whether and how to undertake change to remedy the systemic and moment-to-moment instantiations of racialized harm. In contrast, CADRE's organizational and role-play practices seek to build the capacity and agency of Black and Brown parents themselves to learn practices of solidarity as ways to intervene in these complex dynamics. Below, Maisie reflects

on what she has learned about how to develop the capacity of others to do role-plays like the ones she did with CADRE and in the FLDC convening. We (Megan and Ann) asked her: what is the capacity to act to disrupt the reproductions of harm when nobody's looking? Maisie situates this capacity within a deeper developmental process of learning to love yourself enough to forgive yourself – and then to own your agency and self-determination towards relationships premised not on "good or bad" judgments that merely repeat a cycle of trauma but on remaking a world that embodies healing, humanizing relations, and liberation.

I think it's an arduous process to have people get to that theoretical place – that "meta" place where they can take their life experience, they can understand the historical forces that shaped the underpinnings of it. Then they can think about themselves in that context and how were they shaped by it. Then they can see how that actually then influenced all the things they did subsequent to that. And then they can love themselves enough to forgive themselves in that reflection and in that discovery – and then realize that they have the power to show up differently in the very next second.

I think it's this combination – I've got to do enough political education, but I don't want this to be academic. I don't want you to rest in the consciousness; I need you to practice the thing that we've learned from history instead of critiquing how we keep making the same mistakes. And we keep saying we're going to change things, and nothing changes, and the same things keep happening. I would posit that it's because if all of us disrupted our own little things – and not from a righteous, woke place but from a real, humble, conscientious use of your power as a human being – and especially at schools…if we had a critical mass of parents who knew how to do this, things would be completely different.

We have so many parents who are so harmed and traumatized that [they have been deflated by it] and sometimes they kind of hydrate, and they get seen for the first time – but they don't actually step all the way into that empowerment. It takes staff and people around the parents who can understand all these human dynamics and the healing process but also the trauma cycles, as well as just cold hard strategy of interrupting dehumanizing actions and behaviors by people who have more power. How do you support people in learning how to do that? It's *not enough* that you're conscious.

I would say the experiment is really trying to build up an organization that produces and initiates all this, and it has the right conditions where people then are in charge of their own development so that they learn how to do this work in this way. [That learning], for example, looks like, "I'm not gonna let you off the hook right now. Because if you get past your moment right now, and you actually do the work that I'm asking in this way that I'm inviting you to do and that we have set up the conditions for you to do, that we put the whole organization around – then you can heal, and your practice can be different for you in your own life." People end up having to completely reconsider their relationships with their own parents, their own children, if they really absorb the full breadth of what we're doing. And it's not righteous. It's not like we're trying to make you a "good" parent. We just want you to be conscious of everything. Because the more conscious you are, the more choices you're going to know that you can make. And the more you choose – as opposed to react – you're going to begin to understand what it takes for liberation. You're going to understand what it takes to be self-determining.

Radical Love

As Maisie reflected not only on the work with FLDC but her 20 years of building leadership and organizing with Black and Brown parents in LA with CADRE, she highlighted crucial insights and lessons about the limitations of fostering "egoic" leadership and short-term policy wins that do not push beyond the dynamics of individualism and hierarchical power embedded in dominant systems. She named a contradiction that many in community organizing are reluctant to grapple openly with –one not only shaped by external neoliberal policy and funding contexts (Nygreen, 2017)

but also by the colonizing logics that infuse our organizations, communities, and "movement politics." Supporting those marginalized and harmed by generations of dominant systems to "step into" their leadership can be done "incompletely" in a way that might feel empowering in the moment and garner recognition in the news, particularly in the wake of generational trauma. However, Maisie argued that solely elevating individuals to reinforce dominant power and settler logics can undermine projects of collective healing, dignity, and liberation. Instead, the work of CADRE seeks to embody a radical love that commits to the capacity of all parents and people to "unpack themselves" together as they build a more humanizing practice and world.

The school is not giving up its power. I don't care how nice you are, how good of a parent you are – they're not giving it up. You could be that "good" parent, and the minute your child goes upside down one day, you're gonna be just like everybody else. So, I think parents are being trained to put a lot of stock into egoic power and being the favorites of a school and favorites of a teacher, thinking that that's going to help their kid. That only works for white people, you know – that's the irony.

We're really trying to get to a place where our parents are these very conscious leaders. They're not just egoic leaders, these "I feel powerful" leaders, but they're actually very conscious about how they use their power, how they use it, and whether it comes at the expense of someone else. [The parent leader from the role-play we discussed], Roslyn is a parent – people put her on this pedestal. They think she's this one-of-a-kind. But the radical love is thinking that other people could embody this. If you're going to assign it to one person, then we're in trouble. We have no hope if we're just looking for them. It's like looking for the next charismatic leader, right? Roslyn is what gives me the belief that it is possible, just like my own learning gives me the confidence that other people can practice this and learn it. They just have to give it the same self-love. They have to be able to unpack themselves. And if they just do that, we got it – the rest is all just information.

I would say the other part of this equation is why we're an organizing group, but we don't do a bunch of campaigns: because campaigns don't cultivate this. The win is something that then gives our parents a handle, like a leverage that then we can train them to use. It's not really about the next policy victory, being in the news, and we just keep knocking it out. Rather, we get a policy passed so we can train and monitor. Because that's when you're gonna learn how much power you have.

But if I conditioned you to just go for the policy victory, and then you think you have power – and really most policy victories, there's deals being made. It's not even really people power, really. And nobody who organizes with us [other organizing groups] really monitors. And all that happens is a year or two years later, [other groups say,] "What have you done for us lately? You passed this but you didn't do X!" But I say, they can't give you that – they don't *want* to know how to do it differently." If you don't monitor, interrupt them and hold them accountable, they're not going to give you the thing that you think you want. Even the money, they're gonna hide it.

We literally went for the discipline policy because we knew it now means we can call out all the BS that they do. So, the next time you demean a student in front of their classmates, now we can push back. Before that policy, parents could push back, but it was a teacher's word against the parent or the kid. So now we can at least say, "I call racism" at least, and it has to go in as a different baseline. So, we actually pushed for the policy just so we could train parents to actually monitor something that schools never want parents to monitor. And it created a whole movement.

A whole movement has ensued from that victory, but I will say, unfortunately, I don't think everybody monitors. And even though the movement is filled with groups of color and community-based work, it's this part that I don't know how to do en masse. And so sometimes, the movement politics still has us demanding policy changes, just talking about the problem over and over again and not actually training people to disrupt. So that's why I appreciated the article you've written [about racialized institutional scripts about parents]. There's no way that those scripts aren't going to happen. I view that what schools do to parents – the divide-and-conquer that they do with parents over

behavior and very egoic valuations of people and their worthiness – that it doesn't set us up for a different society. This is the project. This is the way they do it. Anti-Blackness is sealed when you demonize behavior. Because if you always think only certain people are associated with that behavior, we're never going to get out.

I don't know how we change education if we don't all focus on decriminalizing behavior and humanizing. I truly believe that if we humanize parents to the nth degree, like we all want to humanize young people, then school would be a whole different paradigm. You have to respect the parents and their humanity. You wouldn't suspend their kids. You would know that suspending the kids is not going to help their family. It's gonna destroy their family and/or cause more stress in an already stressed-out situation. So you won't have to convince people. Everything would be a total inversion of priorities. And meanwhile, we are stuck advocating for these priorities but on top of a foundation that doesn't breed humanism. I don't believe that we can plug all the holes in education without totally redefining parenting, totally humanizing parents, and starting from that point and seeing what it gets us.

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Expanding Theories of Educational Change in Family & Community-Led Designs

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Abstract

In this paper, we share findings from Family Leadership Design Collaborative's (FLDC) multi-year work, which comprised 10 co-design collaboratives engaged in historicizing their experiences and imagining transformative possibilities for education together. Using knowledge and interaction analysis (e.g., diSessa, Levin, & Brown, 2015) we examined collaboratives' conceptual ecologies (Kelly & Green, 1998) to develop an empirical typology of collaboratives' theories of change (Tuck & Yang, 2018), or the broader aims and the who, what and how of their change-making conversations in community design circles, a first step of solidarity-driven codesign (Ishimaru et al., 2018). Across a diverse range of geographically, linguistically, and racially diverse families and communities, we intentionally rooted the design conversation in an initial set of principles in order to move beyond status quo problem-solving and open social dreaming spaces towards collective changemaking. We found: 1) a conceptual ecology of multiple theories of change both across contexts and within a given context; 2) systems-centric theories of change (premised on family deficiencies or institutional pragmatics) that constrained the dreaming of transformative possibilities; and 3) the increase of more expansive and transformative theories of change as the engagement was sustained and nurtured over time. We argue that sustained engagements that build politicized trust and the ability to grapple with tensions can deepen relational theorizing and enable groups to shape imaginative possibilities for pursuing and realizing change.

Keywords: co-design; participatory design research; nondominant families; educational leadership; social dreaming; theories of change; solidarities.

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Education has long played a central role in cultivating communal wellbeing across cultural communities and history (Smith, 2013). In particular, conceptions about the relationship between families and education profoundly shape what children learn, how they learn it and why they learn it. These intersections are historically saturated and inflected by power in ways that shape not only how we view education and families but also what is possible in efforts to produce just forms of education (Ishimaru & Bang, 2022a). Such dynamics have been made especially salient in the wake of a global pandemic, national (re)awakenings about anti-Black racism and xenophobia, and the devastating recovery of Indigenous children from Canadian (and other) residential boarding schools in the context of ongoing settler colonialism.

Despite these reminders, educational institutions often relate to families in ways that are untethered from nondominant communities' experiences, which constitutes a kind of genesis amnesia (Bourdieu, 1972/1977) of their own institutional histories. For example, the United States has a long history of both removing nonwhite children from their families and incarcerating families of color who are positioned as a threat (to white Americans or their interests). For centuries, Black children were stripped from their parent's arms and auctioned off as slaves. The U.S. government targeted Native American communities for generations with child-separation policies and incarcerated Japanese American families in World War II to force compliance and assimilation (Fryberg & Bang, 2018). Narratives of blame and deficiency about families and communities of color rationalize the separation of Latinx children from their parents as well as schooling practices that distance young people of color from their families and communities (Valenzuela, 2005).

While less overt than boarding schools or child-separation policies, many conventional family interactions with schools and "school readiness" efforts mirror these assimilative dynamics. For example many routine "family engagement" activities (e.g., open houses, parent-teacher conferences, parent trainings) often seek to compel nondominant families to adhere to settled, white normative expectations of "engagement" in support of the school's agenda (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017). These narratives and relations require transformation in order to realize education that cultivates community wellbeing and justice, but many efforts to engage families more equitably have struggled to move beyond what Tilly (1998) refers to as "emulation," or institutional forms and practices that reinscribe inequities, often under the banner of inclusion and equity. For example, listening sessions have become a popular systems-based strategy for "engaging" family and community voices. However, these events often reinforce racialized power inequities when they position families as supplicants appealing to systems-based actors to provide resources, supports or more equitable decisions on their behalf. Further, these listening sessions often create the conditions for families to share the harms and traumas they have experienced in ways that preclude generative conversation about systemic transformation. Thus, we require new approaches and processes that deliberately disrupt and transform the underlying paradigm of assimilation and institutional control that permeate family-school relations.

As the field of family engagement continues to expand efforts and models towards racial equity and justice, we argue that solidarity driven co-design processes can be an important approach for creating spaces to develop knowledge, everyday practices, and relational leadership to envision and enact transformative possibilities for families and education beyond a school-centered, ahistoric paradigm. The Family Leadership Design Collaborative (FLDC) is a national network of scholars, practitioners, and family and community leaders who have been working to develop family engagement that can contribute to family and community wellbeing and education justice. The collaborative proposed a core set of principles and commitments from which to engage in co-design that refuses instrumental partnerships motivated by interest convergence, whereby the interests of communities of color are only advanced when they align with the interests of whites (Bell, 1980). Instead, the FLDC evolved a set of what we call "solidarity-driven codesign" principles that seek to

premise partnerships on solidarities (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Vakil et al., 2016) that live in our relations with each other in collective struggles towards justice.

This paper continues the special 2-part section of the Journal of Family Diversity in Education. In Part 1, we framed the FLDC principles, context and process of partnering with codesign collaboratives across the country (Ishimaru & Bang, 2022a) and highlight the work of collaboratives in a predominantly immigrant community of Salt Lake City, Utah, and in a Persian school in Chicago, Illinois. In Part 2, we share codesign work led by Maisie Chin building Black and Brown parent solidarities in Los Angeles, a commentary by Muhammad Khalifa and Nimo Abdi, and a subsequent paper later this summer examines how an urban Indigenous community in Chicago sought to cultivate global Indigeneities and grow "good elders" in their codesign collaborative.

In this paper, we share findings from across all of these collaboratives as well as others to examine data from 10 FLDC co-design collaboratives as they engaged in historicizing their experiences and imagining transformative possibilities for education together. Using knowledge and interaction analysis (e.g., diSessa, Levin, & Brown, 2015) we examined collaboratives' conceptual ecologies (Kelly & Green, 1998) to develop empirical conceptualizations about their theories of change (Tuck & Yang, 2018), or the broader aims and the who, what and how of their change-making conversations in community design circles. Rooted in Indigenous research methodologies (Bang et al., 2016; Smith, 2013), community design circles are in-depth, reciprocal working groups with diverse stakeholders that aim to identify issues and collectively design solutions (Ishimaru et al., 2018). Across a diverse range of geographically, linguistically, and racially diverse families and communities, we identified key concepts and collective theories of change over time to address the following questions:

- What theories of change emerged from the collaborative codesign sessions rooted in expansive family and community ecologies?
- What were the trajectories of ideas and theorizing across co-design sessions?
- What are the implications for the practice of educational leaders who work with families and communities?

By intentionally rooting the design circles in an initial set of principles across contexts (described below and in more detail in Part 1 of the JFDE special section (Ishimaru & Bang, 2022a)), we sought to move beyond status quo problem-solving and begin instead from a place of social dreaming and collective changemaking. We hypothesized that such an approach might cultivate new and different ideas about what should change, who should be involved in changemaking, and by what mechanisms or processes changes might occur.

Moreover, we hypothesized that the deliberative practice of facilitation in co-design sessions rooted in these principles might cultivate particular rhetorical forms. Informed by the work of Scott Lyons (2000), these rhetorical forms reflect theories of change that have implications for constructions of agency and change making. Lyons (2000) articulated the concepts of "rhetorical sovereignty" and "rhetorical imperialism" in the contexts of examining what Indigenous peoples wanted from writing and narrative forms. He says: "Rhetorical sovereignty is the inherent right and ability of peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit, to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and language of public discourse" (p.450). He further argues that rhetorical imperialism can be understood as "the ability of dominant powers to assert control of others by setting the terms of debate. These terms are often definitional—that is, they identify the parties discussed by describing them in certain ways" (p. 452). Lyons (2000) argues that the pursuit of rhetorical sovereignty for Indigenous peoples is "an attempt to revive not our past, but our possibilities" (p.450). Building with these ideas, an important question that gives rise to broader theories of change is who is constructed as having agency, on what terms and where change making is located and by whom - in short how are problems, opportunities, power and agency constructed in co-design?

Through an extensive analytic process, we found: 1) a conceptual ecology of multiple theories of change both across contexts and within a given context; 2) system-centric theories of change (premised on family deficiencies or institutional pragmatics) that constrained the dreaming of transformative possibilities; and 3) the increase of more expansive and transformative theories of change as relationships and conversations were sustained and nurtured over time. We argue that sustained engagements that build politicized trust (Vakil et al., 2016) and the ability to grapple with tensions can deepen relational theorizing and enable groups to hold multiple scales simultaneously to shape imaginative possibilities for pursuing and realizing change. We close with implications for educational leaders who seek to partner with nondominant families and communities and suggest areas for further research, including attention to the broader sociopolitical contexts and grounding assumptions that may shape local theorizing and relations in co-design.

Racialized School-Centric Logics of Nondominant Family Engagement in Education

Though invariably well intended, efforts to consider equity in school-based family engagement often take the form of systems-based educators making minor adjustments amidst a relatively unchanging backdrop of conventional parent involvement activities, like PTA meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and calls home for trouble (Terriquez, 2011). For instance, language translation, childcare provision, new liaison roles, relationship-building efforts like home visits, and more welcoming environments are important departures from conventional approaches (Ishimaru et al., 2018). However, many of these efforts towards "incremental inclusion" (Patel, 2017) do little to interrogate school-based agendas, hierarchical power paradigms, or the underlying systemic assumptions about the racialized roles of parents, families, and communities at the margins of teaching and learning. Color-evasive, individualistic approaches to helping parents "navigate" or "advocate" for their own child still persist (Olivos, 2096; Warren et al., 2009). Such efforts reinforce the notion that "merit" alone accounts for success and mask a systemic dynamic that implicates individual parents when students do not perform school expectations. Such approaches fall short of fundamentally questioning and shifting powered notions of "what counts," whether as family engagement, "good" parenting, or as desired outcomes for young people (Valdez, 1996).

The school-centric determinations that *some* kinds of engagement count (e.g., attending PTA meetings) and others do not (e.g., teaching through cultural stories at home) are normed on a set of expectations of white, middle class (heterosexual, English-speaking, Christian, nondisabled, two-biological-parent) families (Auerbach, 2007; Baquedano-López et al., 2013). By exclusion, then, these determinations implicate students, parents, and families who do not conform to those expectations as deficient or problematic. Not coincidentally, these judgments are typically rendered in racialized terms by mostly-white educators or administrators in ways that limit opportunities for racially minoritized students and their learning (Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

These consequential racialized assumptions function as a set of institutionalized logics and scripts in schools that govern what seem like "common sense" ways for schools and families to interact, but they are rooted in historically-based power inequities and institutionalized whiteness (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017). As Cheryl Harris (1993) has demonstrated, the meaning and substance of race has changed over time, but "what persists is the expectation of white-controlled institutions in the continued right to determine meaning – the reified privilege of power – that reconstitutes the property interest in whiteness in contemporary form" (p. 1762). That is, as white-controlled institutions, schools maintain the right to arbitrate what behaviors and norms constitute "good" parenting or "positive" engagement and what settled ends "count" as success. For instance, the

expectation that parents should be deferent to the school's agenda and reinforce school discipline expectations at home can function as subtle forms of assimilation and control that derive from historical precedents and reinforce the powered status quo of racial inequities.

These expectations and norms are so deeply rooted in the institutional logics of formal schools, nondominant families rarely have opportunities to participate in shaping teaching and learning beyond providing support at home and narrowly structured avenues for "input" and "feedback" (such as family surveys or public comments on decisions, which reinforce educators as the ultimate decision-makers). Even educators and formal leaders who see themselves as engaged in broader educational justice projects often position themselves as advocates *for* minoritized students and families and lead improvement that excludes the expertise of youth, families and communities themselves (Ishimaru, 2020).

To disrupt the default to incremental inclusion (Patel, 2017) and the racialized assumptions that predetermine role-based interactions (for instance, between teachers and parents), a growing number of educational scholars have found participatory design processes can invite families, communities and educators into social dreaming (Espinoza & Vossoughi, 2008) and reimagining teaching and learning in ways that re-mediate relationships and work to re-establish the epistemic authority of families (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016; Booker & Goldman, 2016). We turn next to a brief overview of participatory design research and the particular design principles evolved by the Family Leadership Design Collaborative as starting points for disrupting and transforming not only the entrenched dynamics of family-school relations but also the racial injustices and settler colonial logics that permeate schools.

Participatory Design Research and Solidarity-driven Codesign Principles

Solidarity-driven codesign is an approach to participatory design research that brings together diverse stakeholders in order to collectively and iteratively identify issues, problems or possibilities of practice and to design change. Participatory design with (not for) youth, families and communities has deep roots in Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies, in nondominant community practices and in community-based design research (Bang et al., 2016; Brayboy, 2005; Kovach, 2010; Patel, 2015; Smith, 2013), as well as community-engaged scholarship (Anyon, 2009; Oakes et al., 2006; Warren et al., 2016). Solidarity-driven codesign emerged from the work of the Family Leadership Design Collaborative (FLDC), a national, transdisciplinary collaborative of family and community leaders, educators and researchers who center racial equity in family engagement. During the first phase of FLDC, over 40 scholars, practitioners, and community leaders convened to identify an initial research and practice agenda shaped by a set of core principles to guide our collective work together (which we have elaborated elsewhere, see Ishimaru et al., 2018; Ishimaru & Bang, 2022a). Within broader aims of community-defined educational justice and collective wellbeing, solidarity-driven codesign seeks to:

Begin with family and community ecologies;
Refuse and disrupt dominant power dynamics;
Enact solidarities in collective change-making; and
Cultivate ongoing transformative possibilities

Through a series of engagements with and in different nondominant communities, we catalyzed a *solidarity-driven* process of partnering to disrupt historically-rooted power and normative institutionally-driven agendas but also to make decisions and design educational practices and tools throughout the research process in ways that build solidarities in the moment as well as over time (for a more complete elaboration of solidarity-driven codesign, see Ishimaru & Bang, 2022b). One

distinguishing feature of solidarity-driven codesign is its emphasis on *both* relational process *and* product, or foregrounding *subject-subject* relations in ways that implicate *subject-object* relations in cultural historical activity theory terms (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016). That is, whereas some approaches to codesign emphasize the end product as the predominant focus of activity, solidarity-driven codesign sessions seek to examine and develop participants' relationships, interactions, and evolving shared understandings and tensions in *tandem* with attention to the focal aim or outcome. For example, this might mean attending to and intervening in the powered interactions between parents and teachers as they seek to collaborate in developing a curriculum. Such an approach posits that the end product (such as a curriculum) will be shaped in consequential ways by the relationships and process of partnering between participants with different roles, expertise, and knowledge. Disrupting historically-based dominant power in codesign necessitates making visible the political and theoretical histories of a particular project, including the personal histories of researchers and participants alike, to unearth the values, goals, and outcomes in order to disrupt inequitable partnerships and re-imagine transformative possibilities (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016; Vakil et al., 2016). As part of the process, then, roles (e.g. researcher, parent, educators) become porous categories that create space for expansive and multidimensional identities. As we have described elsewhere in more detail (see Ishimaru & Bang, 2022b), when codesigners bring their multiple identities to codesign processes (for instance, researchers bring in their roles as parents and members of particular cultural communities), broader understandings and possible solutions often emerge.

Theories of Change in Conceptual Contexts

Solidarity-driven codesigns seek to cultivate community dreaming and decision-making while prefiguring the agency, solidarity, and justice making that we seek as an additional outcome of the process (Cole, 1998; Ishimaru & Bang, 2022b). An initial practice of solidarity-driven codesign invites families, educators and researchers to dream expansively about an elsewhere to the current state that births new possibilities that are not in response to or reactive of oppression, but actively seeking wellbeing and justice. The time and space to dream possible futures beyond the status quo are key in solidarity-driven codesign; without this intentionality, the readily-available solutions often reflect – and reinforce – settled expectations of systems. More specifically solidarity-driven codesign orients design decisions towards collective wellbeing while wrestling with the complexities of socially constructed and historically infused power dynamics. Situated in particular histories and sociopolitical contexts, collaboratives' iterative conversations about community-specific definitions of educational justice and collective change-making built a collective conceptual ecology of knowledge (Kelly & Green, 1998). Conceptual ecologies are fundamental to human activity. People coordinate meaning and activity through shared understandings - and often the breakdown of shared meanings and activity can be connected to the lack of a shared ecology.

By starting from a place of social dreaming and collective changemaking, we hypothesized that participants might develop new and different shared ideas about what and who should change, who should be involved in changemaking and in what roles, and by what mechanisms or processes changes might occur. These conceptualizations offer insights into the consequential implicit and explicit theories of change (TOC) held by a collective (Tuck & Yang, 2018). Though not actions or solutions in themselves, theories of change are consequential for making sense of problems and strategies for realizing particular envisioned change. Such TOCs are crucial to attend to because the history of educational reform highlights a core repeating contradiction in the field: the jump to action with little interrogation about the underlying assumptions about what the action is intended to accomplish towards what ends. In the context of families and racial equity in education, a sense of urgency can

entail a rush to action that defaults to existing repertoires of actions, reforms, and solutions. Such "solutions on demand" (Martin, 2015) can embed dominant logics and assumptions that merely emulate or adapt to inequity (Tilly, 1998). For example, families of color can be socialized to "ask for the crumbs" instead of the "whole cake" because their dreams for their children have been enclosed by what they can imagine the system will grant them (Escalera, personal communication, April, 2021). Likewise, migrant youth can internalize racialized neoliberal logics about learning English as an indicator of belonging and life success (Rodriguez, 2020).

Thus, to explore how collaboratives' theories of change might evolve, we invited FLDC partners to deliberately design circles around solidarity-driven principles to interrogate the racialized histories of participants' lived educational experiences, challenges, and opportunities and to invite participants to imagine future transformative possibilities *beyond* the system as it is or as they had been socialized to expect it to concede. Our presumption was not that any singular theory of change was better or more just; indeed, we suspect the ability to hold and enact multiple theories of change simultaneously may be an indicator of a collective's complex systems thinking capacity, even if dimensions of said theories may be in tension (Tuck & Yang, 2018). We argue that change-making efforts that seek to live solidarities through the process necessitate intentionality about the logics and assumptions that underlie our theories of change. Thus, our findings offer an ecosystem of theories of change, how the terms of engagement embedded in those theories differed in consequential ways, and how they changed over time; collectively these insights offer a broader framework for how we might map the TOCs that emerge from family, community and educator deliberations about educational justice and community wellbeing.

Methods

Context

From the fall of 2016 through the summer of 2017, we engaged 10 family and community codesign collaboratives (collaboratives) in a series of community design circles (DCs), or in-depth reciprocal work groups. These collaboratives engaged in 3 to 5 design circles over a span of weeks or months to identify injustices and issues as well as co-design potential solutions towards education justice and community wellbeing. Across the 10 collaboratives, Indigenous, Latinx, African American, Asian American, and other nondominant families and community members joined researchers and in some cases, professional educators and systems-based administrators, in social dreaming (Espinoza & Vossoughi, 2008) and collective changemaking to explore what transformative change might look like and how it might be brought about in education. The participating collaboratives emerged from the invited network of family, community, scholarly, and practitioner leaders in the field who first comprised the FLDC network, and included sites in: Central Falls (Rhode Island), Chicago (one in an urban Indigenous community, another in a Persian school, Illinois), Detroit (Michigan), Greenville (Mississippi), Los Angeles (California), Salt Lake City (Utah), Salem (Oregon), Seattle (Washington), and Southfield (Michigan). See Appendix A online for a full summary of each collaborative, their central aims, and the codesign partners.

Building from the solidarity-driven codesign principles elaborated by the broader FLDC, each of the community collaboratives worked to engage stories, experiences, and expertise within their communities to imagine what educational justice and wellbeing meant and how they might take it up for themselves within their particular context. Given the broad range of geographies, racial, cultural, socioeconomic and political contexts, each collaborative built from common approaches to design *different* practices, programs, or tools to support their efforts, but they all worked to co-design towards educational justice and community wellbeing.

To be clear, these initial design circles were intended to catalyze new ideas, different relationships, and next phases of work, not transform systems or accomplish educational justice in and of themselves. They did, however, either put new efforts in motion or provide the space and time to take existing work to a different level. For instance, in Chicago, members of diverse urban Indigenous communities envisioned a series of community-based intergenerational cultural learning activities aimed at "raising good elders." In Los Angeles, parent leaders and researchers designed in-the-moment interventions to humanize racialized parent-teacher interactions around discipline and build solidarity between Latinx and African American parents. In West Salt Lake City, Utah, the team developed parent and administrator materials for strengthening the role of families in school-based decision-making councils. Seattle-based community leaders designed facilitative practices for cross-racial coalition work. In Detroit, community organizers worked with researchers to develop an action research guide for youth and community organizers (more in-depth examinations of particular codesign projects can be found in Kuttner et al., 2022; Vossoughi, 2022; Chin et al. 2023); and Bang et al. (forthcoming) across the linked special sections in this journal as well as on the FLDC website: https://familydesigncollab.org/).

Data Collection

The design circle sessions were audio recorded and transcribed to produce a total of 40 transcripts (each ranging from 1.5-4 hours), which were all in English except for those from four collaboratives (which were in Farsi, Spanish, and a mix of Toishanese, Cantonese, Mandarin, all of which were translated into English for analyses). We also conducted interviews with facilitators before and after design circles to better understand multiple forms of community wellbeing and education justice and how those notions were manifesting in local context through codesign. This preliminary analysis was used as a framework for developing community-defined practices for partnership and decision-making that we enacted in partnership with the collaboratives in the subsequent phase of the project.

Data Analyses

Our university-based research team partnered with the local family and community design collaboratives to analyze the data both within and across design circle sessions to identify key concepts and theories of change that reflected the ideas and strategies that emerged from this co-design process. Following the precept of conducting research *with* families and communities rather than *on* them, we iteratively analyzed our data in five phases: 1) we first discussed transcripts, fieldnotes, and artifacts from each session with each set of site-based collaborative partners to inform next steps in the co-design process itself; 2) we subsequently revisited and analyzed transcripts to write analytic memos and develop our criteria and initial coding schemes; (3) we systematically coded all session transcripts and partner analysis conversations; 4) we analyzed the coded data to develop initial findings with site-specific collaborative members; 5) we re-coded our full data set using refined codes to finalize themes and consolidate findings with site-specific collaboratives and FLDC members more broadly. We elaborate each phase briefly below with examples.

The *first phase* of analysis with community design circles occurred during the design and redesign process that we engaged in with each site to make sense of emerging conceptual and relational themes and shape subsequent sessions. In previous work (Ishimaru et al., 2018; FLDC, 2017), we detailed how we attended to and redesigned in ways that would enact these iterative design practices; here we discuss how this in-situ reflection contributed to emerging thematic analysis. As aligned with the participatory design methodologies referenced above, this analytic process opened space for designers to make sense of their own data. In this phase, researchers (from the university team and from each site) read transcripts and sometimes fieldnotes then wrote brief memos to capture both relational dynamics and conceptual themes that emerged during these design circles. For example, in

the Chicago Global Indigenous Collaborative, themes during the first circle included historical trauma, Indigenous erasure both in formal school contexts and in society more broadly, intergenerational learning, and continuities or (dis)similarities within and across Indigenous peoples globally. We reflected on how this activity afforded a wide range of topics to emerge, but conversation often dwelt in "problems" or injustices. In reflecting on the data, codesigners sought to facilitate the second design circle in ways that would honor these conversations about educational injustices while also drawing out possibilities and social dreams. The researchers also used these initial memos to identify themes across the range of geographically, linguistically, and contextually distinct sites.

In the *second* phase of analyses, led and conducted primarily by the university-based research team (led by the authors and including additional graduate students over the years[1]), we analyzed transcripts and wrote analytic memos within and across sites to develop criteria and an initial coding scheme, engaging in an extensive process of developing a team codebook (Guest, 2008). We examined 1430 excerpts through multiple iterations and eventually honed the codebook to 16 codes. Of the total excerpts, 345 excerpts included theories of change. We also undertook iterative coding of a small number of the same transcripts (across different sites) to build inter-rater reliability across the team. We subsequently systematically coded all the data in the *third phase* of analysis using this team codebook. Finally, in the *fourth* phase, we worked with site-specific collaborative members to develop emergent claims about the conceptual ecologies and theories of change we observed emerging across tine in their design circles. We shared emergent claims with sites in the form of conceptual ecology briefs that highlighted each collaborative's top five themes and emerging theories of change. We used our conversations about the briefs as a way to refine, change, and further our sense-making with codesigners in the local collaboratives. Finally, in our *fifth* phase, we analyzed both within and across sites to elaborate a set of 16 emergent theories of change across the data corps. We then consolidated codes based on noticing conceptual "families" of theories that cohered, which we shared with the full FLDC collaborative (which included both local collaboratives and other members of the network who did not conduct design circles). Our subsequent refinements in response to FLDC feedback and engagement are reflected in our findings.

Consistent with participatory design methods, our research team of two PIs, one post-doctoral researcher and 2-4 doctoral research assistants participated in the sense-making and planning of the codesign sessions at different levels, depending on the site. In addition, a member of our core research team was present for at least one session for each of the 10 design circles, with the exception of the Persian school (which was conducted in Farsi). All but two of the partnering FLDC researchers and all of the codesign collaboratives identified as Black, Indigenous, Latinx or Asian American or other racially minoritized identities; all the members of our core research team identified as Indigenous, Asian American, or Latinx researchers, with four of us identifying as parents of color; We sought, through our support, analytic participation, and subsequent analyses, to cultivate an ethic of answerability (Patel, 2014) with and to the communities, learning, and knowledge we witnessed and supported. In a subsequent phase of the work, we worked with a subset of four collaboratives who went on to conduct deeper codesign work that evolved from these circles.

Findings

Across a broad range of contexts, participants and approaches, our analyses of the community design circles highlighted multiple conceptions of the implicit aims and notions of what, who and how

[1] Thanks to additional graduate student research assistants across FLDC phases, including Dr. Amber Banks, Karen O'Reilly-Diaz, Henadina Tavares, Mario Guerra, Katherine Chang, and graduate students at the University of Utah and UCLA/CADRE collaboratives.

change would achieve those aims. Notably, these multiple theories of change existed *within* each design circle and sustained across time, though the kinds of theories discussed also collectively evolved over time. First, we found that even when considered in light of organizational histories focused on singular theories of change (for example, organizing campaigns focused on policy wins or school engagement focused on individual parent support), design circles opened space for participants to articulate and grapple with *multiple* theories of change simultaneously, suggesting a refusal of universals or singular narratives that often drive change-making. Second, we found important differences in how theories of change shaped the kinds of educational change that were considered and imagined. More specifically, we found that systems-centered theories of change – such as deficit orientations towards families as well as change making efforts driven by incremental reforms or institutional pragmatics – constrained imaginative and transformative change. Finally, while most of the design circles took up deficit orientations or systems-centered logics at some point, we found that *sustained* engagement over time enabled a marked shift in collaboratives' conceptualizations towards theories that reached beyond the current system towards imagining and enacting transformative possibilities for community-determined justice and wellbeing. Collectively, our findings suggest that solidarity-driven design practices, even across dramatically distinct geographies, racial-historical contexts, can cultivate transformative visions and aims beyond the existing system in ways that contrast with more normative family engagements, such as "listening sessions" or research "focus groups," that can constrain or enclose possibilities, even as they seek to center family and community "voice."

1. Resisting Universals towards Multiple Theories of Change

As designers considered their own lived experiences, community histories and conceptions of the problems at the intersection of nondominant families, justice and wellbeing, their discussions engaged hypothetical causal relationships both within and outside of formal systems. Four "families" of theories of change emerged across their discussions: 1) Improving parent capacity; 2) Within-systems change; 3) Reclaiming systems; 4) Solidarity-dreaming. Over time, each design site critically took up (meaning it was more than a single mention) at least three theories of change (TOC) at different scales and towards different hypothetical aims. To be clear, the theories that emerged focused not on the actions pursued by the participants but on what participants talked about and *conceptually co-constructed* through their sustained dialogue with one another.

Although it may be tempting to read the four groups of theories as a hierarchical, linear or evaluative framework, we share them as a descriptive and overlapping ecology (which is imperfectly represented by Figure 1). Though the different "families" of related theories do layer in envisioning increasingly expansive aims, a key aspect of this first finding is that every site conceptualized *multiple* theories of change across this overlapping ecology. We discuss briefly below each theory of change family with examples, referencing Fig. 1, which illustrates the overall distribution of the grouped theories of change across all the design circles (see Appendix B online for the codes that comprise each family). In our second finding, we further unpack the undergirding assumptions and stances that shape and distinguish the four theories of change "families" and elaborate how the logics shaped social imaginaries across diverse communities. We examine the trajectories of deliberations over time in our third finding.

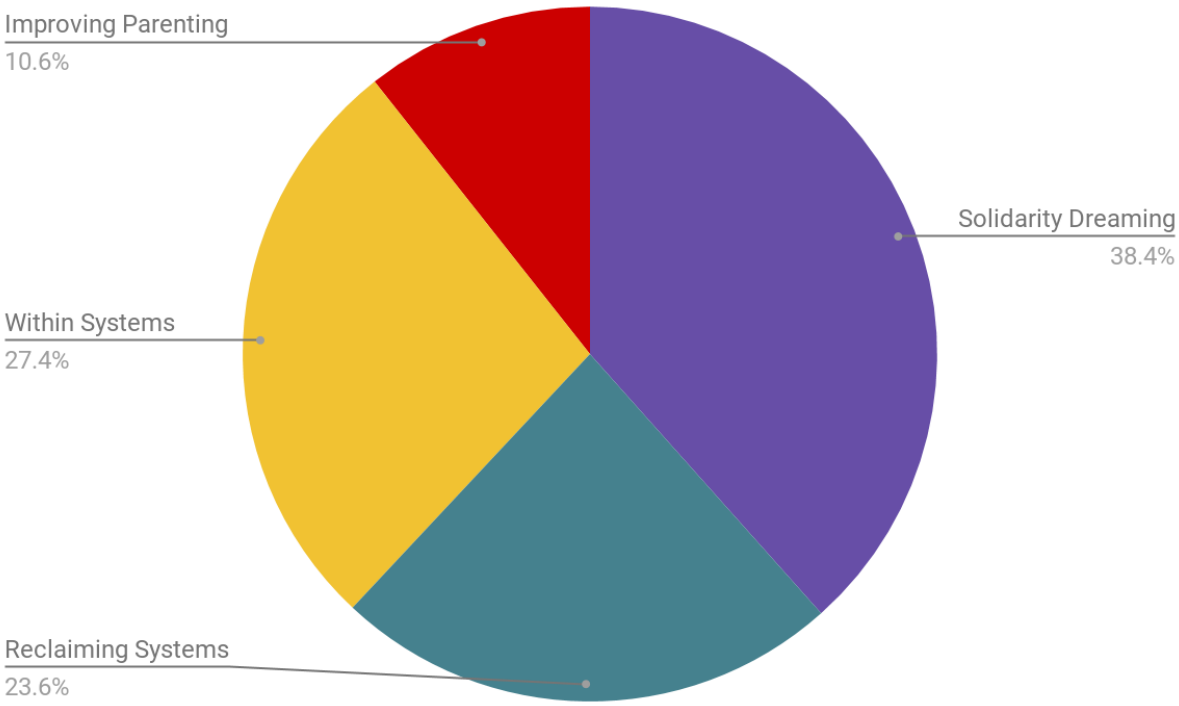

Figure 1. Distribution of theory of change "families"

Improving Parent Capacity Theories of Change

First, although quantitatively the group of theories that emerged least across sites, efforts focused on **improving parent capacity** to educate their children relied on dominant deficit-based conceptions of the problem as rooted in nondominant parents and families themselves (depicted in red, 10.6%). In this TOC, participants talked about nondominant parents as lacking capacities to parent their children well, sometimes in terms of meeting their basic needs and generally as defined by white normative standards. For example, in one site, a participant reframed multigenerational "stair step" families (with many children) as "homeless," as part of a rationale for the need for better financial supports for families. We also grouped here conversations about the need for existing services or agencies to be better coordinated in order to compensate for the multiple ways that parents or families struggled.

Despite the explicit focus on centering the priorities and practices of nondominant families in the design circles, some participants still envisioned solutions focused on "fixing" families or compensating for what participants saw as families' inherent short-comings. For example, an immigrant mother in one design session implied that uninvolved parents were the problem: "I know a lady who never comes to her son's conferences. She only knows that her son goes to school, she does not [know] the teachers, she has never gone anywhere. She doesn't even know the people when she goes to register him." This parent's narrative echoes a long-standing racialized assumption in both research and practice that implies that "uninvolved" parents do not care about their children's education (as evidence by their lack of information and presence at the school) and are therefore to blame if their children do not succeed in school (Ishimaru, 2020; López et al., 2001).

Importantly, though, discussions about improving parent capacity were not always raised in a way that reinforced dominant deficit-based narratives or implied blame. In some circles, participants also referenced a narrow institutional focus on improving parent capacity as a *source* of their own

conflicted historical experiences of school-based engagement (for instance, parent referenced trainings that presumed they did not value education). Moreover, the need to improve parenting capacity also came up in design circles grappling with the broader sociopolitical contexts that shaped their lives. For instance, during the Trump administration's "Muslim ban," parents in the Persian design circle grappled with how to raise their children and help them to navigate their identities amidst the increasingly hostile Islamophobic contexts their families were experiencing. Similarly, after the 2016 election, Latinx families in the Salem design circle grappled with their own parenting roles and responsibilities when their children were experiencing race-based bullying at school or were fearful that they might be separated from their children by immigration authorities. We address these dynamics in our conclusion.

Within-Systems Theories of Change

A related but distinct set of theories of change invoked by design circle participants focused on **within-systems change** (yellow, 27.4%)**,** which included strategies for working within the existing structures and paradigm of formal schooling, such as opening access, increasing representation, and aligning interests between families and educators. This theory of change was frequently invoked alongside improving parent capacity, but was present in every single site. The theories about opening access and increasing representation emphasized the need for decision-making to account for power and cultural dynamics in schools that tend to exclude families from participating in existing systems processes and decision-making bodies. For example, in Salt Lake City, codesigners talked about the process determining which parents would be represented on each school's budget-allocating School Community Council, noting that especially for immigrant families coming into new schools, the current election process excluded many parents:

> You're not asking me as a parent . . .You're just asking the [same] old school folks that are there. I think that, as parents, it's our position to say, "Hey wait a minute. You didn't get that vote from me." That's what's hard for us, or our parents, that we're not willing to get political because politics scare us. . . Well, my people are not comfortable with politics for many obvious reasons. That's the thing, is we [need to] stand up and we say, "No, no, no, no. Hold on. You got half of our kids that are still here, or coming in, so we should have a voice!"

In this case, parents are arguing for the need to expand participation in the councils and include the votes of immigrant Latinx families in decision-making.

The theories of change grouped together in this category were distinct from those in the improving parent capacity theories in that they were more focused on navigating the American educational system and leveraging power for change within it (whereas the prior set of theories emphasized remediating deficits in parents). Within-systems theories of change often had underlying assimilative assumptions that were not considered to be something to disrupt; that is, the need for families to assimilate to the aims, expectations, and normative interactions in formal schooling was taken as a given, a dynamic that often emerged in immigrant contexts. Training and education for educators also fell in this group, with the notion that educators need to shift their deficit-based perspectives of "our kids [as] the most problematic" (Los Angeles DC#1), and learn to better understand and engage with families. According to this theory, educators with better training and understanding of nondominant families would recognize and honor families and communities as supporters of their children in achieving systems-defined academic success, such as regular school attendance, homework completion, good grades, and academic achievement.

Reclaiming Systems Theories of Change

The third "family" of theories of change that emerged across design circles and sites were those focused on **reclaiming educational systems** (green, 26.3%). This group of theories of change sought to reshape the settled roles of families and educators, change the discourses or understandings of the issues and problems, and socialize young people in ways that instilled pride in their cultures while protecting them from systemic harm. We also included theories of change that emphasized the need for community-based organizations to build the advocacy and power of parents and families to demand and model change in schools on their terms, rather than simply increasing access to the system as it is. Collaboratives grounded in an explicit power analysis often took up this theory of change in tandem with others.

Theories of change in this "family" also focused on reshaping conceptions of the problem and potential solutions, exploring ways to move beyond simplistic roles (such as parent, teacher, principal) towards more fluid and multiple identities and relations. For example, families envisioned themselves not only as advocates and change-makers in the system in these narratives, but also as teachers, protectors and socializers of children, especially in addressing racialized or Islamophobic (in the case of the Persian school) harm. Moreover, they imagined reclaiming educational systems to support their children's cultural identities and perspectives:

> [h]ow about we give the right to the children to learn about [their religion and culture]? Give the right to them to have an opinion too. Yeah of course the public library [is] next door, but the school is where they spend their day. So if they are going to learn about Western culture, then, they should be equal. You know what I'm saying? That would be a great advancement in curriculum [to learn about Middle Eastern culture and history], not just for my child but for other children. (parent, Iranian school DC #3).

Thus, theories of change aimed at reclaiming systems sought to reshape status quo approaches to education and explicitly challenged the dominant norms and assumptions of schooling.

Solidarity-Dreaming Theories of Change

Finally, we refer to the remaining family of theories of change as **solidarity dreaming** TOCs (purple in Figure A, 38.4% of the coded segments). As Alma, a Latina parent leader from Salt Lake City, said at a convening, "How can I think about reclaiming a system that was never mine?" This group of TOCs decentered the system entirely and focused on community and culturally-based forms of learning and education as a central resource or starting point for reimagining or making education anew. Codesigners talked about creating or maintaining space and time for reimagining education, humanizing each other, revitalizing and evolving cultural and community practices of education, growing kinship relations across roles and communities, and healing in communities. Particularly in the Chicago Global Indigenous Collaborative, codesigners reflected that healing was a critical component of evolving practices and reclaiming traditional forms of learning and decision-making in the wake of settler colonialism.

> Debra: Yeah, and just going back to where I feel and what one of the things that I was going to suggest, I mean, you have family well-being, but I think community well-being is important, and that is that building strong community, but building strong communities so that we get to a place where we have community well-being. Right now, when it feels so fragmented, that trickles down, and it fragments everything else, so what is it that we can do to create community well-being? ... I think once we have that, and we have a strong community foundation, then we can tackle these other areas, and I think we'd have a much stronger force in changing the system, or bettering education for our families, or for our kids, and creating educational justice ...

> Vincent: ...To start building the family groups, just start putting salve on those fractures and helping families be okay with differences and able to celebrate each other's differences, because I know, just in my own family, I'm talking my brothers and sisters, we've had a lot of years disagreeing with each other and knocking our heads in how to deal with that disagreement. How to live with it, how to love each other through disagreeing with each other, and how does that affect our kids in how they relate with each other? We've seen differences in how they react with each other, because they grow up repeating what we ... the negative vomit that comes out…" (Chicago Global Indigeneity Design Circle #4)

In this case, co-designers discussed the healing that individuals or families must do both individually and as a collective in order to reclaim and evolve practices over generations to foster community well-being. Thus, theories of change grouped together as solidarity-dreaming theories grew from Indigenous, Black, Latinx and Asian American family and community histories and ecologies and their visions of healing, well-being, cultural revitalization, kinship, and humanizing relations (not status quo systems or settler colonial white supremacist institutions). Such solidarity dreams were premised on different onto-epistemological and even axiological grounds than those of dominant systems, which are motivated by individualism, neoliberal racial capitalism, and modernity (de Oliveira Andreotti et al, 2015). The circles that took up these theories of change moved beyond existing systems and institutions as a starting premise and sought to (re)imagine educative possibilities from "otherwise" futures (King et al., 2020).

The Significance of Multiple Theories of Change

In sum, it comes as little surprise that different communities envisioned different notions of change and ways to achieve it, but given the normative drive towards singularities and either-or absolutes in both society and in schools, we call attention to the multiplicities that exist *within* a given community or context. That is, across the 10 design circles in vastly different geographies and communities across the U.S., participants resisted universals and singular theories of change with regard to educating their children and realizing justice and wellbeing in their communities. This stands in marked contrast to the dominant systems-based approach to families, which presumes a singular (white, middle class, heteronormative) set of behaviors, activities, attitudes, and interactions lead to individualistic student academic success. Scholars have long decried "silver bullet" solutions to educational inequities, yet singular theories of change continue to dominate the education reform landscape in the pandemic era, from remediating so-called learning loss to socioemotional learning. Despite trending district strategies, though, families, communities and educators across our design circles theorized multiple theories of change simultaneously to address complex, historically-rooted legacies of colonialism and racial oppression in education.

2. System-centric Theories of Change Reproduced Normative Power and Constrained Imaginative and Transformative Change

Although codesigners across contexts took up multiple theories of change across time, their conceptualizations were not equally distributed across the different groups of theories; rather, they differed in crucial ways in their "terms of engagement," or the explicit and implicit defining of who and what needs changing as the object of focus in co-design. These terms of engagement are constituted in a variety of ways in the theory of change "families" and shape the conceptual and imaginative space for educational change. We see this as aligned with Lyons' (2000) idea of rhetorical sovereignty and rhetorical imperialism. That is, the four families of theories of change hold important distinctions about where and with whom power and agency - where change can be made - are located. For instance, theories of change about building parent capacity aligned with rhetorical imperialism in

reflecting systems-defined notions about parent deficits as the primary problem to address. To make these distinctions clearer, we collapsed our data into two categories: systems-centered logics, which resonate with rhetorical imperialism, and family/community-centered logics, which resonate with rhetorical sovereignty. Systems-centered logics include the parent capacity-building and within-systems theories of change. Family/community-centered logics included our reclaiming systems theories of change and solidarity-dreaming theories of change.

In our analysis, as illustrated in Figure 2, we found design circles that engaged in systems-centered logics driven by deficit-based conceptions of families or institutional pragmatics – our parent capacity-building and within-systems theories of change – to be less likely to engage in theories of change that involved reclaiming systems or solidarity dreaming and transformative possibilities. Indeed, we found that the three co-design circles that spent roughly 60% of their time or more in each of their co-design sessions in systems-based logics struggled to engage in solidarity-dreaming theories of change or even rupture deficit based theories of families. Two of the co-design circles (Seattle and Salem below) spent roughly 50% of their time in systems centric logics overall, though they did not do this consistently across each co-design session. In these two collaboratives, there was a single session that was heavily focused on systems but their other sessions were more significantly focused on family and community forms of agency.

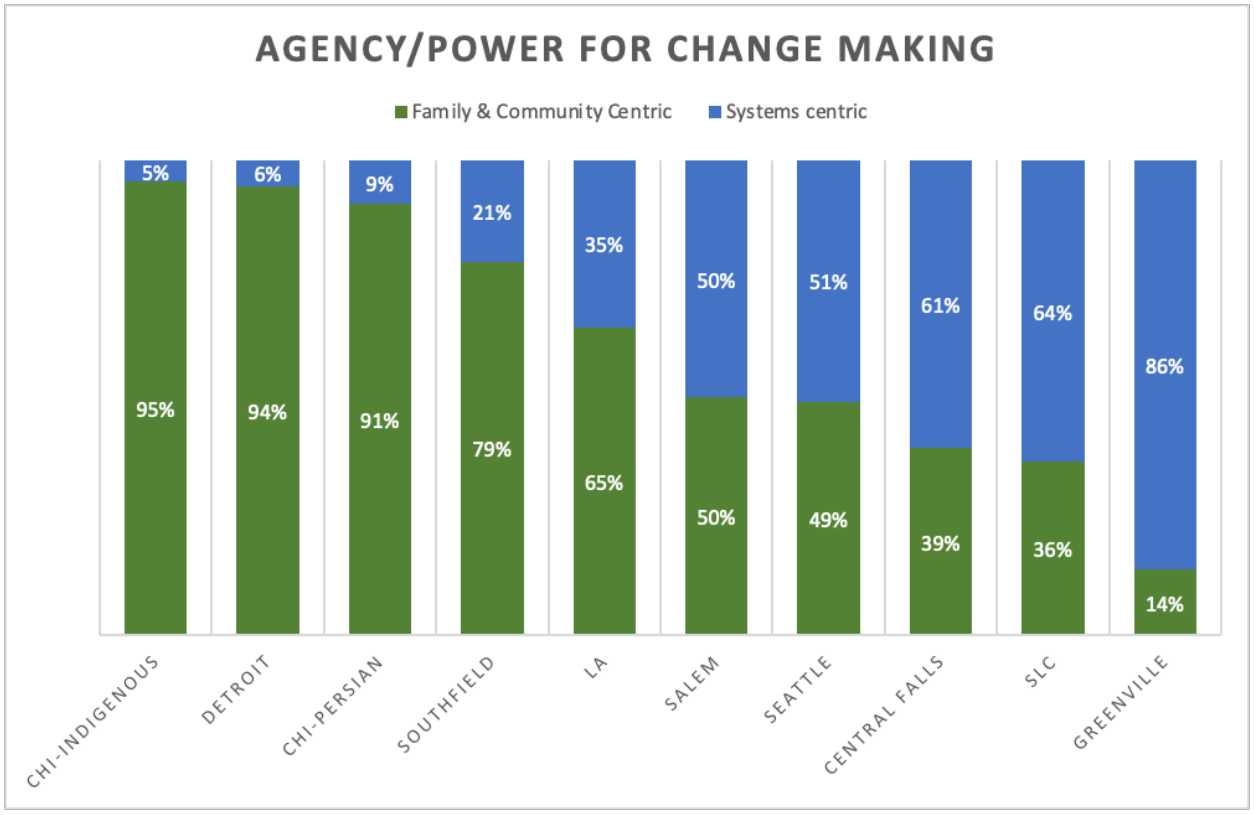

Figure 2. Percentage of codesign sessions focused on family and community-centric and systems-centric logics, by collaborative.

This distinction and its implications were critical to the practice of co-design and its possibilities and limitations. To be clear, we are not suggesting that these potentials are reflective of specific communities but rather are connected to the forms of leadership and facilitative practice that are enacted during co-design, as well as the local and broader sociopolitical contexts of the work.

The following example of within-systems change was related by Chinese immigrant parents in the Seattle design collaborative:

> Parent A (female): I feel that with the cultural difference and the language barrier, there are many things that we don't know. This makes our children's lives that much harder. Unlike white children whose parents can tell them what to do—they already have that experience, but we don't have that experience. So I think that it will be difficult for our children, and parents really need to think about how to...get more knowledge and more resources to help them and our community….
>
> Parent B (female): When I brought that up [about being able to borrow books to bring home], the point was that we just don't know what rights (options) we have… They [schools] don't think that this is something they need to tell us… So I really want them to provide us with this information so that we can personally go to the government and ask for these things. (*Seattle Design Circle #2*)

In these two quotes we can see that Parent A & B were attuned to the terms set by the school systems and dominant society. They did not identify that their own experiences or knowledges as helpful to their children particularly as compared to white children. They did not see their own terms as relevant to change making. Instead they position knowledge and experiences outside of their own as what is needed to help their children and community. We do see that Parent B wants to be able to advocate for herself directly to those she has identified in systems as having power and in trying to understand the options they have as determined by systems. While of course there may be important practicability to this stance, it reflects a within systems theory of change. Over the course of the co-design in this same group, Parent C comes to narrate a significant difference in perspective, one we suggest is reflective of family and community centric theories of change. She reflected:

> Parent C (female): Before coming to this group, I just settled for what was given to me. But after this meeting—after troubling you all to teach us how to use our voices– –I know that I can now think about what I want and what I need. I can really dream. (Seattle Design Circle #3)

The shift this parent narrates - one from settling for what given to her to feeling she can "now think about what she wants and what she needs – is reflective of a co-design circle that enacted particular theories of change and cultivated this parent's personal form of rhetorical sovereignty. One in which she came to feel like her own perspectives were important and she could decide for herself what she wanted and needed. Importantly, she moves beyond that to even suggest she know feels like she "can really dream." Lyons (2000) work argues that a key piece of rhetorical sovereignty is not only redressing or reviving past and present, but also about the possible. Parent C here has moved from accepting the terms set for her by others to dreaming futures on her own terms.

As scholars, educational leaders in school systems, as well as community based educational leaders engaged in co-design, we must continually ask: what are the terms of engagement and who are they constructed by? Are we deliberately or unintentionally engaged in rhetorical imperialism in the context of co-design? What practices cultivate and support rhetorical sovereignty in co-design? Indeed, Lyons (2000) argues that "rhetorical sovereignty requires more than a renewed commitment to listening and learning; it also requires a radical rethinking of how and what we teach" (p. 450). In our context, it means radically rethinking how and what we facilitate during co-design as well as vigilant awareness of the ongoing status quo narratives of both problems and solutions and the ways in which historically shaped power dynamics – where powerful institutions and their actants set the terms – continue to be regenerated in current practices. Thus, a key implication for this finding is the need for educational leaders to have opportunities to recognize and experience theories of change beyond institutional forms, as well to experience and engage in practices grounded in familial and community

theories of change and possibility. This requires longer term relations and interactions than conventional forms of listening sessions can cultivate or sustain.

3. Sustained Engagement Enabled Shifts toward Reimagining and Making Anew

While we observed crucial distinctions between design circles that adopted systems-centered logics driven by deficit-based conceptions of families or institutional pragmatics, we also noticed a shift over time towards theories of change that sought to reclaim or reimagine education on the terms of families and communities. That is, across design circles and contexts, sustained engagement with nondominant families and communities opened conversations about transformative possibilities *beyond* status-quo systems. When we analyzed the design circles over time, a marked pattern emerged, as shown in Figure 3. Particularly, the design circles that continued into a fourth session engaged with theories of change driven less by institutional constraints and logics but were centered more in the priorities, power, and agency of families and communities in reclaiming systems of education or reimagining them entirely.

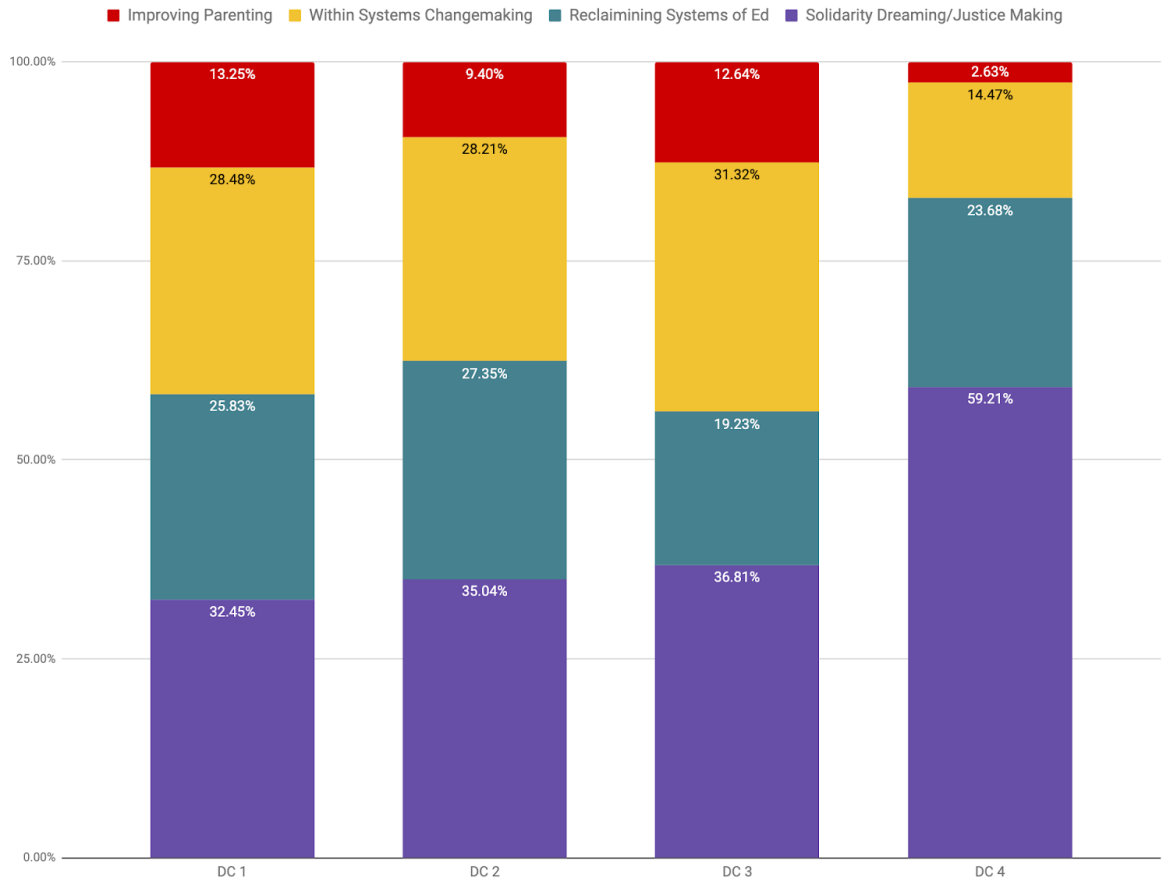

Figure 3. Percentage of theories of change discussed across all collaboratives, over time (DC=Design Circle)

The emergence of more transformative theories of change showed that the design circles engendered the growth of shared conceptions of change consistent with the intentional aim of solidarity-driven codesign. When we invited others to take up design circles, we did so in a deliberate effort to move beyond conventional focus groups or single family engagements which comprise the

norm in formal systems. While purporting to enable systems to "listen" to families, typical engagement formats tend to foster ahistoric, rigidly role-bound interactions between families and educators, replicate powered positionings (across roles, formal education, race, class, language, gender, etc.) and reproduce readily-accessible dominant narratives and explanations grounded in systems-defined terms about the purposes and aims of education. In this sense, then, the design circles achieved their aim in disrupting dominant logics and creating spaces that enabled families and educators to deepen their conversations over time and open the range of imagined possibilities for change. Through the codesign of the FLDC initiative itself, we came to refer to these as "aperturas" after the notion developed in critical pedagogy contexts – not simply openings but strategic entryways or portals into fundamentally different conceptualizations and potential solutions towards community-determined aims (Ishimaru & Bang, 2016). In Spanish, "aperturas" also connote tightness or pressure points, and the FLDC network invoked this term to highlight cracks in the dominant paradigm that provide an opening for collective change to reimagine education within particular communities in a specific sociopolitical and racial-historical moment.

The expansion toward solidarity-dreaming theories of change over time also represents a more profound emergence, however. That is, although these TOCs were present in a few collaboratives that began with community-based questions about wellbeing and justice, solidarity dreaming emerged and grew over time, particularly by the third and fourth design circles in a given context (notably, the sites that did not elect to extend into a fourth design circle were largely those dominated by remediation paradigms and systems-centered logics, as per the prior finding). Although the starting point and community contexts of design circles varied, the communities who sustained their engagements expanded their collective theorizing to examine different potential avenues of change related to growing humanizing, familial relations, building from and evolving cultural and community practices, and prioritizing time and space for healing and reimagining. As seen in Figure 3, the trajectory of design conversations shifted over time, particularly towards the third and fourth design circle, to reflect a greater incidence of theories focused on reclaiming systems and solidarity and justice-dreaming.

Five collaboratives continued into a fourth design circle, primarily because the designers themselves felt the need to extend or continue their conversations with one another (see Figure 4). Regardless of where they started their explorations, these collaboratives all tended, over time, to deepen those theories of change, particularly towards approaches that sought to build from community-based or cultural forms of education towards solidarity and justice-dreaming. For example, the Indigenous Chicago design circle talked about the crucial role of elders as teachers, asking themselves "How will I be a good elder?" (see Bang et al., forthcoming, in the summer JFDE special issue). Lani and Cynthia discussed their experiences learning from elders and the need to reclaim that form of learning as a routine practice in educational spaces:

> Lani: I feel like we should bring them [elders] in. Have our elders come share, not just from us, with us that they care so much more. There's nothing like I've said this before, there's nothing like it went apart from this. It works in so many ways. I know when my grandmother comes to share, she could still talk about the same topic perhaps but they will always have a different perspective of how to deliver it. I'm always amazed at that. It's humbling.
>
> Cynthia: I think a lot of times too our elders feel neglected as far as maybe not as well come in certain spaces or that their knowledge isn't really priced and valued. I think especially too with all the things going on in this world that we should really invite our elders more to be with us, so we can learn from them…just the thought of how the elders really do invest into our people, our youth especially. Not only teaching us just stories and wisdom, but the act of just keeping the traditional life something that what

some people think oh it's just on dancing but it's the way of our people. It teaches us humility. It teaches us grace. It teaches us about the community. It teaches us a lot about ourselves and how to become people to help make a difference for 7 generations. It also too gives me an idea more of like how I want to reach out to the community and help them. Maybe that will be me someday.

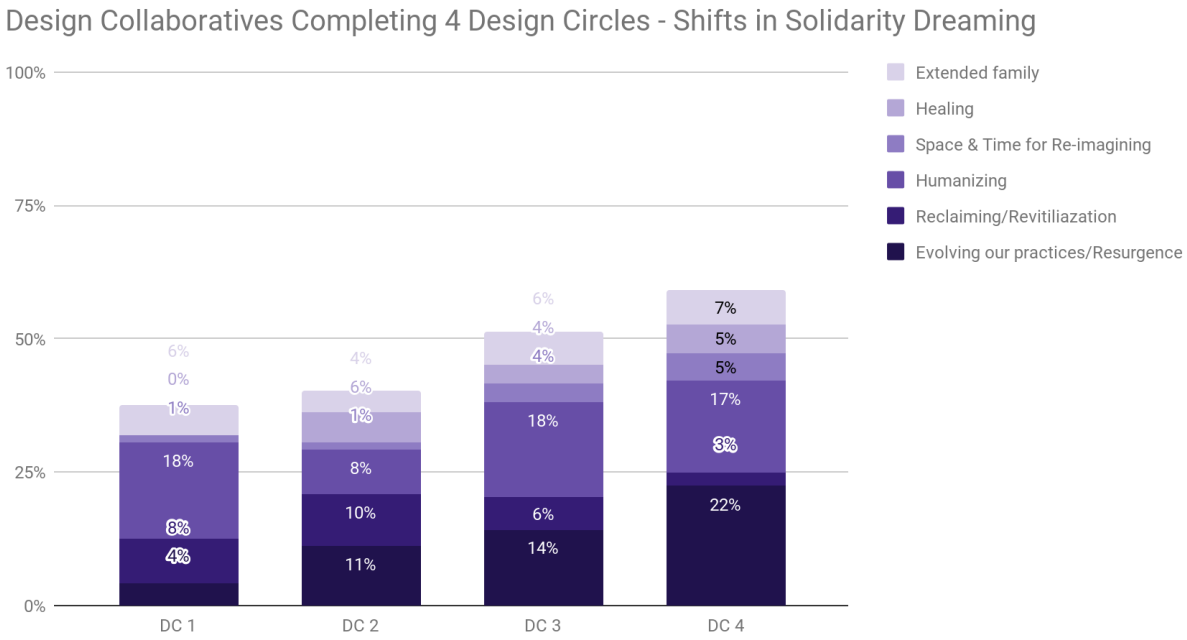

Figure 4. Shifts in solidarity-dreaming theories of change across engagements for collaboratives that conducted 4 design circles (Southfield, Salt Lake City, Indigenous Chicago, Detroit, Persian School)

Codesign theorizing over time also opened insights about organizational practices and the possibilities for rooting change-making in families' experiences and priorities, rather than systems-centered solutions. In Detroit, the organizing group took up a more transformative theory of change related to evolving their own practices in identifying campaigns using research tools (Wilson et al., 2018). The research collaborative between university-based scholars and youth and parent leaders in an organizing group introduced qualitative data collection, such as focus groups, and named organizing one-on-ones as tools for better understanding what families and communities want, not just what the problems are. One of the organizers reflected on their past campaign, and realized that they might have advocated for different kinds of solutions "with special ed, if we had talked to a bunch of our members, and learned that their experience with special ed or their concern with special ed was a lot about being pushed out of schools, or not being let into schools, [that] it wasn't as much about getting resources in [Detroit Public Schools] or something." In their case, evolving their practices meant ensuring organizational leaders took the time to understand members' experiences and insights, rather than presuming their funding-focused policy solutions would address families' priorities.

We wondered whether design conversations with only nondominant families and community leaders as participants (not educators or systems leaders) were simply more likely to grow into transformative possibilities, but this hypothesis was not supported by our analyses. Notably, the shift towards solidarity-dreaming theories of change was not confined to community-based contexts or design circles with only families and community members as participants. In fact, a couple of circles

with only parents and families struggled to move beyond within-systems change. Yet in both Southfield and Salt Lake City, educators and administrators were part of the conversation from the beginning, and both grew their beyond-systems theories of change. For instance, in Southfield, principals and parents shared emotional stories of their own struggles and aspirations, eventually referring to each other as "Aunt" and "Uncle" in relation to the children they were all endeavoring to raise together. Alma, a principal, explained that her own role as a mother was essential to her formal role:

> Alma: I think there's just stuff. Sometimes I'm in my formal role I would deal with a lot of people that by the time they got to me they were already on 10 or it was urgent. I had a pile of urgent already. What I have learned to do is stop, listen and I always try to remember this may be our student but this is their child and I'm a mother so I channel that same energy. I'm a firm believer of that whole reciprocity. What you put out you'll return. Whatever I want from my children I try to give to other people's children.

The relationships built through the deep listening in the design circles in Southfield began to approach kinship relations, something Derrick Lopez, the facilitator and assistant superintendent at the time, called moving from "positionship to relationship." Thus, despite vastly different roles of participants in each design circle, the design decisions and facilitative moves were crucial in opening deeper relationality and theorizing over time towards solidarities and rhetorical sovereignty.

Conclusions and Implications

As the field of education continues to expand the forms of practice and methods (e.g. research-practice and research-community partnerships) in which engagement between scholars, practitioners, families and communities are routinized, there are critical questions about the nature and forms of those engagements. Indeed, previous scholarship has demonstrated that some forms of institutionally-based family engagement have been implemented in ways that have increased demands of familial participation in ways that further disadvantage families and communities who have been least well served by educational systems (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Valdez, 1996).

Theorizing has never solely been the domain of scholars or philosophers; theorizing is always happening, whether or not we recognize it as such, and prior work has highlighted the complex insights that parents, families and communities of color can bring to our theorizing of racial injustices in education (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2017). This study suggests that codesigners can take up conceptual theories of change that echo or reify dominant institutional logics as a form of rhetorical imperialism (Lyons, 2000) – such as remediating so-called "inherent deficiencies" of youth and families of color or assimilative efforts to increase access and representation in the status quo system. But these same codesigners can also evolve their theorizing over time to move towards rhetorical sovereignty, seeding their visions for educational futures on family and community grounds that reclaim systems or foster healing, revitalize cultural practices, and evolve new solidarity-driven approaches within and between communities. Thus, the theory of change "families," terms of engagement, and trajectories of codesign theorizing offer a broad framework for how we might shape and facilitate towards solidarity-driven designs that emerge from family, community and educator deliberations about educational justice and community wellbeing.

This framework for cultivating solidarity-driven theories of change and rhetorical sovereignty with families and communities of color, in turn, offers implications for educational leaders as they have increasingly begun to recognize that efforts to engage families and communities are crucial to pursuing racial justice in education. We elaborate some foundational but heretofore empirically underexamined conditions and groundings for solidarity-driven codesign. First, leaders should listen

and facilitate for multiplicities and support participants in holding multiple scales and possible ways forward. The refusal of singularities existed across all our collaboratives, which suggests that facilitators need only encourage these multiple conceptions rather than insist on universals, which can be challenging to normative expectations of leaders to provide definitive, singular solutions. Leaders can also help codesigners to notice and shift beyond readily available institutional logics and scripts – or "solutions on demand" (Martin, 2015) – and develop the politicized trust necessary for deeper theorizing and social dreaming that builds from family and community grounds, rather than accepting only the "crumbs" in deference to institutional pragmatics of what we can imagine systems granting communities. Lastly, dreaming and making has been ceded for over four or five generations, so imagining beyond the current system is a practice that takes time as well as care, so as to avoid merely renarrating trauma. We argue that a group's ability to grapple with tensions across multiple scales necessitates relationality nurtured over time. Sustained engagement – rather than one-time listening sessions or focus groups - can foster relational theorizing towards more transformative aims.

Lest co-design (ironically) become the next "silver bullet" in education reform, we caution that the initial process in these communities constituted a modest – though critical – step forward in enabling local family and community collaboratives to build their long-term capacity to make change over time. Tracking and supporting co-design processes across far-flung urban, suburban and rural geographies, distinct racial, cultural and linguistic histories, and particular community contexts entailed significant challenges, constant adaptation, and inevitable tensions. Despite the diversity of the collaboratives, though, the dominant structures of US schooling and deficit-based assumptions about nondominant families and communities in education were surprisingly consistent and often reasserted themselves amidst efforts to imagine alternatives.

Lastly, theorizing in local communities does not happen in a vacuum. We need to better understand both the micro-level facilitative moves that shape codesign trajectories as well as the broader sociopolitical and racial dynamics – such as the 2017 election, the Muslim "ban," anti-Black violence, immigration policies and raids, and of course, the global pandemic, racial reckonings and pushback. All of these contexts may profoundly shape local theorizing and communities' capacities to imagine possibilities for transformative change. In the companion pieces across the special sections focused on the work of the Family Leadership Design Collaborative, our partner collaboratives offer nuanced portrayals of how these theories of change played out in specific racial and sociopolitical contexts as they co-designed school decision-making and humanizing relations with Latinx immigrant families and educators in West Salt Lake City (Kuttner et al., 2022); intergenerational learning and parenting for complex personhood, race and identities in the Chicago Iranian diaspora (Vossoughi, 2022); Black and Brown parent solidarities to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline in Los Angeles (this issue, Chin et al.); and intergenerational cultural learning to "raise good elders" in Chicago global Indigenous communities (Bang et al., forthcoming). In tandem with Khalifa and Abdi's closing commentary (this issue) reflecting on both the entanglements of coloniality and the possibilities of centering collective dreaming in ancestral and community knowledges, it is our hope that these ongoing inquiries and emergent framework will support educational and community leaders across contexts in cultivating solidarity-driven codesign with youth, families and communities of color and building our collective capacities to imagine and realize educational justice and wellbeing.

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APPENDIX A: Community Design Circle Descriptions		
Geography	**Central Aim of the Collaborative**	**Co-Designers**
Southeast Seattle, WA	Toisanese Dreams Reshaping Seattle Schools Toisanese (Chinese) families used data from a community survey of families' experiences with Seattle Public Schools and their own stories to identify priorities and advocate with city and district staff for policy changes to enable families to communicate their dreams and needs for their children and their schools.	- Partners: Southeast Seattle Education Coalition, Chinese Information Service Center, & University of Washington - 15-20 Chinese American families - Languages: Toisanese, Cantonese, Mandarin, English
Salem-Keizer, OR	Family-School Collaboration to Support Immigrant Communities Latinx families, community organizers, and school district personnel addressed Latinx parents' experiences and struggles to support their children, particularly in the current political climate. They discussed aggressions faced by their	- Partners: Salem-Keizer Coalition for Equality and University of Oregon - 8-10 Latinx families & parent leaders - Languages: Spanish

	community and children in schools and sought to explore how schools protect Latinx students and address the fear experienced by many.	
South Los Angeles, CA	<u>Humanizing Parent-Teacher Interactions</u> Black and Brown parents reimagined moment-to-moment parent-teacher interactions towards more humanizing relationships in work to address racism and the school-to-prison pipeline.	- Partners: CADRE and University of California, Los Angeles - 12-15 Black & brown CADRE parent leaders - Languages: Spanish, English
West Salt Lake City, UT	<u>Re-imagining School Community Councils</u> Latinx parents, community leaders, and school and district staff re-envisioned the purpose and function of an existing school-based resource and decision-making body, School Community Councils (SCCs)..	- Partners: West Salt Lake City School District, University Neighborhood Partners, University of Utah - 10 families & 10 educators - Languages: Spanish & English
Greenville, MS	<u>Collaborating to Support Early Child Education</u> Early childhood, P-12, and higher	- Partners: Citizens for a Better Greenville, Greenville Public Schools, Head Start,

	education administrators and educators from federal, state, city, and community institutions examined how to increase ECE participation in Greenville, support ECE teachers in working with families, and address a long history of underfunding, which perpetuates the disenfranchisement of rural black communities.	Mississippi Valley State Univ., Bates College - 13 District educators & administrators, childcare providers, higher ed faculty, black community leader - Language: English
Chicago, IL	<u>Building Global Indigeneity</u> Indigenous parent and community leaders took up global Indigenous identities and built solidarities across multiple Indigenous communities to explore how they might "bend the river" - or engage intergenerational change from a historicized view.	- Partners: Aloha Center, the American Indian Center, Native American Support Program at the University of Illinois, Chicago, Northwestern University - Languages: English
Chicago, IL	<u>Social Justice in an Iranian School Context</u> Iranian parents in a community-based setting envisioned, designed, and sustained efforts to support Iranian diaspora youth	- Partners: Chicago Persian School and Northwestern University - 8-10 Iranian youth, parents, & grandparents

	and families, particularly in the current context of racism and Islamaphobia.	- Languages: Persian (with English)
Southfield, MI	Shifting from "Position-ship" to "Relationship" in School Leadership - Family Interactions Principals and parents in the Southfield Public School district addressed the unequal power dynamics between leaders and families to co-develop a framework for a relationship built on mutual trust and respect.	- Partners: Southfield Public Schools - 6 Black parents, 6 principals (5 Black & 1 white) - Language: English
Detroit, MI	Community Organizing Research Community organizers and university researchers collaborated to marshal educational data and research in intergenerational community organizing strategies to advocate for school change at local and state levels.	- Partners: 482Forward and University of Michigan - 6-8 youth & parent leaders, 2-3 org staff, 3 add'l researchers - Language: English
Central Falls, RI	Building Cross-Race/Cultural Parenting Solidarities Parents in a small New England district	- Partners: Central Falls School District & Annenberg Institute for

	examined deficit-based mindsets and hierarchical roles in district family engagement and envisioned collective parenting approaches towards community well-being.	Education Reform - 8-10 mothers (multiracial) - Language: Spanish & English

Appendix B: Theories of Change Identified during Community Design Circles			
TOCs Families	**Theory of Change**	**Definition**	**Coded**
Solidarity-dreaming & Justice Making	**Evolving our Practices/Resurgence**	Families/communities/educators need to develop and/or learn new practices for education.	10.%
	Creating/Maintaining Space and Time for Reimagining	We need resources and spaces in order to imagine and enact new possibilities	2.47%
	Healing	We need to heal from or attend to historical and ongoing traumas.	2.3% 13 excerpts
	Humanizing Relationships	We need to see each other as humans, respect each other's rights as humans, and take each others' perspectives	13.3%
	Growing Extended Families	We need to take care of each other as family.	4.4%
	Reclaiming/Revitalizing Cultural Practices	Families and communities need to reclaim or revive cultural practices, values, languages, etc.	5.3%

Reclaiming Our Systems	**Racial Socialization/ Protecting from Systemic Harm**	Families need to help socialize children into their cultural communities and educate/protect them from systemic harm	9.1%
	Expanding Conception of the Problem	We need to better understand the context, issues, systems, and problems	
	Developing Parent/Community Advocacy and Organizing	We need to empower or train families and communities to advocate for their children and demand change.	12.4%
Within-Systems Change	**Changing Mindsets/Perceptions**	We need educators/systems leaders to change their perceptions or beliefs about families and communities. And vice versa.	7.5% 41 excerpts
	Aligning Interests		4.8%
	Increasing Access/Inclusion	We need better access/inclusion processes, practices, tools to increase participation or engagement of people who are typically dis-engaged	9.3%

	Increasing Representation	We need more diverse leadership or representative leadership from our communities	3.6
	Educating Families & Communities	We need to educate families on how systems work as is in order to change them	
Improving Parent Capacity	**Fixing Families & Communities**	We need to train parents how to prepare their children socially and academically	5.1%
	Coordinating Social Services & Programs	Organizations or institutions need to coordinate services or programs aimed at children and families	5.5% 29 excerpts

Rescue from Coloniality? The Power of Dreaming

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Introduction

In this essay, we reflect on the context and promise of Codesign and Theories of Change (TOC). Throughout my (MK) academic career, the Codesign work undertaken by the Family Leadership Design Collaborative (FLDC) has been one of the most inspirational, humanizing, and anti-colonial academic projects in which I have engaged or witnessed. Our conveners, two women of Indigenous/Italian and Asian American descent, honored and humanized the knowledges and voices of all those who contributed to the Codesign – parents, community leaders and advocates, researchers, school leaders, and students. This is unusual in Western educational spaces that sit on colonial histories. The activities in the Codesign were designed to foster thinking and research outside of traditional educational structures and histories. This type of Codesign is also unusual in that it represents a break from the school-centric past in which people in the US typically confine themselves to dreaming within the educational histories and technologies. The papers in this two-part special issue all speak to how the Indigenous/ancestral knowledges can be centered in the relationships that communities have with schools.

Dr. Nimo Abdi graciously serves as co-writer, co-thinker, and co-theorizer for this piece. Her background as a non-Westerner, as a Somali (African) refugee to colonized Western space, and as an educator, as a mother, and as a scholar interested in Indigenous (non-White/non-western) forms of motherhood will push us into a dreaming space that we, as Westerners, may not have found ourselves. From this point forward, the writing is our combined voice. We have decided to focus on three elements of this work: one, we explore ways to visiblize coloniality within and throughout schooling; two, we theorize into the most common and, in our view the most promising, TOC that emerged from Drs. Ishimaru's and Bang's research with the FLDC Codesign project—*Solidarity Dreaming*[1] (Ishimaru & Bang, 2022); here we think through what the "solidarity" as well as the "dreaming" might

[1] When taken together, the term Solidarity Dreaming represents a specific and unique type of community-based liberation built on ancestral knowledge that comes directly from Minoritized peoples. For this reason, we also seek to hyper-visiblize this term. To raise the status of Solidarity Dreaming will hopefully put it at the center of how communities are formed and recreate it.

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mean in this term. And three, we conclude with thoughts around what solidary and collaboration must mean for educators and schools.

Why Co-Design? Visibilizing Invisibilized Coloniality Schooling in Plain Sight

Many parents and youth from Black, Indigenous, and communities of color feel assaulted and devalued in the current moment, and unfortunately, at every earlier moment in U.S. history. The politicized assault on Critical Race Theory (CRT) represents a broader sentiment of anti-Blackness, where many have become very comfortable with public displays of bigotry and anger when forced to come to terms with the dehumanization of Black and Indigenous students in school. But it isn't only White conservatives that have demonstrated racial and ethnic bigotry and dehumanization. In fact, anti-Blackness/anti-Indigeneity was on full display on the lips of Nury Martinez, the democratic, Latina city council president in Los Angeles. She encouraged physical violence against a Black male child that, in her view, "looks like a monkey;" and suggested that Indigenous people are "ugly" and wondered what village those "little short dark people" were from?"

This complicates and pushes understandings that all "people of color" are automatically in solidarity. Or that bigotry is not common among liberals or people associated with leftist politics. In fact, it requires a much deeper search for what solidarity might mean. Indeed, some of the most egregious data around discipline and academic performance of Indigenous and Black students, is in liberal-leaning states in the Pacific Northwest, Midwest, and East. This signals a very urgent need for solidarity across differences within non-dominant communities. But also, it suggests that solidarity must be principled. It also reminds us that educators must visibilize how Coloniality[2] reinforces colonial hierarchies in schools and in society at large. The logics, practices, and assumptions that came with Colonialism is, in many ways, still present in current societies and organizations (Coloniality). Practices of Coloniality often inflicts that same pain and damage as colonial administrations once did, but now it is unnoticed, seen as normal, or even as good. Coloniality is inivisibilized in the logics of modern schooling and stands in direct opposition to Codesign, humanization, community self-determination, and Solidarity Dreaming. For us, Coloniality is expressed both in the discursive and in the material, and must be confronted in both spaces. Let us visibilize it, as an important first step in the journey of Solidarity Dreaming.

Coloniality as Discursive and Embodied

When educators talk about "systems of oppression," there are often vague references to power relationships or random displays of equity data. To dream forward, we often must look back. In our view, it is important to name and describe colonial logics that are represented in schooling practices

[2] In this commentary, we use a capital letter C in employing the term Coloniality. For us, this term is unique, but historically relevant as it signifies a process, through which people are made up and subjected to centuries of invisiblized oppressions. Our decision to capitalize this word helps us highlight and hyper-visibilize this process, with the hopes that community members and educators are able to confront Coloniality in its many forms.

from neoliberal and to even social justice practices. While this list is not exhaustive, here are few of the more prevalent forms of colonial representation in and around schools.

1. **Colonized "Acceptable" Resistance.** Social justice and community liberation practices that are not aligned with, or emanate from, Western epistemologies and ontologies are either overlooked or not recognized by those engaged in social justice and anti-racist work in schools. This speaks to the complex ways that Westernization and colonization have permeated into the discursive realities of even those from minoritized communities and critically-inclined White allies. One example is the tendency to affirm only knowledge systems and practices that are secular oriented by many anti-racist workers. This negation or downplaying of religious and spiritual oriented practices that inform ethics of kinship and relationality within families and communities is not valued as legitimate knowledge systems that offer possibilities for dreaming and community building. This is so because these ethics are not considered useful in the material and secular world of Western capitalism. Similarly, it entails only affirming as knowledge that which is "observable" and not known through what is felt or communally intuited. We find the Codesign emphasis on respect for elders, and the prioritization of ancestral and intergenerational knowledge helpful as it opens up opportunities for theorizing and engaging the epistemic and ontological realities of non-dominant communities in a much deeper way than a mere lip-serving for the relevance of non-Western knowledge. This type of analysis provides an inquiry that goes beyond critique and mere response to colonization and domination, and instead takes community knowledge both as a starting and ending point for theory and practice (Ishimaru & Bang, 2022).

2. **Capitalism or Collectivism?** Western capitalism has required an individualized freedom and competition that has negated the lived collectivism that Black and Indigenous peoples have always embodied. Capitalism and resulting governmentality require the State as the arbiter of all affairs of people, not people themselves (community). Notions of freedom that fail to take into account the wellbeing of the collective over that of individual choices/practices are widespread. This is why it is so easy for educators to take school policy as a starting point for school-community engagement practices, and not community histories. Efforts to codesign need to highlight the need for engaging individualism not only as Western and colonial orientation but as a complex phenomenon that requires a reimagining of educational provisions and services. For instance, many families from non-dominant communities are ontologically inclined to collectivist existence, and teach their children communal practices of collaboration, where the "We" takes precedence over "I." Yet, they also understand that colonial institutions require one to compete for resources and power. Hence, the work of Codesign and solidarity building takes into account the worries of families and communities over an ever-shrinking labor market and environmental challenges that often leave their offspring underemployed, and disproportionately exposed to poverty and incarceration. It seems that in theory, collectivism is often evoked as a lofty ideal regarding the educational needs of Indigenous and non-dominant communities, while those with power continue to

benefit in a capitalist society. Hence, a collectivist orientation to anti-colonial educational reimagining requires a much deeper commitment that puts in place policies that ensure equitable access to resources and provisions in education, labor market, health care, and the legal system, etc. We find Maisie Chin's (2023, this issue) work helpful because she organizes parents to work collectively against anti-Black school policies that are often designed to pit parents against one another for resources; the organization she leads, CADRE, fights against schools' habit of using working class Black children and families as the measure of undesirability. Chin's work demonstrates the emotional labor required in delinking from the coloniality of schooling as parents reorient themselves into Indigenous and ancestral practices of collectivism that prioritize the collective over the individual across racial and ethnic diversity. By seeing, loving, and advocating all children as their own, parents in Chin's work are engaged in decolonial dreaming (see also Abdi, 2022).

3. **Top-Down, School-Centric Knowledge.** Colonial models of schools understood subaltern peoples to be on a spectrum between savage human and non-human. So, depending on how they were defined as beings, they were either to be controlled or desavagized and schools played a central role in this. In modern Coloniality logics of schooling, this belief is represented in the many deficit discourses that portray community knowledge as either harmful or non-existent. Thus, many beginning teachers see students (and community peoples, parents, etc.) as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge (intended to civilize them).

   Aggressive State policies to assimilate non-Western, non-white, and working-class children have evolved over time from forced removal of Native American and enslaved African children either into boarding schools or onto the slave auction, to contemporary welfare policies that meant to punish poor and immigrant families of color. School-community engagement work is influenced by neoliberal policies that often blame communities of color and working people's parenting style for the high poverty and unemployment rates in society (Raey, 1989). Contrary to its raced and gendered nature, parent-school relations are often talked about as a race and gender neutral initiative. Both research and experience teach us that it is mostly mothers who are involved in overseeing children's learning in schools. In particular, we learned a great deal from the works of BIPOC women, and mother scholars that schools often marginalize them regardless of class and educational status.

   The frustrations, erasure and hostility reported by many BIPOC mothers indicate the impossibility of reconciling the quest for humanizing learning experiences for their children and the state's assimilation agenda. So, when BIPOC mothers resist the state's assimilationist agenda by seeking power to advocate for their children, they are framed as combative, hostile and/or indifferent to their children's educational success by schools (Abdi, 2022).

   Codesign efforts are pertinent and urgently needed in school-parent relations because they offer a counternarrative of how Black, Indigenous and other marginalized mothers support children's education. For example, instead of focusing on how mothers are positioned within school, a more helpful way is to think about how gender (and its intersection with race) itself is a colonial construct that is used to erase women's contribution to family and social life

(Abdi, 2022). This is so because Western conceptions of gender are not universal. Therefore, concepts like mother and motherhood look different and attend to different sets of ethos, and ethical concerns within Indigenous and non-dominant families and communities. For instance, motherhood in Indigenous African tradition encompasses both the material and the spiritual sphere. In this view, motherhood as an institution has social, and political implications. So, when teachers and administrators in US schools infantilize, and disrespect an immigrant Somali mother, they are in a sense engaging both discursive and material violence on that family and community (Abdi, 2022).

Coloniality as Organizational and Material

The colonial hierarchy is also reinforced through the actual structures and resources of organizations. The physical and organizational structures of schooling, including the relationship with parents and youth, the school design and location all represent colonial understandings of parents and youth and hierarchies of school authority. In fact, the very notion that schools should be the primary method of educating children is indeed a colonial logic. Below are descriptions of organizational and material instances of Coloniality.

1. **Purpose of schooling vs. education**. For Black and Indigenous, it is not only a matter of what school should be, but why school should be. Schools have been used to destroy Indigenous communities, to exclude African enslaved from "official" learning, and used by former slaves to liberate their communities! Given such extreme variance in the uses of schools, it is important that the conversation focus on education and learning for the well-being (liberation) of community, and not only on the notion of "school." In other words, it is not merely about school, but about how schools are situated in the long histories of communities they serve. In his essay on what Black community responses might be to schooling during Covid and the murder of George Floyd, Brian Lozenski (2021) posited the following:

> "Risk is always unequally distributed to those on the margins. For Black communities, physical and/or psychological risk was always a calculation in the pursuit of education. What remained variable was the reward, or the transmutation of that risk into a dramatically improved lived experience, or what some have articulated as 'liberation'" (Lozenski, 2021, p. 2).

We understand this to mean that education and the transmission of knowledge has meant a completely different meaning for Black and Indigenous peoples. It was not about the accumulation of wealth or self-interest. Rather, the purpose of education has always been to preserve and to improve the collective. And so should be schools. Codesign unearthed Collective Dreaming that has occurred among BIPOC community folk, despite the Colonization and Coloniality having such a prominent role in schools.

2. **Knowledge definitions and measurement.** That knowledge and literacy must be printed, and that it must be measured, and that students must be compared to each other (or the whole) are all western inventions of knowledge transmission. It is not for us here, to assess value to Western ways of knowing as much as it is to visibilize it as Western. It is also useful to know that Western knowledge associated with schooling has often been utilized, promoted and practiced to dominate people, lands, and resources.

3. **In Power we Trust?** Colonialists, and those that initiated schools in the West, believed that they had the power to judge, but to never be judged; that they could describe Indigenous students, but never had to subject themselves to being described; and that they could classify, but never be classified by subjects. Thus, the power to decide who is intelligent, learning, or well-behaved all emanate from a history of domination and control. This power has been invisibilized and embedded into the very job description and scopes of work of modern-day school leaders and educators. This type of power allowed educators in Indian schools to justify the destruction of Indigenous culture and language, and Indigenous lives. Similar expressions of power exist in schools today, such as tracking and standardized testing.

4. **Disentanglement of Schools from Students' Political Lives.** While we do not suggest that educators and leaders in schools politically indoctrinate students with governmental politics, we do suggest that schools should neither direct students to be exclusively individualistic, nor to define success in terms of grades and wealth. In fact, there are many issues that will directly impact students who are in school now for the next 50 years, and most schools are "apolitical" around those issues, especially if they are critical of U.S. government behaviors; issues like continuous preemptive war and the toppling of governments around the world, an extreme concentration of wealth for the ultra-rich, America's sustained war of anti-Blackness, global recessions that are driven by textbook US economic policies, diminishing health care opportunities for the Nation's most underserved, and the climate-based, slow-motion killing of planet Earth are all issues rarely even discussed in schools, not to mention taken up. There are notable exceptions to this.

5. **Parent "Training" Programs**. Most large school districts, and many well-funded non-profit organizations, have highlighted and promoted the practice of "training" parents to be good stewards of their children that are enrolled as students in schools. The corollary and subtext is often that whatever knowledge and parenting skills that the parents arrived in schools already possessing, is useless if not damaging. This colonial logic was also seen in earlier periods of North American history, as Indigenous children were prevented from even seeing their parents. And if they imitated their parents, their lives could be, and were often, taken. Parent training programs often pushed parents to help their children comply with state-sanctioned policies that surveilled and punished parents from non-dominant and working-class backgrounds. And because they couldn't see the cultural assets and agency of parents, they were deemed deficient and in need of training.

6. **Monitoring and Surveillance**. Terms like, 'hall monitors' and 'surveillance cameras' seem normal and are as commonplace as the 'school bell' or 'classroom management.' But educators must be aware that the physical structures and those that maintain those structures mirror understandings of earlier practices in colonial history. Practices of surveillance are met with caution or suspicion for many BIPOC students and their families. For students to accept they are constantly being watched also means that they accept that they need to be watched. And what is the supporting narrative of people that always need to be watched? Monitoring and surveillance are also often connected to behavior modification of BIPOC students, most of which has nothing at all to do with learning.

7. **Tokenizing Voice for Imperial Goals**. This is perhaps one of the biggest disappointments for us, because a tokenization of voice is often used by organizations to co-opt agency and liberation. Peaceful or compliant resistance voices are sought out and lifted up, so that colonizing agents can use the good voice to mute voices that demand revolutionary change. That is not to say that some BIPOC voices lack agency or are inauthentic. Rather we problematize educators that use BIPOC voices in exoticizing and tokenizing ways, and not for community self-determination or liberation. In other words, schools must not use 'comfortable' or 'peaceful' community voices to mute other community voices that might countervail, resist, or challenge the status quo in schools.

Why CoDesign? Solidarity Dreaming: What Codesigned education could look like for Communities and School

> "This group of 'Theories of Change' decentered the system entirely and focused on community and culturally-based forms of learning and education as a central resource or starting point for reimagining or making education anew. Codesigners talked about creating or maintaining space and time for reimagining education, humanizing each other, revitalizing and evolving cultural and community practices of education, growing kinship relations across roles and communities, and healing in communities" (Ishimaru & Bang, 2022, p. 23-24).

It is not surprising that Solidarity Dreaming was the most often imagined TOC across the FLDC Codesign activities because we know that humans will constantly seek the power to define their own existences and humanity. We spent the first part of this paper visibilizing aspects of Coloniality in/around schools and communities because the removal of perpetual colonial practices is the first step that frees us to Dream. Muhammad went to culturally-affirming schools that were set up to critique White supremacy and protect Black humanity. In her formative education, Nimo went to public schools in Somalia that emphasized decolonization. In the 1970s and 1980s, Somalia was one of few Sub-Saharan African countries that replaced all colonial languages in the K-12 curriculum and implemented Indigenous language as the medium for instruction. She studied all subjects in Somali

and from a Somali stand point, with strong emphasis on both oral and print literacy. Schooling was affirming for her, because teaching and learning were based on a relational ethics that drew on Somali epistemologies of respect for elders and knowledge bearers (teachers), as well as knowledge seekers (students), where teachers were said to be "second parents". This type of reciprocal relationality facilitates the creation of learning spaces that lean on ethical and spiritual relationality.

Though Black and Indigenous children attend schools with practices built on Coloniality, BIPOC parents still have agency to push and mold these same schools. We are not oblivious to the fact that *Dreaming* and then *Changing* will take time. But as we highlight the importance of Dreaming, we remember that educators in schools do not know better than parents what is best for their children's diet, nor their health, spirituality, and nor their education. This commentary takes up the prospect and potential, indeed the Dreaming, made possible through Codesign and Solidarity Dreaming. Robin D. Kelley suggests that we are capable of embracing but moving beyond protest, and into molding new human beings. And we must collectively make space for all those Dreaming, without colonial interruptions or boundaries. Though there are no limits in Dreaming, we focus our conversation around dreaming in communities, and in regards to learning and education.

The first part of this paper briefly touched on ways colonial practices continue to show up and dictate teaching, structures, contexts, and relationships in and around schools. BIPOC peoples who resist colonial domination in the West do not put their effort into building military prowess to rival that of Western powers. However, they can absolutely outmatch and overcome Western powers in their ability to constantly envision and work for a world that holds up all of our humanities—Solidarity Dreaming. We wonder: what about our histories can inform Solidarity Dreaming?

Resisting Modernity and what it means to "not change"

Being modern and progressive has been a primary discourse and impetus to attack the Global South, and Black and Indigenous communities in the U.S. Western logics which tend to define progress as change. While this is sometimes true, it must also be noted that some change has not been good for Black and Indigenous folk or their communities. Perhaps one of the most striking examples is what Black and Indigenous peoples lost with the advent of colonization and imperialism. We make clear that it is not for us to determine what change is good for communities and students, but it is for them to make that decision for themselves.

When asking the question of: what is lost with modernity and change, we reflect on Black schools and the impact of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka.* Indeed, Black civil rights leaders who fought for the passage of *Brown* hoped to get better educational opportunities, and functional educational facilities. It is important to remember that the desire of Black leaders was ultimately a path to Black humanity–dignity, the ability to receive an education that led to decent jobs with a livable wage. But when they Dreamed, they likely did not foresee the myriad forms of violence that Black children would face until the current day. They perhaps could not predict that even within desegregated schools, circumstances around Black education would not get much better, but that it would become much more violent. They likely would not have known that the landmark case would have all but eliminated arguably the strongest Black institution at that time–Black education. All of those things that we would do anything for now–dignity and love for students, an abundance of highly-

skilled and professional Black teachers, community-led schools, high academic output, and an ability to deeply connect schools to the very plight of the community–were at the core of pre-*Brown* schools. Our question is this: what about the past should inform our Dreaming, and what about the promises of 'change' can limit our Dreaming. This is not a critique of the Theories of Change outlined in this special issue (Ishimaru & Bang, 2022) as much as it is a "*Dreaming*" of what TOC what it might include.

What of the "Solidarity" in Solidarity Dreaming

What actually are the limits of decolonial, anti-racism, and social justice reforms? As Ramon Grosfoguel notes in his works, Eurocentric, and white liberal historical sensibilities tend to steer most of the critical thought and voice found in contemporary "social justice" work, despite the fact that non-Western peoples have engaged in this work differently and for much longer. For us, solidarity means to understand across differences and explore the different ways that the entanglement of race and capitalism organize systems of oppressions across the globe, and by extension in the U.S. Solidarity building finds ways to acknowledge and work through tensions that exist both within the localized and transnational spaces, and to do so in ways that bring together various communities with these different historical consciousness and sensibilities as they have uniquely contested colonialism and coloniality. Solidarity building also means making space for colonized communities to make sense of their complex relationship with whiteness and colonialism before engaging across multiple voices and experiences. Maisie Chin's experiences with CADRE is a powerful example of how to resist such colonial structures in school. Maisie, as an Asian American woman, stood on principle when she was enlisted to support the colonial anti-Blackness:

> "And so when teachers, white teachers, in particular, talk all kinds of dehumanizing things about Black and Brown children, and then approach me as if I was going to be some co-conspirator, that's when I started to totally dismantle that."

It did not matter that Maisie was not Black; it did not matter that the white educators that Maisie spoke of expected Asian Americans to elevate themselves through the practice of enacting anti-Blackness; and it did not matter that she was not from a community on which the cultural behaviors were criminalized. Dreaming solidarity can be based on the full humanity of all, especially Black and Indigenous students. Indeed, CADRE grew solidarities based on principles of anti-Coloniality and Black liberation. But still we wonder, how can we *Dream* together across boundaries and in solidarity toward a new/old, pre-colonial and anti-colonial, humanity? Ancestral and community knowledges are found in the everyday living practices of grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, neighbors and community members as they engage in essential labor of care, love, dignity, and beauty. Community knowledges can be gleaned from knowledge embedded in the rituals of care that families undertake as they cultivate joy in cooking, cleaning, attending to children, the elderly, the ill, gardening, grooming; in serving, in worship, in play, in sharing and passing of stories (Lugones, 2010) that sustain our most fundamental need as humans, i.e., acceptance, compassion, and love. While these knowledge systems and practices may look different across communities, and contexts, nevertheless they provide a specific historical consciousness, which makes it possible not only for resistance but also for thriving and building despite domination and humiliation.

What of the "Dreaming" in solidarity

Dreaming happens when community members collectively imagine and work for a future within which self-determination, economic viability, culturally, spiritually, and linguistically responsive education, wholesome nourishment, affirming environments, and other aspects–that they deem necessary for their humanity–can be realized. Indeed, we believe that dreaming happens within all facets of life, but here, we limit our reflection on how they connect to education. All communities have the ability to recognize colonization, settler colonialism and coloniality, including those that benefit from it. But communities on the margin have historically had to dream more because they were most negatively impacted by the colonial presence and its enduring imprints. We think of Solidarity Dreaming in phases: relational, cultural, structural, and economic, and primarily in the order listed.

1. **Relational (reciprocal) Dreaming**. *Relational Solidarity Dreaming* is the ability to envision a future around people who, together, will enrich the humanity and spirits of students as they learn. It is also the ability to choose whom you can learn with, and from. And relational exists in communities of people who are collectively committed to the preservation of all living beings, including humans, animals, and the Earth. Relational Dreaming requires an embeddedness in and commitment to communities, to understand their ontologies why they exist, and thus what the purposes of schooling are in their existence. Only after that can educational projects, like schools or CBOs, begin to truly support communities. Education must start from and be led by peoples in non-education spaces. This is essential because even while structural oppression may be afflicting some students, Relational Dreaming spaces in school will still always work to humanize schools.

2. **Cultural Dreaming**. This dreaming represents how the cultural, spiritual, and linguistic aspects of communities are indistinguishable from their learning. It is a moment when 'culture' means 'learning,' and learning is culture; culture is not learned in educational spaces (such as schools) but it is embodied within all aspects of knowledge transmissions and relationships. It is a moment in which spiritual aspects of humanity are embraced. Cultural Dreaming is what makes ancestral knowledge intergenerational, and what carries that knowledge across multiple spaces and times. Cultural Dreaming also is the primary process that makes and remakes meaning for peoples, and those that hope to serve them. As with the case with many early hip hop pioneers, Nas *Dreamed*; for him he imagined what would happen if he "*Ruled the World*" and it was a transnational, oppression-free, community-centered, spiritual, healthy, ethically-principled, financially secure, hopeful and joyous existence:

    Trips to Paris, I civilized every savage
    Gimme one shot I turn trife life to lavish
    Political prisoner set free, stress free
    No work release purple M3's and jet skis
    Feel the wind breeze in West Indies
    I'd make Coretta Scott-King mayor o'the cities and reverse themes to Willies
    It sounds foul but every girl I meet to go downtown

> I'd open every cell in Attica send em to Africa…
>
> It wouldn't be no such thing as jealousies or be felony
> Strictly living longevity to the destiny
> I thought I'd never see, but reality struck
> Better find out before your time's out, what the fuck
> -Nas, *If I ruled the World (1996)*

3. **Structural Dreaming**. Here we are left with the question of how organizations and societal structures can support *Solidarity Dreaming*, something they have been unable and unwilling to do until now. Educators often put forth 'powersharing' as a way forward for education. But we are moved to ask, 'sharing of what?' For example, non-Western ontologies require those of us from Western spaces to ask: what is the purpose of education and schooling? If we educators hope to powershare so that parents can begin to have greater influence in schools, then we are indeed killing the solidary structural dreaming. But when educators can exist solely to support the community in their pursuit of humanity, dignity, wholeness, and preservation of life and spirit, then we enter structures into the solidarity dreaming of communities. Thus, as we think through *Structural Solidarity Dreaming*, for us organizations and systems are mere tools that should be made to beautify community, in much the same way that a paintbrush, lawnmower, or a row of planted trees would. Structural inequities in schools and communities would become nonexistent. And if any organizations did emerge within communities, they would complement rather than extract from communities.

4. **Economic Dreaming**. We have mentioned dignity at several moments throughout this paper, and for communities and individuals to obtain decolonization and solidarity dreaming, they must have viable (self-sustained and self-contained) economic existences that are not reliant on, if not even entangled with, Western capitalist structures and colonizing financial enterprises. This dreaming represents the self-sufficiency needed for Black, Indigenous and other minoritized communities. This is a push against dehumanized understandings of Western economic greed that have reduced human worth to material wealth. Rather, here, we argue that the *Economic Dreaming* does not problematize merely the presence of resources, but rather it establishes the extent to which those resources are used to preserve and sustain humanity, the Earth and all it contains. So, issues like a sustainable living wage, collective anti-poverty existences, circulation of capital in minoritized communities, and a cessation of Western/White monetization of BIPOC physical, cultural, and geographic capital are all issues that would be taken up.

Concluding Thoughts

Decolonization requires *Dreaming,* and, though it came millennia earlier, *Dreaming* also requires Decolonization. In this essay, we have shared thoughts about the meaning of *Solidarity Dreaming* and the promise of CoDesign. For educators, this essay has implications for how they resist oppression and fight for the humanity of our youth and their communities. Solidarity Dreaming requires

community-led educational leadership; it requires centering Ancestral knowledge; it requires a removal of school histories as a starting place of dreaming; it requires a constant renewal and creativity around decolonization; and it requires a collaboration of people with varied backgrounds, roles, education and wealth backgrounds, but who are all committed restoring/preserving the humanity of communities and places in which they are located.

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Advancing Professional Development for Family, School and Community Engagement: A Conversation Regarding NAFSCE's Family Core Engagement Core Competencies

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Introduction

The Journal of Family Diversity in Education (JFDE) strives to provide timely and insightful content for readers and the broader education community. However, the typically lengthy research and publication process in academia can make it difficult to respond to topical issues in a timely manner. In response to this challenge, the JFDE is committed to facilitating periodic community conversations that seek to engage academic and community experts in dialogue pertaining to important issues.

What follows is a transcript of a conversation that was focused on the new family engagement core competency recommendations from the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE). While it is not new to see specific recommendations for family engagement emerge – generally, these recommendations tend to be prescriptive in nature, grounded in Euro-centric ideologies, and school-centered. NAFSCE, however, has created competencies that, instead of centering what parents and families ought to be doing, emphasize power sharing and the transformation of traditional family, school, and community engagement practices (See Table 1). In addition, NAFSCE's work has implications for *all* family-facing professionals, not just teachers and school administrators. Beyond the core competencies, we learn in our conversation more about how NAFSCE's work around family, school, and community engagement is grounded in social justice and equity. This is especially critical given the fast-moving anti-CRT and anti-LGBTQ policies being passed and proposed nationwide. We invite our readers to consider how we might leverage the work of NAFSCE to more authentically center families and communities within family, school, and community engagement.

The conversation took place on January 24, 2023 and was facilitated by the JFDE co-editors Michael Evans and Érica Fernández. Joining us on the call from NAFSCE were Dr. Margaret Caspe, Senior Research Consultant, and Dr. Reyna Hernandez, Senior Director for Research and Policy. Participants reviewed the transcript to ensure accuracy, and for our readers' convenience, we have embedded

hyperlinks and footnotes to various NAFSCE documents and resources throughout the manuscript. This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity. Throughout the interview "Framework" is used to refer to the Educator Preparation Framework for Family and Community Partnerships. Core Competencies is used to refer to the Family Engagement Core Competencies: A Body of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Family-Facing Professionals. Both of these reports are free for download at: www.nafsce.org/edprep

Table 1. The Family Engagement Core Competencies by Domain

Reflect	Connect	Collaborate	Lead Alongside Families
1. Respect, Honor, and Value Families a. Examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities b. Explore, understand, and honor with families how children develop, grow, and change from birth through adulthood across settings, and how these changes affect families	**3. Build Trusting Reciprocal Relationships with Families** a. Cultivate mutual trust b. Communicate effectively c. Create welcoming environments d. Reach out actively to families, especially those who might be most underserved	**5. Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families** a. Build upon family knowledge as resources for learning b. Join together with families for planning, implementing, and evaluating learning opportunities and services	**7. Take Part in Lifelong Learning** a. Identify and participate as a member of the family engagement profession b. Engage in professional learning to grow family engagement knowledge and skills c. Use data to assess, evaluate, and improve family and community engagement
2. Embrace Equity Throughout Family Engagement a. Look inward to develop cultural humility, cognitive flexibility, and perspective-taking skills to practice anti-bias and equitable family and community engagement. b. Reflect on how history and social context influence family engagement systems and practices	**4. Foster Community Partnerships for Learning and Family Wellbeing** a. Build community partnerships to support children and families b. Establish systems to expand how families link to community resources c. Cultivate social support networks and connections among families	**6. Link Family and Community Engagement to Learning and Development** a. Develop data systems that are accessible to each and every family b. Create conversations around developmental and academic progress c. Expand on family learning in the home and community	**8. Advocate for Systems Change** a. Identify and examine new and existing policies and practices to further family and community engagement b. Champion equity as an essential element of family and community engagement and stand with families for equitable educational systems and outcomes c. Reframe the conversation around family and community engagement to expand public understanding

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A Community Conversation

Michael Evans: Thank you for speaking with us and the readers of JFDE today. I was hoping that each of you could share a little bit about yourself and how you came to this work and how you came to be working on this project for NAFSCE.

Maggie Caspe: I'm Maggie Caspe and I'm a Senior Research Consultant at NAFSCE, which is the National Association for Family School and Community Engagement. NAFSCE was founded in 2014 and has a mission to advance high-impact policies and practices for family, school, and community engagement to promote child development and improve student achievement. NAFSCE does this in a variety of ways; by promoting dialogue in the field and among its members; providing technical assistance and training to states as well as the federal government around their family and community engagement strategies; and also by taking on a number of special projects that are of importance to our members. One of those projects is thinking more critically about how we prepare educators for family and community engagement and the competencies that educators develop that make them effective. That's the project that Reyna and I are working on together and this project is close to my heart. I began my career as a kindergarten and first grade teacher and one of the areas I felt least prepared for was how to engage families and communities. So, a lot of my professional career has been about diving deep into and understanding family and community engagement, and what it looks like to prepare educators and professionals around this topic.

Reyna Hernandez: I am the Senior Director for Research and Policy at NAFSCE. As Maggie mentioned, NAFSCE is a very young organization and is truly doing a lot of really innovative work in thinking more deeply about these Core Competencies, to take a step beyond just saying what good family engagement looks like, but to really dig into it. We're in the business of people and what do the people working on the ground level, who are really trying to make a space welcoming and have two-way communication with families, what does it take for them to be able to do all of that?

I was drawn to the organization (NAFSCE) because it was thinking about systems and systemic conditions. It's not just that people need to do things differently, but that we need policies and systems to make sure that people are *able* to do things differently and that they're being supported. For me, my background is heavily in the space of social justice and community development. I started more on the community engagement side of the equation as a community partner collaborating with schools around youth enrichment and leadership. Just navigating school systems was challenging as an outsider, it wasn't really true partnership, it was like trying to push into the education space to do really great things for kids and really wrestling with it.

The first job that I had out of college was through a fellowship project at a Parent Information and Support Center. And it was funded by a school district, we were employees of the district, but at the same time there was the sense that we were outsiders because we weren't based at the school. We were perceived as being on the parents' side, and we thought, "No, there are NO sides here! We're all trying to do what's best for kids and families." At the time I didn't think of myself as a community engagement practitioner, but now that I'm in this field and see and hear experiences from different people, I realize that unfortunately, the challenges that I faced are not unusual.

Much of my career has also been working closely with the immigrant community, looking at things like language access, and supporting them in understanding and navigating systems that might be very

different. So much of this work is bridging and capacity building, building up things like confidence and understanding so that someone could show up and know that they have a seat at the table, even if no one was pulling out a chair for them. There's a lot of social justice in this work. I really do think that the work that we're doing is helping to build a pipeline of leadership and capacity building that extends far beyond just education into other civic spaces and across issues.

Michael Evans: Early on NAFSCE seemed to focus more on the provision of resources and technical work. The Family Engagement Core Competencies and the Educator Preparation Framework for Family and Community Partnerships seems a little bit more macro in terms of its approach. Could you tell us a little bit about why NAFSCE chose this moment in time to focus on this topic, and what inspired the pivot point from doing technical training toward focusing on the development of this broader Framework?

Reyna Hernandez: I think it's part of a natural evolution for us. In addition to some of that early work on resource development that you are referring to, we've had some work that hasn't necessarily been quite as prominent, but it included a lot of higher-level systems work, in particular working with state education agencies. Over the course of two cohorts in partnership with the Council for Chief State School Officers, we worked with 18 different states around the development of State Family Engagement Frameworks.[1] The frameworks all looked very different because they were all co-developed by local coalitions and stakeholders. It was really a challenge at the state level to think about, first of all, what does family and community engagement mean to them and then how do they advance and continue to support the field in doing that work? The states have continued to carry that work forward thinking about their professional training, thinking about how they support their grant programs that include family and community engagement. There was a lot of systemic work being done there, but it was done more quietly, in cohorts and learning communities and through what we called an opportunity canvas that actually assessed each state across different areas, including educator preparation and professional development.

We were looking at their state standards, we were looking at their requirements for ed prep and one of the pieces that sort of bridges our work was a report that we did entitled, State of the States[2], that was looking at state licensure requirements, looking at these different components within state systems and what would support (or not) preparation around family and community engagement.

The development of a framework to try to move educator preparation on this topic was built into our DNA. It was part of the strategic plan from when NAFSCE was founded, so we knew from the start that at some point we'd be developing and ultimately piloting an educator preparation framework, and trying to move the needle on this, but we moved along that systems piece first. When we got to the development of the Framework, we did it with our Family Engagement Consortium on Educator Preparation. 14 teams applied to be part of this consortium. We ultimately selected 7 state teams. Each one of those teams had to include that systemic piece, a state administrator, someone from an agency that was overseeing educator preparation, along with the educator preparation partner. We also worked with some very key partners at the nexus of educator preparation, teacher quality, equity,

[1] For additional information on the State Consortium on Family Engagement and for links to the various state level frameworks please see the following website: https://nafsce.org/page/StateFrameworks

[2] NAFSCE (2019), The state of the states: Family, school and community engagement within state educator licensure requirements. Alexandria, VA, Retrieved from https://cdn.ymaws.com/nafsce.org/resource/resmgr/custompages/NAFSCE_States_Report_FINAL_0.pdf

and accreditation - The American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, the National Education Association, and MAEC, which was formerly the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. The systemic piece has been a thread throughout, and there's a convergence here of policy, practice and research. We're not just advocating for policies we *think* make sense, these are ideas developed in partnership, on a body of research that comes from surveying the field and surveying higher education.

Maggie Caspe: To build on what Reyna was saying, NAFSCE had been working with states on their family and community engagement frameworks for several years. Simultaneously NAFSCE was also doing webinars and training for the field. And these big questions kept coming up in the field: What do family-facing professionals really need to know and be able to do to engage families meaningfully and equitably? What might a scope and a sequence of training look like for educators? If we have in our statewide frameworks a mandate to better prepare educators for family and community engagement, then HOW are we going to prepare educators for this work? What does it really mean to be a family-facing professional?

We did some looking around and this isn't a new question, but what we found was that a lot of the ideas were siloed, there wasn't just one place that the family engagement field could go for such information. There were a bunch of standards. You have the NPTA standards[3], you have the Head Start relationship-based competencies[4], which are all really great, but they are really calling on family and community engagement professionals who work within particular disciplines and domains at particular periods of time. What we wanted to do when developing the Family Engagement Core Competencies was to distill these ideas at an even higher level. We don't want to supplant any of those standards that are already out there, but rather we were trying to harness and unify them to have an agreed upon set of competencies that those in the field of family and community engagement do and aspire to.

Reyna Hernandez: There was already work out there, for example the Dual Capacity Framework[5] that said we need to build capacity, but then what is that capacity? What does it look like? When you looked at the states, they were all over the place, some of them didn't even mention relationships which of course is a very foundational concept. It was sort of a hodgepodge of ideas. There's also another body of research that we had done in partnership with The Frameworks Institute (a non-profit think tank) to really look at how people understand family and community engagement. It resulted in a report called Reframing the Conversation[6], and one of the findings was that, in general, people tend to think that practitioners engage families if they care and if they don't engage families, it must mean they don't care. There's a similar idea that families will show up if they care, and families

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[3] National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. Retrieved on March 24th, 2023 from https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/family-school-partnerships

[4] Head Start: Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (2022). Relationship Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement. Retrieved on March 20th, 2023 from https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/relationship-based-competencies-support-family-engagement/relationship-based-competencies-support-family-engagement

[5] Mapp, K.L. &Bergman, E. (2019). Dual capcity-building framework for family-school partnerships (Version 2) Retrieved from www.dualcapacity.org.

[6] Pineau, M.G., L'Hôte, E., Davis, C. & Volmert, A. (2019). Beyond caring: Mapping the gaps between expert, public, practitioner, and policy maker understandings of family, school and community engagement. Washington, DC: Frameworks Institute. Retrieved from https://famengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/NAFSCE-Map-the-Gaps-Final-Ju.pdf

will not show up if they don't care. And so we know that we need to move beyond that type of thinking and we need to build out an understanding not only in the family and community engagement field, but across education, across other spaces, to build an understanding that there are competencies, that there are knowledge, skills, dispositions involved in this work, and that it goes beyond simply caring. Of course, caring is important, but we can be proactive in helping prepare people to do this work.

Érica Fernández: And I think that's a really good transition to our next question, which is centered around equity. I think we've heard a lot about the obstacles, the barriers, these tensions that exist when we're thinking about family, community and school engagement, and how important it is to create bridges to authentic partnership and sharing power. As we're considering the larger dynamics of the domains and competencies, we're curious to know how NAFSCE thinks about the concept of equity. What does equity mean and look like, particularly within family and community engagement space?

Maggie Caspe: This is a question we think about a lot at NAFSCE. One of the things we talk about and that comes up in our reports is how family and community engagement itself is a matter of equity, because we know from the research that family and community engagement bears its greatest impact on those who are most underserved. From this perspective, equity IS family and community engagement, because it's working to reduce those disparities that exist in educational opportunities. So that's one take on it, but a second way we think about equity is that family engagement, as we just described, is about creating systems, conditions and policies that open access to families who have been most marginalized and underserved in our society. We know that there are norms, systems, policies and structures out there that advantage some and disadvantage others. If we start from a deep understanding of this historical marginalization and systemic exclusion, it requires that we create policies and conditions that open up opportunities for families and children to be, as Barton writes about, "a rightful presence"[7]. And I think our work in preparing educators for family and community engagement is one part of this, of creating these systems that change the structures that are out there. I think a third way that we're thinking about equity and family and community engagement is something that one of our team members, Eugenio Longoria Sáenz, talks about how equity is thinking and being conscious of people and places. This moves us away from equity being talked about as a zero-sum game, who has the power and who doesn't, and instead moves us toward a view of equity that is really bound up in the Core Competencies to reflect, connect, collaborate, and lead.

When we talk about *reflect*, we're talking about family-facing professionals who are constantly examining, respecting and valuing the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities and honoring this with families. Reflecting means looking inward to develop cultural humility and cognitive flexibility and perspective taking skills as well as reflecting on how history and social contexts impact systems, and influence family and community engagement. I think this is all a big part of equity and family and community engagement. We also talk about what family-facing professionals do as they *connect*. They connect and build trusting relationships with families, and they everage the resources in a wider community to promote intergenerational family wellbeing, which is a big part of equity. What we mean by *collaborate* is that we're moving away from school-centric visions of what family and community engagement is, and I know that this is something that Ann Ishimaru's work points to.[8]

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[7] Calabrese Barton, A., & Tan, E. (2020). Beyond equity as inclusion: A framework of "rightful presence" for guiding justice-oriented studies in teaching and learning. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(6), 433-440.

[8] Ishimaru, A. M. (2022). Possible futures: Youth, families, and communities as educational leaders. *Kappan Online.* Retrieved from https://kappanonline.org/possible-futures-youth-families-communities-leaders-ishimaru/

We're trying to move away from this notion of "doing to and for families" towards thinking about how we are making the funds of knowledge that exist within families and communities visible to the education community. Even more, how we harness those funds of knowledge and create more equitable collaborations that promote curriculum, programs, services, that are not just the school telling families and communities what to do, but are co-constructed and focused on doing together and with. The last domain in the Core Competencies is to *lead* alongside families. This is such an essential element of family and community engagement, because what it means is we're creating places for families and family facing professionals to lead together.

NAFSCE has a parent Parent and Family Leaders Council, that's composed of a number of family leaders, and one leader told her story for our upcoming monograph about how parents in her community witnessed an injustice and went to the principal. And the principal listened, the principal reflected and said, "Let's make this change, but I can't do it alone, let's do it together, let's lead and make this policy change together". And they did. I think all of these elements are all interrelated when we think about equity.

Érica Fernández: I think it's really helpful to get a sense of how the domains and competencies are really centering families and community members, and really disrupting these traditional power dynamics that we see in schools, especially within family and community engagement and partnerships. And to your point, it's not really authentic engagement if we're not creating and establishing partnerships that work with and alongside families and community members. I think this is connected to the next question. Can you please tell us more about the *process* that resulted in the creation of these domains and competencies? We have already heard a little about the process, but we are curious if you'd want to share more about the inclusion of diverse voices of parents and families, were they a part of helping to construct these domains and competencies and if so, to what extent?

Maggie Caspe: They were actually a huge part. We developed these competencies through a six-phase process. In the first phase we convened a committee of family engagement experts and this included parent leaders, family liaisons, district and state leaders, research and community partners. And I think it is important to know that they were with us every step of the way in the development of the competencies, so this wasn't like we met in February of 2019 and then we said, "see you later"! This group was a constant partner throughout the creation of the document. In phase two and three, we did a lot of synthesizing from the themes and ideas that were emerging in conversations with this committee. And we conducted an extensive literature review, to make sure that everything that we were thinking about was grounded in an evidence base. In phase four, we actually did a comprehensive crosswalk of the national standards of 15 major national organizations, and this exists in the appendices in the Core Competencies, because we wanted to understand how other organizations are positioning, family engagement, knowledge, skills and dispositions. In the fifth phase, we conducted focus groups and individual interviews with over 60 community-focused members. We talked with educators, we talked with district leaders, we talked with librarians, after-school staff, more parent leaders, to say "this is how we're thinking about the Core Competencies, how do they sound to you?" We made a lot of changes based on the feedback that we heard. And then the last phase in our process was a national survey of over 600 family-facing professionals. And again, that included parent leaders, family liaisons, state leaders, Title I Coordinators, district staff, faculty, you name it, who were giving feedback like, "I feel really prepared on this competency, but I don't feel so prepared on this one. This is where I'd like more training, this one is really important if I could only focus on one." That gives an overview of the six-phase process, but just to emphasize, we never want this document to come across

as "NAFSCE says do this"! NAFSCE is about partnerships and bringing partners together so we see this as a document for the field, by the field and we are really proud of that.

Reyna Hernandez: As Maggie mentioned earlier, NAFSCE has a Parent and Family Leaders Council - what we call the PFLC - that is a standing committee for our board of directors. Over time we've now moved to having three members of the Parent and Family Leaders Council on our board of directors, so they are sitting board members, and they serve as a direct connection between the PFLC and that big picture part of our work. These are individuals who are primarily at the table as parent leaders, typically involved in parent leadership organizations, from local organizations to groups like the United Parent Leaders Action Network (UPLAN) and the National PTA, so they are really representative of different types of parent leadership from different parts of the country. They are regularly engaged in everything that we do at NAFSCE. We have a range of other projects that we're working on, including a book that we're editing, and the PFLC authored one of those chapters, so they've been involved in so many different ways. It's something that for us is so important because it's a real way of trying to connect to what's happening on the ground and make sure that these voices are then elevated up.

Michael Evans: Our next question is centered on potential applications of the Core Competencies. I am personally involved in teacher preparation for family engagement and my work has certainly changed over the past four years, because the climate around public education and that nexus of families and communities has changed. John Rogers and some colleagues at UCLA have just released a report that principals are reporting higher levels of tension than have ever existed before.[9] Public schools are increasingly becoming a contentious space. We have Governor DeSantis seeking to not allow AP African-American History to be taught in Florida schools.[10] So how do you imagine that these Core Competencies or these domains might help inform educators who are trying to navigate these increasingly contentious spaces in public education?

Reyna Hernandez: I think everyone has been impacted by those shifts and feeling the climate change over time. While we were developing the Framework George Floyd was murdered and our Consortium felt strongly that we needed to respond. We wrote a blog around the role that ed prep has to play in the movement for racial and social justice. [11] You can't be exclusive in education. All the work that we're doing is really rooted in equity and inclusion.

When you look at the Family Engagement Core Competencies themselves, in a lot of ways they take our position for us in terms of what family and community engagement looks like. It is not one side that gets to choose, whether its parents win, or teachers win, or whose voice is most important; they are all important. As this wedge is being driven, we're saying in the third competency, that there has to be reciprocity and balance in relationships. In the second competency, we say that family-facing professionals must reflect on how history and social context influence family engagement systems and practices. That is essential professional practice, NOT optional. When we talk about co-construction,

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[9] Rogers, J. & Kahne, J. with Ishimoto, M., Kwako, A., Stern, S.C., Bingener, C., Raphael, L., Alkam, S., & Conde, Y. (2022). *Educating for a Diverse Democracy: The Chilling Role of Political Conflict in Blue, Purple, and Red Communities*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access. Retrieved from https://idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/educating-for-a-diverse-democracy/

[10] Natanson, H. (2023, February 20). As red states target Black history lessons, blue states embrace them. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/02/13/black-history-red-states-blue-states-teaching-lessons/

[11] See: https://nafsce.org/page/drivingbeliefs

it is with the idea that people are reflecting on family, reflecting background, reflecting pedagogy, so we talk a lot about culturally responsive practice. This is how you start to create relevant education that people feel has some connection to the lives that they're living.

I think that the debates that are happening right now, they don't leave space open for us to create culturally relevant education that has connection to the lives that people are living because they speak to the preferences of what end up being only a handful of parental voices. We are *not* saying some parent voices matter and others don't. We are saying we have to recognize as professionals and practitioners that there's been an imbalance and it is our role and our duty to address this. We speak in one of the competencies that professionals have to champion equity as an essential element of family and community engagement, and stand with families for equitable educational systems and outcomes. What that means for us is that you may not agree with what families are saying, but part of our role is to open up spaces so that we can bring voices that may not feel welcome to the table, may not already be showing up, and create a more balanced dialogue and then use these other skills when not everyone agrees.

Vito Borrello, the Executive Director of NAFSCE always says this is hard work where people will disagree, but we have to get to the place of critical dialogue. So for NAFSCE, it's built into the practice of the competencies and as an association we felt we needed to take a stand and be clear on this. We put together a statement called "Healing the Growing Divide"[12], and it essentially speaks very directly to what we see as being this growing divisiveness between families, educators, community members, history, context, and we've had about 24 organizations that have signed on to that statement, and we're trying to think of ways that we can then advance this perspective. When it's parents against teachers the kids lose. We really need to be coming together differently and we need to be inclusive, especially in public education, which is for everyone.

Michael Evans: How do you hope that these domains and competencies are going to shift the relationship or reshape the relationship between families and educators? We were hoping that you could speak specifically to the potential that you see for transformation of the relationship with BIPOC families and communities.

Reyna Hernandez: I think everything that we've talked about so far speaks to a massive shift in dynamic, which I think will very directly impact these relationships. In some of the Family Engagement Core Competencies we speak directly to historically marginalized communities, recognizing it's not anything that's implicit within particular groups of families, it's the way systems and history have brought us to this place. The question becomes, how do we adjust our practices? And how do we recognize this and adjust those systems because some of them may be exclusive by design and we need to remedy that.

In one of the early meetings when we were developing the Core Competencies we couldn't help but think about that social justice cry of "nothing about us without us." This really needs to be a project that we do together. To think about education in partnership and in collaboration with diverse communities. And that means that because some of these communities have been historically

[12] See NAFSCE's Statement on Healing the Growing Divide through Equitable Family, School and Community Partnerships. Released on August 29th, 2022.
https://cdn.ymaws.com/nafsce.org/resource/resmgr/HGD_Statement_of_Support.pdf

marginalized, you're talking about a massive shift in the dynamics. Our vision is about universal family engagement, but in order for that to happen we know we have to have a laser-like focus on BIPOC families, on low-income families, on non-English dominant families who have been foreclosed from being able to access some of these systems in a very different way. We have a universal vision, but how we get there requires intentionality.

Maggie Caspe: Here is a very specific example. Just last week I was participating in a Friday Cafe, which is a group of family-facing professionals, who come together each month to talk about dilemmas of practice and share ideas and resources.[13] One of the themes that came up in this meeting was that as family-facing professionals, whether we are in libraries, after-school programs, or schools, we are often building programs and we're hoping people come! But what happens when you build a program or event and people don't come?! It's frustrating, but what emerged was a conversation about how we might use the Core Competencies to transform those feelings that emerge. That feeling of, "I spent so much time and only one person came, so I'm a terrible family-facing professional", or that even worse feeling of, "families didn't come so they don't care!" How can we develop our practice so that we use these pressure points as an opportunity to step back and reflect on a variety of questions, "How did I plan this event? Who was in the room with me? Who did I connect with about it? Was there an attempt to achieve consensus and collaboration? How did we co-create?"

That's the hardest part. From our survey, we found that these ideas surrounding co-creation are sometimes the hardest to implement, but we need to keep asking ourselves who was at the planning table, who was leading it? My hope is that the Core Competencies become a habit of mind through which we can constantly reflect on whether or not our family and community engagement practices are equitable and when we encounter dilemmas or when we encounter problems, we can reflect on questions like, how am I connecting or how am I collaborating? How am I leading *alongside* families? And maybe that will help to transform relationships among families, schools, and communities.

Érica Fernández: I think one of the things that keeps coming up is this idea of transformation. I often challenge folks to try to reimagine systems and structures, and that in and of itself can be an act of resistance and liberation. I'm curious from your work on this Framework, what would need to be reimagined within teacher preparation programs or other systems and structures for these humanizing and authentic relationships to exist between schools, families and communities?

Reyna Hernandez: We've been spending a lot of time thinking about what sort of changes are needed. Reimagining is actually one of the levers that we talk about as a major lever for change. Doing this work does require that high level reimagining and I think that that's one of the places where we start by saying, if we are going to reimagine teacher preparation, let's start with who is the "we"? Who should be part of that? Are we talking about a faculty meeting? Are we talking about the department head? Is it the Dean's vision that we need to be more focused on family engagement, so go get it done?

From our perspective, we're really talking about a collective "we". Within the Framework, the "we" that is reimagined includes educator preparation programs and leaders, education faculty, it includes state agencies, regulators, and accreditors too. The "we" includes school partners, community-based partners, and those representing not only future employers of educators, but also potential authentic spaces where educators can have experiences as they're learning to engage with families and to engage

[13] To learn more about the Friday Café you can visit their website at: https://fridaycafe.org/about-friday-cafe/

in community. And then families themselves, really thinking about what are different ways we can reimagine the role that families might play? When you look at the recommendations, how can we reimagine coursework in higher ed? First of all, let's make sure there is coursework! Because less than half of programs even offer a course! We're in this position where you're just talking about a single offering and it's usually not required. But this goes beyond having a course, what does this content look like when it's integrated throughout the curriculum? What could coursework look like when families' voices are a part of that, for example through a family as faculty model?

What does it look like when coursework is connected to the field experience? How can we reimagine field experiences in different ways, including thinking that education is not limited to school day hours. Could field experiences involve service learning? Could it involve a placement at a local community-based organization that has a different perspective? Could it involve mentoring from community ambassadors or cultural ambassadors? Could it involve workshops that are being offered by the library, or by a parent leadership group, or by someone else? There are just so many different ways that those field experiences can be more authentic, and this work can be embedded in educator prep. Just going to a community fair or a wellness fair is an experience that helps you understand the community where you might be placed in a very different way.

At the same time, we should emphasize that there IS work being done to reimagine educator preparation, and we included nearly 30 case studies in the Framework report to highlight this. For example, one of the programs that was part of our collaboration had a community advisory group that helped guide their program. That's pretty rare, but community voices can be a regular, structural, ongoing part of the shaping of educator preparation. We also know that there's a lot that can be done and that needs to be done at the various policy levels. Federally there are a lot of ways that different funds can be used to advance equity and address family and community engagement, but sometimes those programs are not explicit. We could strengthen how we talk about these things. At the state level, requirements for accreditation of educator preparation could be more explicit. Every state has some level of requirements for their prep programs, teaching standards, and admissions standards, right? All of these different spaces are places where there could be some embedding of these competencies, but it has to be done intentionally.

Érica Fernández: To wrap up our conversation, can you share with us what's next for NAFSCE when we're thinking about the implementation or the evaluation and refinement of these competencies and domains?

Maggie Caspe: One thing that we're really hoping for is a national credential for the field. I know that a lot of this conversation has focused on educator preparation, but there are many family-facing professionals who are constantly asking for more opportunities to grow and hone their skills. NAFSCE is committed to putting together a credential that would be based on these Core Competencies. We're also working with states like Maryland and Ohio, to really use these Core Competencies to develop rubrics and some small professional learning communities.

One thing that we've learned, with regard to your question about refinement, is that we've heard time and time again that although we talk about reflect, connect, collaborate and lead as these distinct domains and constructs, we know that, in fact, they are very much overlapping and interconnected.

Sometimes we can get into the weeds, for example, we'll have discussions about whether a situation or practice is best categorized as reflect, connect, collaborate, or lead? But really, they're all together.

For instructional and pedagogical purposes, it is helpful to disaggregate them because it helps give us something to latch on to cognitively as we try to think through dilemmas and what we're trying to do. But in truth, when we see a masterful, well prepared, family-facing professional, we're going to see them seamlessly weave the practice of reflecting, connecting, collaborating, and leading together. This is what we're aspiring to. As we refine this work we are definitely thinking more about these competencies, both independently and also in a more integrated way.

Reyna Hernandez: We also want to develop more training, not only by us, but by partners and others who can use the Core Competencies and be really intentional. Our partners, AACTE, NEA, CAEP, and MAEC, are all very interested in supporting the field, which they work very closely with, whether it's through creating learning groups or perhaps online training modules and toolkits. We're really exploring different ways right now of partnering with them to support higher education.

Michael Evans: I do like this idea of trying to reach a broader audience. I can imagine school board members, local PTA presidents, and other people who maybe don't have an official family-facing job, but who still play a significant role in terms of making connections with the community, using these competencies as a way to reflect on their engagement with their constituencies. Are they really reaching out and connecting with ALL the families that are in their district? It's great to hear that you're thinking about this more broadly than just teachers or principals. Maggie and Reyna, thank you so much for sharing your work with the readers of the JFDE. We are really grateful for your time!