USING A MIXED-METHODS NEEDS ANALYSIS OF A COMMUNITY OF

STAKEHOLDERS TO IDENTIFY PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL READINESS

A Record of Study

by

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ABSTRACT

      Through a multi-strand mixed-methods study, I determined the areas of need for family engagement efforts at Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition to increase the capacity of member organizations to support families in school readiness. A sequential explanatory QUAN>QUAL method was used to analyze family perceptions of school readiness. Then a convergent QUAN+QUAL design was used to compare the programming and resources provided by Family Bridge to family perceptions. Results determined that families want to know more ways to help their children be school ready and are willing to participate in programming and resources provided by the community. Community groups can assist families by providing multiple opportunities and methods for families to connect. Recommendations include connecting with families enrolled in early learning centers and building more robust communication systems so families know that programming and resources exist to support them.

DEDICATION

To my family, we always say, "Walkers, Never Give Up." Thank you to my husband, Will, for pushing me to go back to school and taking on many of the family burdens so I would have time to complete this degree. I am so thankful I get to be "Mr. and Mrs." Dr. Walker with you.

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NOMENCLATURE

DFPS	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
DSHS	Texas Department of State Health Services
HHSC	Texas Health and Human Services Commission
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
NAEYC	National Association of Young Children
PTA	Primary Parent Teacher Association
SBDM	Site-Based Decision-Making Committee
TDA	Texas Department of Agriculture
TEA	Texas Education Agency
THSSCO	Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office
TPEIR	Texas Public Education Information Resource
TWC	Texas Workforce Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE ACTION

1.1 The Context

Pine Tree Primary is the first school a young child attends in the public school system in my school district. Multiple factors within the school environment, home environment, and community environment can positively or negatively affect early childhood development. If a child is not developmentally ready for school, it can negatively impact their long-term development. Still, it can be challenging to determine the root cause of this developmental gap and implement a solution. However, by working collaboratively as a group, school, home, and community, to mitigate the negative factors which can inhibit the young child's development by supporting families as they work to raise their children, not only can school readiness be improved, but the health of families as well. Throughout this chapter, I attempted to frame the underlying issues hindering family and community involvement in school readiness, what has been done to support readiness, and what might help resolve the problem.

1.1.1 National or International Context

Nationwide school readiness is defined in many ways depending on the viewpoint held by the parent, school, or community and the expectations of stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels. Almost all aspects of readiness are affected by the environment in which a child lives. Children growing up in more disadvantaged situations are more likely to enroll in kindergarten, less ready than their more advantageous peers, and in turn more likely to drop out of school when they are older because the gap often does not close (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Bruner et al., 2004; Doggett & Wat, 2010; Hair et al., 2006; Hunzai, 2007). Most states do not

offer public education until kindergarten; thus, children old enough to attend public kindergarten are typically the focus of research to determine readiness. According to Ackerman and Barnett (2005), kindergarten readiness is about a child's academic ability in reading, math, their health and general knowledge. Recently, the literature has also discussed language readiness and social-emotional maturity as aspects of school readiness (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; De Feyter et al., 2020; Garrity et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2006; Hunzai, 2007; Nores & Barnett, 2010). The definition of readiness is beginning to expand in the research beyond academic performance to encompass health, physical growth, development, language, cognition, and social and emotional development.

On a national level, several studies have been conducted on school readiness. Hair et al. (2006) conducted a multivariate analysis of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten class of 1998-1999 to create a profile of school readiness. They noted that "readiness implies the mastery of certain basic skills or abilities that, in turn permit a child to function successfully in a school setting, both academically and socially" (p. 432). According to these researchers, students who were not ready for school by kindergarten were most likely to have problems in elementary school and beyond (Hair et al., 2006). Nationally, this target of having all children ready for kindergarten has been in place since the National Education Goals Panel in 1991. Out of every dollar spent on school-aged children, about 13.7 cents are spent on early childhood education and school readiness initiatives. Most school funding is directed to K-12 schools rather than early childhood education. (Baquedano-López et al. 2013; Bruner et al., 2004; Ma et al., 2016). The lack of funding leaves many communities unable to provide comprehensive early learning support for young children. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has long championed the need to improve the quality of

early childhood education to help support all families and ensure their children are ready for school. One component of this initiative is improving current preschool opportunities and leveraging the community's power to support young children and families (Willer, 1990).

There has been a long-standing perception that the more a parent is involved with the school, the better chance of success. A national study analyzed data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort 1998-1999 for correlations between family involvement, school outreach, and student achievement (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). However, the involvement model and the parties' perceptions play a significant role in the success of any outreach (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Gross et al., 2020; Kernan, 2012). Baquedano-Lopez, Alexander, and Hernandez share the continuum of parent outreach in US education, ranging from Parents as Partners to the sometimes-negative perceptions of Parents as Problems. The role of parents in school is frequently influenced by the perceptions of teachers and administrators, who are often white and middle class. Parents are incorrectly perceived as the problem in a school-home partnership model when it is school-centric and tends to be focused on the school's agenda alone with little to no parent input (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Wilder, 2014). To create a true partnership between school and home, open lines of communication between all stakeholders are critical for establishing a mutual understanding of collaboration.

Because early learning opportunities are more decentralized and underfunded than schooling for K-12 students, home, school, and community organizations need to do similar work to combine resources to provide comprehensive support to young children and families. Most state investments in early learning are less than 1% of the state budget. Funding for K-12 education is seven times that of early learning, with the greatest divestment of financing for children from birth to age two (Bruner et al., 2004). However, investment in early education can

generate $8 in economic growth for every dollar spent (Doggett & Wat, 2010). This divestment

is further confirmed by the fact that preschool enrollment among 3- and 4-year-olds has

remained unchanged since 2016, leaving around 4.2 million children out of school across the

country. (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2020). Because of this gap many children enter

kindergarten unprepared.

1.1.2 Situational Context

In Texas, it is not a requirement to provide formal education to a child until the year they

turn six by September 1st. As a result, prekindergarten and kindergarten programs are not

required public education grade levels. Outside of public-school districts in Texas, there is a

patchwork of options available for families to use for early childhood educational opportunities,

such as early learning centers, private schools, home daycares, and family members. In most

areas, early learning efforts are not cohesive or collaborative, which results in children enrolling

in kindergarten with a vast array of background experiences and varying levels of school

readiness.

During the next several years (2020-2025), the Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan is

intended to guide the collaborative efforts of multiple agencies involved in early childhood

learning, such as those responsible for funding, staffing, and coordinating programs. Early

learning coalitions are integral to the plan through "Goal 5: Each community has a plan for a

coordinated system of early childhood services" (Texas Early Learning Council, 2020, p.vi).

Early investing in children's education is more than just a children's issue. Human capital and

future economic growth can benefit local, state, and federal governments from such investments.

For example, high-quality childcare for young children allows the parents to be productive

workforce members, increasing the economy (Bruner et al., 2004; Doggett & Wat, 2010).

4

Among the guiding principles within the Strategic Plan is a call for community supports to be efficient and easily accessible to meet the needs of children and families. These recommendations and others also align with the suggestions of the Bipartisan Policy Group, which conducted a state-by-state analysis of early care and education. The group developed a scoring system to measure program organization and implementation. Higher scoring states had a more integrated administration of early learning programs. Texas scored lower on this rating because the administration of early learning programs is spread across many state agencies. A primary recommendation was to facilitate communication across agencies to ensure seamless coordination and transition of services for young learners (Early Childhood Initiative, 2018). These themes are also reflected in the objectives and principles of the newly released Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan.

The Longview, Texas, metropolitan area, with a population of 250.000, consists of a series of smaller towns and rural areas surrounding the city of Longview, with about 85,000 people living within the city limits. Most children in the area, about a 30-mile radius, are born in one of two hospitals and grow up in one of two counties, Gregg or Harrison. Despite this, many children in Longview begin school in one of these counties without having earned the necessary school readiness skills or with unresolved health or development issues. The Texas Public Education Information Resource (TPEIR) Report on Kindergarten programs indicates that roughly 51% of students who enroll in public schools in Longview are kindergarten-ready. This yearly report combines the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) data, which is given to all public school kindergarten students during the first 60 days of school. Currently, the KEA only reports readiness using reading-literacy factors but will be expanded to include social and emotional factors, health and wellness, and language and communication. Pine Tree ISD is one

of 4 school districts within the city limits and is home to around 4,500 PK-12 students. Pine Tree Primary School is located within the Longview city limits and serves approximately 550 prekindergarten and kindergarten students, many of whom are economically disadvantaged.

1.2 The Problem

Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge Coalition must create a comprehensive support system to ensure families can help their children get ready for school. No existing systems leverage the collaboration of home, school, and community to enhance the school readiness of young children before they begin kindergarten. Current student information systems do not gather data on a child before their enrollment age. As a result, fewer families could connect with Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition programs and resources to support early intervention and family engagement. With these missing aspects, it is currently difficult to provide opportunities for families to work with the school and community to access programs and resources to help ensure all children as school-ready.

1.2.1 Relevant History of the Problem

The concept of Pine Tree ISD and the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition partnering together to improve school readiness is relatively new. In February 2020, Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge members attended a Texas Early Childhood Community Convening to learn how to create a comprehensive system of support for those living in Pine Tree ISD. The Texas Early Learning System has been historically composed of a mixed-delivery system that uses multiple program models and service settings to attempt to meet the needs of young children and their families: Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Texas Education Agency

(TEA), Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office (THSSCO), Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Representatives from each agency were at the Early Childhood Community Convening. They touted that strength in coordination and collaboration across all the programs and services within their agencies through inter-agency workgroups, data sharing agreements, and data platforms. The reality is that while agencies do appear to be doing much to support early education, this is done on a small scale or disjointedly so that comprehensive support is not offered. (Burner et al., 2004; Early Childhood Initiative, 2014). Even though we were introduced to an inter-agency liaison for early learning, the group attending the convening was left with the impression that each community was on its own to build a comprehensive system of support to improve outcomes for our young Texans.

Gregg County has an existing early learning coalition called Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition, which works to ensure that all children born in Gregg County are ready for school, where Longview and Pine Tree Primary schools are located. Family Bridge seeks to connect families with programs and resources focusing on prenatal to age five children. However, Family Bridge is currently missing systems to connect families with their programming and find other groups to work together to achieve school readiness. Most young children born in Longview enroll in public schools in Gregg County. However, Pine Tree Primary is the only public school member of the coalition. Both groups have a shared vision to help increase school readiness. However, there is a gap regarding what families could gain from such partnerships to achieve school readiness and what stakeholders are missing.

Because there is a gap in organization and funding for early childhood education on a federal and state level, it is left to the local communities and school districts to create systems of support to promote school readiness. There is no reason that a person born in Longview, Texas,

should not be ready to begin kindergarten educationally, socially, and health-wise. Unfortunately, this is not the case at Pine Tree Primary School. One missing system is a way to gather information about young children and their families before enrolling. Another missing system disseminates information about school readiness to families of young children who live in the area served by Pine Tree Primary but do not have older siblings enrolled in the school district.

1.2.2 Significance of the problem.

No state or federal programs guarantee early learning opportunities for all children, so there is no one place for families to find assistance in achieving school readiness. It is up to families to find programs and resources locally. For families or members of organizations, navigating this patchwork can prove challenging. Pine Tree Primary has attempted to help connect families and member organizations at school events during enrollment and throughout the school year in the past few years. A limited number of member organizations have assisted families with school-aged children and preschoolers. There is, however, no system that connects families not enrolled to Pine Tree Primary. The families of Pine Tree Primary are highly engaged in every way they can be in their children's learning after they know how they can support their children. Pine Tree Primary cannot provide all preschool children with a high-quality education before they enter kindergarten because families who could have benefited from programs and resources to support school readiness are unaware of their existence or how to access them.

Before the global pandemic shuttered most early learning opportunities in the Longview, Texas area for almost six months, only about half of the young children were considered ready to begin kindergarten. Public and private schools returned to face-to-face instruction in August 2020 with virtual learning as an option for families who felt unsafe for their children to return to

face-to-face school. However, enrollment in head start, prekindergarten, and kindergarten programs areas was lower than any other grade level. The member organizations of the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition have had to provide the majority of their services through virtual means throughout the pandemic. During monthly coalition meetings, groups report lower numbers of families enrolled in their services. The result was that fewer children could access programming to prepare them for school. The more significant concern is that a group of preschool children will enter kindergarten or first grade over the next few years without the skills they need to succeed in school. Consequently, more students may have difficulty during their K-12 academic years.

1.3 Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

Strand 1- (1)What programming and resources do families currently access to assist with school readiness?

Strand 2- (2a) How do family members perceive school readiness?

 (2b) What types of programming and resources would families like to access to assist with school readiness?

Mixed- (1&2a) How do family perceptions about school readiness explain the programming and resource they access with school readiness?

(1&2b) How does the desired programming of families reflect gaps and/or needs met given the programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness?

Strand 3- (3)What programming is available through the member community organizations of Family Bridge that will assist with school readiness?

Mixed Strands 1, 2, & 3- How does the programming available through the member

organizations of Family Bridge assist with school readiness corroborate (converge or

diverge) the programming and resource accessed and needed to assist with school

readiness?

Figure 1
Multi Strand Mixed Methods Research Questions

Strand 1: Quantitative Stand

(1)What programming and resources do families currently access to assist with school readiness?

Strand 2: Qualitative Stand

(2a) How do family members perceive school readiness?
(2b) What types of programming and resources would families like to access to assist with school readiness?

Mixed- QUAN>QUAL

(1&2a) How do family perceptions about school readiness explain the programming and resource they access with school readiness?

(1&2b) How does the desired programming of families reflect gaps and/or needs met given the programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness?

Strand 3: Quantitative Stand

(3)What programming is available through the member community organizations of Family Bridge that will assist with school readiness?

Mixed: QUAN+QUAL
Strands 1, 2, & 3
How does the programming available through the member organizations of Family Bridge assist with school readiness corroborate (converge or diverge) the programming and resource accessed and needed to assist with school readiness?

1.4 Personal Context

1.4.1 Researcher's Roles and Personal Histories

I believe that all children can learn and deserve an education to achieve their full

potential. My job as a school leader is to ensure my students are guaranteed equitable educational

opportunities while on my campus. I also must ensure their families are provided with the

10

support they need to ensure their children are healthy and ready to learn before they become my students. I did not want to become a teacher; I wanted to do anything but teach. I grew up in a family of teachers, both current and back several generations. Education was just another part of my existence. I grew up in my mother's school, helping her and her coworkers. In third grade, I could reshelve books using Dewey's system, run the copy machine, run scantrons, and brew the principal's coffee. I never dreamed I would be a teacher; I would be a scientist or the first woman Speaker of the House.

All this changed my senior year of high school. I was only missing one credit to complete my diploma, and my high school had begun a program in which students could earn elective hours through volunteering at other district campuses. I signed up for the kindergarten mentorship program and spent half daily with twenty-two kindergarteners. I experienced the highs and lows of teaching children in that age group, including everything from field trips to parties to nose cleaning and even lost socks in the bathroom. In a few months, I changed my plans from prelaw to education, and once that decision was made, I felt more "like myself" than I had ever felt before. I was never supposed to be a lawyer or a scientist. In my youth, I ignored what I was destined for and made to do: teach. My life's circumstances had uniquely prepared me for something else.

1.4.2 Journey to the Problem

In 2016, after fourteen years in education, I finally had an opportunity to move from leading a classroom of students to assisting in leading a school focused on educating students experiencing public school for the first time. As an upper elementary classroom teacher, my job was to lead students through the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn". By the time students reach their fourth or fifth year in public schools, some deficits caused by lack of

school readiness or parental involvement have partly been mitigated because students grow from their experience in school and in academic learning. In contrast, when I first started working with young students just starting kindergarten, there was a much more significant difference between the students who came to school prepared and those who did not. This difference increased during the pandemic as families prioritized survival over preparing their children for school. With the crisis at its height, many parents chose not to enroll their children in public schools. In the past year, it has been challenging to connect with families who may have children who would benefit from programs offered at my school. It has resulted in a growing concern that students will have difficulty covering the gaps caused by the pandemic for decades. As a new school leader, I have learned that just like a classroom teacher, you cannot change the world alone. It takes a village to make sure every child succeeds. My primary role as a school leader is to ensure that all my teachers, staff, students, families, and community members can find ways to build the village they need.

1.4.3 Significant stakeholders

There are several groups of significant stakeholders: the families of Pine Tree ISD, Pine Tree Primary School, and Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition of Gregg County. Pine Tree Primary School is located in Longview, Texas, about an hour from the Louisiana border along Interstate 20. About 550 prekindergarten and kindergarten students are provided an academically challenging and play-based education. Many students who enroll come from families who live in poverty. For most young children and many families, this is the first experience with public school. The mission of Pine Tree Primary is "Pine Tree Primary builds the foundation from birth to adulthood by partnering with families, students, and the community. Focusing on our common goal of unity, we will grow all learners as we continue a culture of excellence." The parent-

focused design of this new mission statement came from the Primary Site-Based Decision Making Committee (SBDM), refocusing our staff's understanding of how families and communities play a far more significant role in the education of young children than previously understood.

During the school shutdown of Spring 2020, families took over the reins of educating our students, with teachers being a support system. As a result, more discussion ensued concerning how to support families outside of the classroom through aligned community resources. One way to increase family decision-making power was by developing a Primary Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Then through the member organizations of the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition of Gregg County, Pine Tree Primary seeks to help connect families with programs and resources that support their work to get their young children ready for school. Because Pine Tree ISD is one of several school districts located in Gregg County, the results of this study can impact the lives of families and young children across the area.

1.5 Important terms

Capacity- the ability or power to do, experience, or understand something.

Early childhood education- educational opportunities provided to children from birth to age five Similar terms: early learning opportunities, preschool

Early learning provider- any group or service that provides a curriculum to children aged birth to 5 intended to achieve school readiness

Early learning coalition- a group of stakeholders, community groups, or member organizations from a community providing services to families through strategic and coordinated efforts focusing on children prenatal to age 5. Similar terms: Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS)

Parental involvement- how the primary caregiver in a child's life interacts with the school or provider (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Dermott & Fowler, 2020; Gross et al., 2020). Similar terms: family engagement, family involvement, parental engagement, home-school partnership

School readiness- "mastery of skills that allow a child to be successful in a formal school setting, both academically and socially" (Halfon et al., 2009, p.432). Similar terms: Kindergarten readiness

Young children- aged birth to five

1.6 Closing Thoughts on Chapter 1

Chapter 1 discussed the lack of funding and organization towards increasing school readiness nationally and at the state level. The need to connect families, schools, and communities with resources and programming to improve school readiness for young children is paramount. Since there is a gap between the provision of early learning and public schooling, local communities are forced to build systems of comprehensive support. Given the absence of current systems, this is challenging to facilitate information sharing between early learning providers and public school systems.

In this mixed-methods action research study, I studied the capacity of the community organization members of the Family Bridge Learning Coalition of Gregg County to determine the programming available and how it aligns with what families perceive are areas they need support to help their children be ready for school ready. Chapter 2 looks more closely at the history of school readiness, family engagement, and early learning coalitions. The connections between these three topics are discussed before implementing the solutions and methods in Chapter 3, the analysis and results in Chapter 4, and the conclusions in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIP

2.1 Introduction

Young children who enter formal schooling unprepared for what they will learn can suffer a lifetime of education gaps. The first five years of life are essential for a child's development. However, the lack of comprehensive early childhood education support systems results in limited support for families. Once young children turn five, they often begin formal schooling. K-12 schooling, public or private, has a robust system of support on local, state, and federal levels compared to early learning programs. Currently, federal, state, and local funding and programming for early learning initiatives are limited, and only a minority of children receive high-quality programs. Instead of providing comprehensive systems of support for young children and their families, a patchwork of early learning experiences has resulted. Through this ROS, I examined potential solutions for schools and communities to achieve school readiness and family involvement by leveraging the resources available through a local early learning coalition.

In response to the lack of funding and organization of early childhood education opportunities, early learning coalitions have formed to seek ways to combine efforts to support families in their engagement in early learning by working together with the community, the home, and the school. By collaborating with the community, the home, and the school, young children can begin kindergarten ready to learn. This review of literature focuses on school readiness and how the engagement of families in the process of early learning with support from early learning coalitions can increase a young child's chance of success in K-12 education. Throughout, connections will be made to the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition's current

15

work and areas of growth identified through the research on early learning and parental involvement framework.

2.2 Relevant historical background

The role of early learning coalitions was previously established through the work of the Texas Early Learning Council. Osborne et al. (2014) evaluated the effectiveness of early learning coalitions in Texas from 2010 to 2013. After implementing an early learning coalition system created to oversee Texas Home Visiting programs, a study was conducted and concluded that though there was significant progress in implementation, communities needed more tools to sustain early childhood comprehensive systems successfully. Another conclusion from this study was that barriers to implementation early on may no longer be there later, but those early successes may not be sustained over time.

> "The sustainability of a local coordinate system that is both fully integrated and comprehensive will be critical to reaching the ultimate goal of providing a seamless delivery of health and human services for young children and their families." (Osborne et al., 2014, p. 21)

However, further follow-up research was needed to determine the effectiveness of early learning coalitions in improving early learning outcomes. No follow-up research has been conducted to determine if the original coalitions successfully improved outcomes long-term (Brown, 2014).

2.3 Alignment with Action Research Traditions

2.3.1 Systems Thinking

Stroh's systems thinking method was used as the major framework for guiding our strategic planning at the 2020 Texas Early Childhood Community Convening. Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge began their partnership to achieve school readiness. Systems thinking is a process that looks at factors and interactions contributing to a problem through many different aspects of the system to find solutions (Stroh, 2015). In the context of this change process, systems thinking involves four steps. First, once a problem is identified, the groups involved must build their foundation and affirm the readiness for a change. Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge Coalition are seeking ways to build a comprehensive system of support for families to increase school readiness. Second, the current reality of the problem, how it is being addressed, and who is responsible for the problem must be identified. This occurs through looking at many pieces of information to determine the scope of the problem as well as other stakeholders who may be able to partner in the solution. The third and fourth steps involved making a choice to solve the problem and implement it. Both groups have a shared mission to increase family engagement opportunities to support increased school readiness. The exact next steps for change have not yet been identified because there is not enough information about the problem. Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge are firmly entrenched in step two, shown in the Systems Thinking Stage Map in Figure 2 below. Both groups have a clear mission and know that working together will increase school readiness. However, neither group has developed a way to identify families to partner with, not what families may need. Due to a lack of consideration for the perspectives of the young children's families, there is a current gap in understanding how to work together to achieve school readiness. The lack of family engagement and opportunities for input

17

is a problem. More information about solving this problem can be discovered by conducting a needs analysis.

Figure 2

Systems Thinking Stage Map
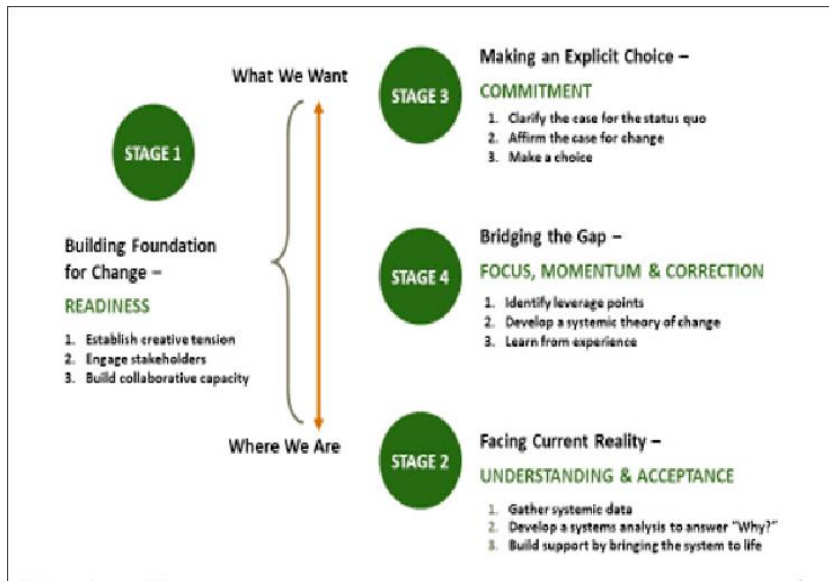
2.3.2 Mixed-Methods Action Research

Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge Coalition are at a point in their growth where they need to learn more about how our performance impacts families' ability to achieve school readiness. They need to implement a method that combines qualitative and quantitative data collection opportunities for several reasons. Quantitative data would allow both groups to collect information about the numbers and types of families with young children in the Pine Tree area. As a result, both groups can develop more precise measures in the future to determine how the program impacts school readiness. However, this is only part of the story of the families and finding out what programming and services they may need. We can learn the story behind each

family's journey to school readiness and how the community supported or did not support the process by collecting qualitative data. Doing so would allow for a more thorough understanding of what is needed to achieve school readiness for the families of Pine Tree. Ivankova (2015) approaches this need for fact-finding within the mixed methods action research model's reconnaissance phase. During the reconnaissance phase, the researcher gathers and analyzes qualitative and quantitative data to create meta-inferences about the problem and the context. By combining sequential and concurrent research approaches to answer a research question, we can better understand the problem than by using only one method.

2.3.3 Community-Based Participatory Action Research

Because this study intersects the community of Pine Tree through the perspectives of Pine Tree Primary families and the member organizations of Family Bridge Coalition, it is similar to approaches found within community-based participatory action research. This approach is generally used when the outcome promotes a change or action in the community. Instead of focusing on outside experts, this approach uses the influence and engagement of community members through the process (Esinger & Senturia, 2001; Ivankova, 2015; Leavy, 2017). Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge Coalition member organizations will use the information gathered in this study to understand and serve families better. Families will also gain access to the information learned about what community programs and resources are available.

2.4 Theoretical or conceptual framework

2.4.1 Conceptual framework

Mixed methods research combines the assumptions and methods found within qualitative and quantitative theories. This approach assumes "multiple ways of seeing and hearing multiple ways of making sense of the social world and multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued." (Greene, 2007, p. 20). In this study, several viewpoints, school, community, and family, build upon this viewpoint of mixed methods research. Another framework in this study is the social justice theoretical framework. By viewing and acting in a way that resists unfairness and inequity, this framework can help position the study to ensure access for all. Because of the diverse demographics of the families in Pine Tree, access and opportunity must always be considered from that perspective (Leavy, 2017; Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2009).

2.4.2 Family Engagement Frameworks

Studies of the effectiveness of early learning and parental involvement often find areas with little consensus because there are different lenses to examine the research with no one definitive conceptual framework. Yamauchi et al. (2017) conducted a five-year study to analyze 215 journal articles on family-school partnerships to determine which frameworks were used in the research. In over half of the research studies, no single framework was explicitly used for student family-school partnerships. The study did identify four frameworks that were used most often: Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, social capital theory, Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence, and Moll's fund of knowledge. Most often used for family involvement were Epstein's types of family involvement and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parental involvement (Yamauchi et al., 2017). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and

Epstein's types of family involvement are used in many studies on early learning and developing

comprehensive systems of support.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, shown below in Figure 2, has been the basis

of how the complex relationships around a young child affect his or her environment. This theory

is grounded in the understanding that many variables can affect how a child develops. Variables

can interact with one another, resulting in different outcomes depending on how the factors

interact. This is an important concept to consider when developing a comprehensive support

system to help families assist their young children in preparing for school. Programming and

resources which assist one family to help their child be more ready for school may not have the

same effect on another family due to their differences (De Feyter et al., 2020; Galindo &Sheldon,

2012; Garrity, 2016).

Figure 3

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory

Reprinted From: Moving "eco" back into socio-ecological models: A proposal to reorient ecological
literacy into human developmental models and school systems - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate.
Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/An-adapted-illustrated-

Epstein's six types of family involvement, shown below in Figure 3, is the theoretical framework used in much legislation on creating family engagement programs and developing comprehensive support systems. These six types are the basic requirements of the Family Engagement Plan which Pine Tree Primary must write and implement yearly. Many Family Bridge Coalition member organizations have similar requirements for programming implementation requirements. First, there is a focus on helping families by increasing their parenting skills within the home setting and assisting schools in understanding the background and cultures of the families. Second, the development of systems for community clearing about the child's progress and programming offered by the school creates a two-way communication system between home and school. Third, improving the feasibility of families volunteering and participating in school activities and other programming increases the connections between families and the school. Fourth, through support, families work with their children at home by providing materials and programs that families can use to increase their ability to assist their children academically. Fifth, including families in the decision-making process increase the family's ability to advocate for their child's learning. Finally, by coordinating resources and programming, the community outside the school and the family can collaborate to help support the family in many areas of need (Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Wilder,2014; Yamauchi, 2017). Through these six types of involvement, young children's learning is influenced by the connections built around them. Stronger relationships between school and home can increase a child's achievement beyond school readiness for kindergarten (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Grace et al., 2014; Kelaher et al., 2009). Coalitions can determine the most effective means to support families and school readiness by developing or using a framework for early learning and parental involvement.

Figure 4

Epstein's Six Types Model of Parent Involvement
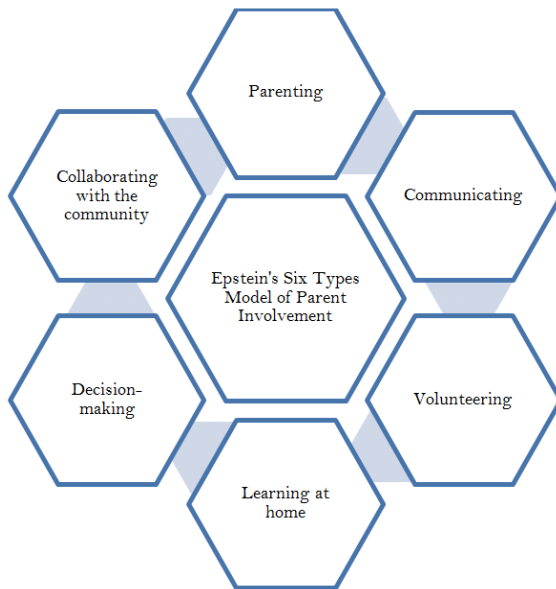
Reprinted From: Reading with Mom: Reading Habits among Rural Readers in Sarawak - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/An-adapted-illustrated- [accessed 14 Mar, 2022]

2.5 Most significant research or practice studies

2.5.1 School Readiness

School readiness is a term used to encompass a wide range of understandings and beliefs regarding how to tell when a young child is prepared to begin formal education. Halfon et al. (2009) defined readiness as "the mastery of certain basic skills or abilities that, in turn, permit a child to function successfully in a school setting, both academically and socially" (p.432). Many studies on the effects of school readiness focus on student academic outcomes after kindergarten (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Hunzai, 2007; Nores & Barnett, 2010; Wechsler et al., 2016). Fewer studies have highlighted the effects of readiness for school socially (Garrity et al., 2016; Halfon et al., 2009), but there is increasing evidence that social-emotional

readiness can be linked to outcomes in school (De Feyter et al., 2020). With school readiness as a goal, many programs have been implemented to provide early learning opportunities with varying degrees of success. However, there is no one framework through which school readiness is viewed. Various viewpoints will be compared by looking at the readiness skills a young child must reach a certain level of proficiency, the environment most conducive to readiness, profiles of preparedness, and the maturation needed for kindergarten.

Readiness Through Skills. This framework describes students acquiring a particular set of skills and being "ready" for school. Labeled as a "skills beget skill" approach, this framework assumes that young children will be successful as adults if they reach a certain readiness threshold (Votruba-Drzal & Dearing, 2017). For example, a child with the pre-reading skills needed to read in kindergarten would be a more proficient reader by third grade, thus having a higher chance of graduating high school and being college and career ready. In contrast, children who do not have the necessary pre-reading skills will struggle in school and have a higher chance of dropping out of high school.

The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) Dimensions of Readiness for schools have been used since 2000 to influence the development of many assessments and research projects seeking to determine the readiness of kindergarten students. These goals include readiness factors around physical health, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, language, and cognitive development (Hair et al., 2006). The purpose of viewing kindergarten readiness as a set of skills is to identify students at risk for learning difficulties and provide early intervention. For example, children who lack academic skills upon kindergarten entry but are healthy and have good social skills are more likely to catch up academically than children who lack academic, health, and social-emotional readiness skills (Hair et al., 2006; Mollborn, 2016).

However, there is a disconnect between what parents and teachers feel is most important for school readiness in this framework. Research shows that parents feel that students will have a more effective transition to school if they are optimistic about starting school. Parents also view their children as ready if they can adjust to the social aspects of kindergarten. In this viewpoint, a parent may not teach the child how to respond to their name or take care of personal self-health skills such as toileting and dressing, but the child may play well with their peers. While teachers understand the importance of social skills for kindergarten readiness, they view children as unready if they do not have some reading and math skills. There is a readiness gap when parents fail to understand that kindergarten is part of the K-12 school system rather than an early learning center whose primary purpose is to care for children while their parents work (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Hair et al., 2006). Generally, the level of kindergarten readiness in reading, math, and overall well-being ties directly to the parent's level of education and the environment in which the child grows up. Parents with more resources to provide early learning opportunities for their children will have children who are more prepared for kindergarten (Ackerman and Barnett, 2005).

Some of the skills identified as possible readiness indicators have been pieced together from various studies, but these skills may or may not be generalizable to all children. However, the work has been used to develop early learning guidelines and educational policies (Halle et al., 2012). These skills can be analyzed through a person-centered approach or a variable centered-approach. A person-centered approach looks at profiles that describe individuals deemed as school-ready. This readiness framework can be a set of skills or conditions of development that can show over time to indicate readiness. A variable-centered approach looks at individual skills or traits that a young child has or does not have to be considered school-

ready. A variable-centered approach may compare demographic data about a child with the assessment data to determine kindergarten readiness. For example, a child who lives in poverty is likelier to not score as high in kindergarten readiness skills as a child who does not live in poverty. (Halle et al., 2012; Votruba-Drzal & Dearing, 2017). Researchers looking to determine readiness by skills often look for the reasons behind the gaps in the skills by looking at the environment around the young child.

In Texas, public school kindergarten students are assessed using a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) within the first 60 days to determine readiness levels in emergent literacy reading, emergent literacy writing, mathematics, language and communication, and health and wellness. The KEA assessment aligns with early childhood outcomes the state deems necessary for the students to succeed in kindergarten. The results are reported yearly to the Early Childhood Data System(ECDS) to be analyzed by state agencies to determine overall general progress toward kindergarten readiness of the population and specifically of publicly funded prekindergarten programs (Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment, 2021). By looking at kindergarten readiness through a set of skills that a student has, one can use this framework to look at one view of readiness.

Readiness Through Environment. Another framework of school readiness takes components of the variable-oriented approach by predicting factors associated with the child that can positively or negatively impact school readiness and then applies it to the environment around the child and not just to the child in isolation. Mollborn (2016) transitioned the study of kindergarten readiness from focusing on what skills a young child has in various areas of readiness to the child's proximal environmental factors. Readiness through the environment

research examines early childhood and young children's interaction systems as they grow and develop.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory explains six overlapping spheres that surround a child during their development: microsystem (immediate environment), mesosystem (connection), exosystem(indirect environment), macrosystem (social and cultural values), and chronosystem (changes over time). The microsystem consists of the child's direct interactions at home and school. At the same time, the mesosystem extends to the environment surrounding the child but is only indirectly connected to the child. The spheres of influence further out have not been studied directly correlated with kindergarten readiness to the extent of being fully included in a general framework (Mollborn, 2016). These spheres of influence play a lesser degree on the child's direct development as they get further from the center. For example, a child's microsystem of mostly school and home will play a more significant role in the child's development than in the macrosystem of social and cultural values. Even this macrosystem may influence belief systems in the home but not significantly affect the young child's development. The person-oriented approach to school readiness focuses on the child's skills. The variable-center approach focuses on the microsystem and analyzes all the things directly around the child that could influence readiness.

The school transitional model steps into the mesosystem to examine the influences around that child to manipulate those variables to achieve school readiness (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Mollborn, 2016; Votruba-Drzal & Dearing, 2017). A school transitional model looks beyond what a child's readiness attributes indicate and looks at his or her environment to see how that will affect school readiness. Instead of examining a child's poverty level, it considers why they live in poverty. A model of this nature identifies variables to

manipulate, such as resources for food, insurance, education of the mother, and early education.

Additionally, this model considers the child's environment, such as a move, the addition of

siblings, or traumatic events. These environmental changes could affect school readiness

outcomes positively or negatively (Mollborn, 2016). By looking beyond sociodemographics,

which many of the readiness through skills use as the reason for lack of skills, the school

developmental model seeks to understand how the child's community can be changed to achieve

school readiness.

Readiness Through Maturity. A final but somewhat overlooked framework for school

readiness is simply the maturationist perspective. Using this view, children begin schooling when

the required educational enrollment begins in their community, state, or country (Snow, 2016).

Many families begin their children in public schools when their community says they should

start attending school. The year to start kindergarten is usually on a set cut-off date, splitting the

students into grades to continue through school as a cohort. The maturationist perspective is

shaped by what age the child's community identifies as ready to begin kindergarten to group

children of a similar age for their K-12 educational journey. Student maturity can vary

significantly from one state to another and country to country. A child may be considered mature

enough to enter kindergarten in one community but may not be by another community's

standards (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Hair et al., 2006; Snow, 2016). Even though children may

be chronologically eligible for kindergarten, this does not imply a sense of readiness found in the

other frameworks. Nationally, about 7% of families delay chronologically eligible kindergarten

students, more often boys than girls, to give the children an extra year to mature (Ackerman &

Barnett, 2005).

Some similarities in early learning programs, both nationally and internationally, have achieved school readiness for young children. Programs that provide support and instruction to caregivers can achieve school readiness by empowering the caregivers to be their child's primary teacher. Conducting home visits over varying periods to train families to teach young children can increase their academic achievement into their elementary school years (Goff et al., 2014; Grace et al., 2014; Wong et al., 2020). Focusing on family-centered early education fits Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework based on the idea that a comprehensive system of support is necessary for a child's success. (Garrity et al., 2016).

The need for more early learning programs to achieve school readiness has been emphasized in the literature continuously and through private and public initiatives. Several state agencies are currently involved in funding early learning in Texas. However, most of the funding is focused on Head Start or publicly funded prekindergarten, which is only available to families who qualify as economically disadvantaged (Brown, 2014; Early Childhood Initiative, 2018). The result is large groups of young children whose families struggle to afford high-quality pre-school programs. Poor quality early learning programs can create achievement gaps and have long-lasting effects. Children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs from disadvantaged families do better in school and are less likely to drop out (Bruner et al., 2004; Hage & Foundation for Child Development, 2012; Hunzai, 2007).

Though there is a need for more early learning programs to support school readiness, there is currently a lack of funding and resources for comprehensive programming funded on either a state or federal level. It is left to the local community to piece together a system of support in its absence. In many states, the authority of early learning programs is spread across many agencies with little consensus or public policy to guide the work (Hage & Foundation for

29

Child Development, 2012). The need to create broad-based coalitions and support to meet the

needs of families seeking early learning experiences is often noted in the research, along with a

need to align programs and funding sources. Recommendations suggest prioritizing quality

programming and continuous improvement, providing training and coaching, and coordinating

administration on early learning programs. The recommendations can lead to a more

comprehensive approach to early learning (Early Childhood Initiative, 2018; Wechsler et al.,

2016). There is a strong need for more early learning programs to meet the needs of all families

through more public and private support.

2.5.2 Early Learning Coalitions

Coalitions bring together many organizations that want to improve outcomes for the

community through a collective commitment to the common goals they share. Often formed by

various public and private stakeholders, coalitions seek to create cooperative, integrated groups

focused on solving problems that are important to the mission of the member organizations and

to improve outcomes for the surrounding communities. The effectiveness of coalitions in

improving health or educational outcomes in the surrounding community has been studied

extensively to determine what steps are needed to build a coalition (Briggs, 1999; Kelaher et al.,

2009; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Some critical factors in the development of a coalition found in

the research include identifying a common purpose, finding the organizations and groups needed

in the coalition, finding ways to create a consensus on decision-making, and implementing the

planned actions of the coalition (Briggs, 1999; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Kelaher et al., 2009;

Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). A shortage of research exists about the effectiveness of the coalition's

intermediate steps and the actual outcomes it improves. Most research focuses on the formation

of the coalition instead of the actual effectiveness of the coalition in enacting change (Kelaher et

al., 2009). Briggs (1999) compared coalition efforts to symphonies because of "the importance of multiple instruments working together to construct a superb performance" (p.367).

In order to form an effective early learning coalition, practices highlighted in the literature should be included in the formation of a strategic planning process. A systems-based approach that intentionally plans for collaboration and cohesion through formal rules and procedures can build a more effective coalition focused on achieving a common purpose. Early learning coalitions must tailor their work to the specific needs of the families they serve through effective communication systems that allow families to have input into the shared decision-making process. (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Garcia et al., 2016; Hage & Foundation, 2012; Nores & Fernandez, 2018; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Kelehar and Dunt (2009) studied this type of collaboration and developed a partnership tool that looked at what makes an effective partnership. They found that coalitions and partnerships with a way to gain feedback quickly on how the process is going could keep the momentum going, minimizing barriers to the partnership. Practices that highlight effective coalition formation apply to the realm of early learning because they bring groups together to create a comprehensive support system.

Unified efforts through the use of coalitions bridge connections between local and state levels of programming to provide an adequate level of support for early learning programs to be successful (Briggs, 1999; Bruner et al., 2004; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Kelaher et al., 2009; Osborne et al., 2014; Willer, 1990; Zakocs & Edwards, 2006). Because early learning opportunities are more decentralized and underfunded than schooling for K-12 students, groups needing to do similar work must combine resources to provide comprehensive support to young children and families. A clear plan and structure for forming an early learning coalition can increase the effectiveness of the work a coalition undertakes.

Coalition-sponsored programs are most effective when they have clear, focused

programmatic objectives that are designed to achieve realistic goals and address

community needs in a unique, innovative way. Programs that emerge from such an

orientation are better equipped to achieve targeted outcomes and sustain community

support because they use limited resources in an efficient manner, provide a focus for

coalition member work efforts, complement existing community programs, and promote

coalition credibility through the achievement and documentation of "quick wins" or

intermediate goals. (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001, p.256)

Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) go on to discuss how their qualitative analysis of 80 articles,

chapters, and practitioner's guides, concludes this these "quick wins" can occur after developing

the capacity of the coalition through building core collaborative capacities through four levels:

member, relational, organizational, and programmatic. The capacity of a coalition to effect

change can be developed through the four levels. By looking at a coalition's capacity to support

early learning, the group can use the strategic planning process to develop a comprehensive

system of support for families.

Partnerships created within an early learning coalition between the community and local

schools can strengthen the effectiveness of the work of a coalition. Frederico and Whiteside

(2016) studied the effects of partnerships and parent engagement through the lens of a case study

focusing on the efforts of social work to develop community-school partnerships. Factors

highlighted in the study which increase the chances of successful implementation of such work

include having a shared vision and goals, democratic governance, supportive policies with

external funding, skilled workers with clearly defined roles, and ongoing review and evaluations.

A significant conclusion of the study was the importance of the role of the leader of the work.

Moreover, this study found that the success of the project relied to a large extent on the expertise of the project coordinator or manager. This person is essentially the custodian of the vision, assisting participants to remain faithful to its aims and stay engaged throughout the process, even as the influence or importance of their role changes with particular tasks. This study demonstrated just how important it is that workers in such roles be well qualified and experienced, a finding that has relevance for social work. (Frederico & Whiteside, 2016, p 63)

School-community partnerships as a way to alleviate child maltreatment and support families are most effective where there is knowledge of what community programs would be most beneficial to both the families involved and the school (Dickinson et al., 2007; Hartman et al., 2017; Mangione & Speth, 1998; Vermilya & Kerwin, 2017). Currently, the Family Bridge Coalition does not have a leadership structure and relies on individuals to contribute voluntarily. Participation in the coalition is not currently required for participating organizations' funding or job descriptions. There is no established system in the research to determine which community and school partnerships would be most beneficial to supporting early learning in the area.

2.5.3 Parental involvement

Parental involvement is an encompassing term found in research and governmental policy definitions. Also known as parent engagement, family involvement, home-school partnership, or family engagement, this concept has a long history in education (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Frederico & Whiteside, 2016; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Gross et al., 2020; Janssen & Vandenbroeck, 2018; Lau & Ng, 2019; Mandarakas, 2014). Baquedano-López et al. (2013) discuss the history of parental involvement through its evolution from parents as problems to parents as partners to parents are the first teachers. There have been many initiatives

33

by the federal government, states, and local governments promoting parental involvement. However, there has not been a consensus about what this means nor how effective programming should look. (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Bruner et al., 2004; Grace et al., 2014; Mandarakas, 2014; Yamauchi et al., 2017).

The abundance of research on parental involvement makes it difficult for policy-makers to distinguish between individual studies and objectively select the high-quality research to serve as the basis of their decisions—the issue of a wide range of research on parental involvement. Even though there are many studies on the importance and effectiveness of parental involvement, determining what makes parental involvement a factor in school readiness is based on the many stakeholders' interpretations of what parental involvement is. Research has been conducted using various quantitative and qualitative methods with sampling processes and research questions. To synthesize this information to be used by policymakers can be challenging to complete, leading to gaps in the assurance that resources are being put towards the most effective parental involvement initiatives (Wilder, 2014).

Parent involvement, with its many terms and definitions, is how parents and the surrounding community support each other in reaching the goal of school readiness. What constitutes parental involvement has different meanings when viewed from the perspective of the caregiver at home and the early learning provider. Parental involvement is most effective at increasing school readiness when it is highly structured with a clearly outlined framework of objectives and results (Hara & Burke, 2001; Ma et al., 2016). Several meta-analyses of the research have been conducted to examine the relationships between learning outcomes and the education involvement of parents and children during early educational experiences to determine which frameworks were most responsible for increasing student outcomes. The research

concluded a positive correlation between learning outcomes and parental involvement, but when resources were limited, more focus should be on increasing parental involvement over community partnership development (Ma et al., 2016; Polanin et al., 2014; Schueler et al., 2017 Wilder, 2014). Further research has been conducted using a meta-analysis of parental involvement and its effects on student achievement. The synthesis of nine studies concluded no consensus on parent involvement. However, the achievement effects can be seen across many academic areas (Wilder, 2014).

Family Engagement will be used synonymously with parental involvement to be more inclusive of the many ways in which families provide for their children. Much of the research uses parental involvement or parent engagement to describe how the primary caregiver in a child's life interacts with the school (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Dermott & Fowler, 2020; Gross et al., 2020). However, the term parent does not fully describe the role of the primary caregiver(s) because the family structure has changed. The family is no longer just mom, dad, and children, or even those who live in the household with a child (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013; Dermott & Fowler, 2020) . "Family is best thought of as a property of interpersonal relationships, rather than demarcating an institution constituted by a set of members" (Dermott & Fowler, 2020, p.6). The term family engagement also aligns with the Family Bridge Coalition's mission and vision statement to provide support to help families create "strong family bonds, well-being, and school readiness" (Family Bridge Coalition, 2020). Parental involvement, known as family engagement, has shifted throughout the research to encompass the varied structures of families that exist today.

Family engagement programs for early learning have been shown through numerous studies to be an effective way to achieve school readiness if the parties involved are on equal

footing. Positive parent-school engagement leads to positive outcomes for students. The role of the teacher is crucial in the success of any parent engagement program because it sets the expectations for how the relationship between school and home will work (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Mandarakas, 2014, Redding et al., 2011). Federal education policies have often highlighted parent involvement in their children's education as an educational reform linked to substantial academic achievement. Parent involvement in their children's learning has historically been painted negatively. A family's inability to be involved in their child's education is often why the child does not achieve it even though the schooling is ineffective (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Frederico & Whiteside, 2016; Gross et al., 2020). Research also indicates how a teacher defines parental involvement affects the quality and outcomes of the parent interaction with preparation for school readiness. When the teacher sees parents as equal partners who can contribute in meaningful ways and not just how the teacher decides, students are school-ready (Bhengu & Svosve, 2019; Lau & Ng, 2019; Mandarakas, 2014; Redding et al., 2011; Yamauchi et al., 2017). Family involvement in a child's education can increase school achievement if the school's structure and the teachers' perception as to what parental involvement is are designed in such a way to support families and not punish them for perceived lack of participation.

In the same way, programming can engage communities with families. Family engagement programs, which include parents as partners and not just how schools and providers determine, can increase positive early learning outcomes. A family engagement program focusing on the home environment and supporting parents as the first teachers increase positive student outcomes well into childhood (Hayes et al., 2018; Janssen & Vandenbroeck, 2018). Research further breaks down this concept into parent engagement models: school-based

involvement, homeschool conference, and home-based involvement (Gross et al., 2020). Many parent engagement programs for early learning focused on school readiness are home-based. Providers work with families in the home to build support in the child's first learning environment (Champine et al., 2018; Duffee et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2018). Home visiting programs have been implemented worldwide to improve school readiness outcomes and parent involvement in learning. (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Goff et al., 2014; Grace et al., 2014; Hayes et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2020).

Even though parent engagement is a practice linked with improved student learning outcomes, there is a lack of guidance in research and governmental requirements regarding effective parental engagement and how to evaluate it in real-world situations. Many of the roles of evidence-based practices have not been well defined, resulting in a more value-lending approach to parent engagement, which may or may not lead to greater academic achievement. Gross et al. (2020) studied how the "two-way communication" definition from the United States Department of Education has often been labeled as the parent's responsibility instead of shared responsibility between the provider and family. (Gross et al., 2020).

Parental involvement and engagement are included in many federal programs such as Title I, Title III, and IDEA; there is a lack of specificity as to what practices are related to increasing parent involvement and school readiness (Ma et al., 2016; Wilder, 2014). In another study in 2014, Wilder conducted a meta-analysis of nine different studies on parental involvement in student achievement and concluded that teachers, parents, and policymakers had recognized the positive impacts of parental involvement even though there is still no consensus as to what it is and how to evaluate it. Without a proper definition of parent involvement and a

way to evaluate its effects, there are gaps in the literature on implementing an effective model to achieve school readiness.

When defining the main elements or indicators of high-quality early childhood family engagement, many states, agencies, and early education providers use the High-Quality Family Engagement for Quality Rating Improvement Systems Key Indicators: professional learning for providers on how to engage with families successfully, growing families knowledge base, promoting family to family connections for understanding and support, connecting families with community resources and supports, fostering two-way productive communication between the providers and home, and creating programs that encourage family engagement. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services et al., 2018). Based upon many studies on family engagement and parental involvement using many different approaches, these approaches most significantly impact family wellness and readiness. There is no one framework around what family engagement is in the research. However, there are similar descriptors found in many of the studies conducted. High-quality family engagement programs increase student learning outcomes from early childhood and beyond because the involvement of a parent in a child's learning is a significant indicator of future learning success (Bruner et al., 2004; Gross et al., 2020; Janssen & Vandenbroeck, 2018; Wilder, 2014).

The above indicators echo requirements for high-quality Texas public prekindergarten programs for family engagement and the Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan (Texas Early Learning Council, 2020). The Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan guides the work of state agencies and other stakeholders on early childhood learning for the next five years (2020-2025). One intended outcome of the strategic plan is to guide the collaborative efforts of multiple agencies that play a role in the funding, organization, and governance of early learning initiatives

in Texas. Within this strategic plan are many references to the role of family engagement in the education of young children. One goal is that all families have access to high-quality programs for early learning and the information needed to determine which program is the best fit for their child. It highlights the parent's role as the child's first and most important teacher (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Janssen & Vandenbroeck, 2018). Another goal of the Early Learning Strategic Plan is to equip families with the educational tools and resources to help their children be healthy and school-ready. A critical fundamental piece in this plan is to put the responsibility of making sure a student is ready for school as the family's priority. In contrast, the community puts supportin place to make this a reality (Hartman et al., 2017). Family engagement is a vital component of the Texas Strategic Early Learning plan and aims to have all young children healthy and ready to learn.

2.6 Closing Thoughts on Chapter 2

This chapter set the foundation for using a mixed-methods action research approach to solve the problem. Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge use the systems thinking approach to find more information about achieving school readiness. Then the literature review examined the landscape around early learning coalitions, school readiness, and family engagement. It is vast, with many different approaches and definitions (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Gross et al., 2020; Osborne et al., 2014). It may be left to the local community to define school readiness and family engagement in a way relevant to the needs of the stakeholders involved (Texas Early Learning Council, 2020). A few common findings stand out. Schools, parents, and community partners must find ways to work collaboratively to make the most of a young child's early years of brain development. All children must have opportunities to become school ready even when faced with challenges such as lack of funding or a unified focus on the state and national levels (Bruner

et al., 2004; Early Childhood Initiative, 2018). Local communities must find ways to band together to affect early learning outcomes for their area using early childhood comprehensive systems. The role of the community and its capacity to provide comprehensive support for families must be defined by its capacity and capability to serve the families and their needs for early learning support (Foster-Fisherman et al.,2001). Coalitions for early learning can bolster this collaborative effort by bringing together those with a vested interest in preparing young children for school (Zakocs, 2006).

Through my ROS, I examined the capacity of an early learning coalition to assist families in preparing young children to be school-ready. The research literature suggests that a robust, local early childhood comprehensive system for families and young children will achieve school readiness. There is a lack of connection between the coalition's work, its member organizations, and the local public school, where most young children will enroll as they reach kindergarten age.

CHAPTER III SOLUTION AND METHOD

3.1 Outline of the proposed solution

Through a multi-strand mixed-methods study, I determined the areas of need for family engagement efforts at Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge to increase the capacity of member organizations of Family Bridge to support the families of Pine Tree Primary in the area of school readiness by providing multiple opportunities and methods for families and the coalition to connect. Pine Tree Primary and the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition conducted needs analysis as part of their ongoing program evaluations. One way to identify future parent engagement efforts is to integrate to determine both groups' needs analysis using systems thinking approaches to identify the underlying causes (Hovmand, 2014; Stroh, 2015).

This study addressed two sides of the same coin: what programs can offer and what families need. There was currently no way to analyze this quantitatively and qualitatively by either Pine Tree Primary or Family Bridge, which left gaps in understanding what families need and how programs could help them. A sequential explanatory QUAN>QUAL design was used to discover more about the families of Pine Tree and their perceptions of school readiness. First, in Strand 1, surveys identified families with young children and what programs and resources they used to support school readiness. Then, in Strand 2, the survey results informed follow-up focus groups and interviews to gather information about family perceptions of achieving school readiness. A convergent QUAN+QUAL design was used to compare the programming and resources provided through the member organizations of Family Bridge to Strands 1 and 2. In Strand 3, Family Bridge community group members completed a survey to gather information about programs and resources provided. Then the results of both surveys and the focus groups and interviews were analyzed separately and jointly for convergence and divergence to

understand the capacity of the early learning coalition to meet the school readiness needs of the

families. The results allowed for a reframing for our families, schools, and community about

what school readiness is for our area and how to support families of young children.

Figure 5
Multi Strand Mixed Methods Research Method Diagram
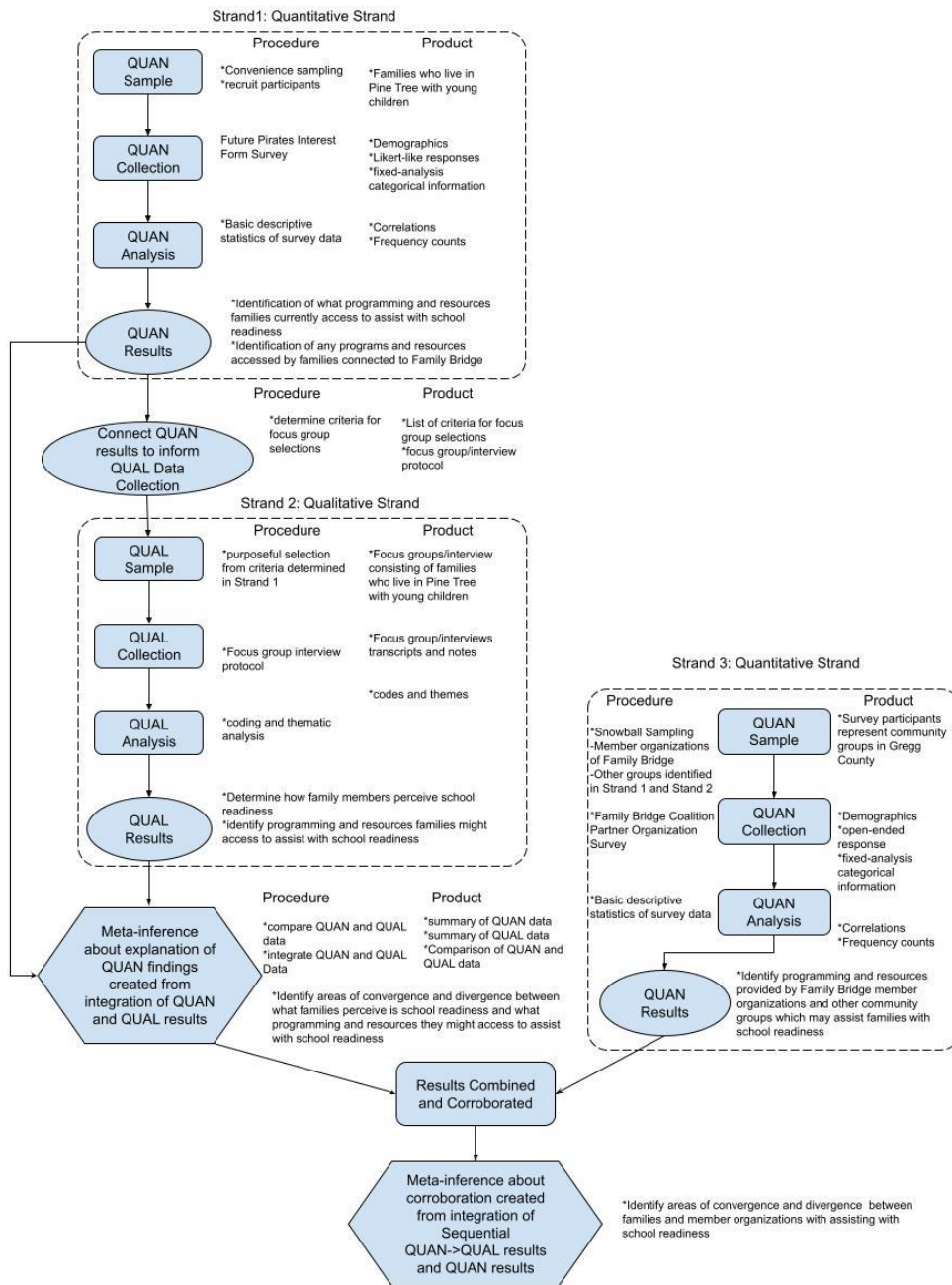
Table 2.1

Research Questions and Strand Alignment

Research Question	Data sources	Analysis Methods	Results Rationale
Strand 1-What programming and resources do families currently access to assist with school readiness?	Future Pirates Survey -Likert-Like -fixed response categorical	Basic descriptive statistics of survey data	*Identification of what programming and resources families currently access to assist with school readiness *Identification of any programs and resources accessed by groups connected to Family Bridge
Strand 2 - (2a) How do family members perceive school readiness?	Focus Groups and Interview -transcripts -notes	Coding for categories and themes	*Determined how family members perceive school readiness
Strand 2 -(2b) What types of programming and resources would families like to access to assist with school readiness?	Focus Groups and Interviews -transcripts -notes	Coding for categories and themes	*Identified programming and resources families might access to assist with school readiness
Mixed - (1 & 2a) How do family perceptions about school readiness explain the programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness?	Future Pirates Survey -Likert-Like -fixed response categorical	Basic descriptive statistics of survey data	*Identified areas of convergence and divergence between what families perceive is school readiness and what programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness
Mixed -(1 & 2b) How does the desired programming of families reflect gaps and/or needs met given the programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness?	Focus Groups and Interview -transcripts -notes	Coding for themes	
Strand 3-(3) What programming is available through member community organizations of Family Bridge that will assist with school readiness?	Family Bridge Survey	Basic descriptive statistics of survey data	*Identified programming and resources provided by Family Bridge member organizations and other community groups which

	-fixed-response categorical -open-ended response		may assist families with school readiness
Mixed (1, 2, &3) - How does the programming available through member community organizations of Family Bridge to assist with school readiness corroborate (converge or diverge) the programming and resources accessed and needed to assist with school readiness?	Joint analysis of results from Strands 1,2,&3	Basic descriptive statistics of survey data Coding for themes	*Identified areas of convergence and divergence between families and member organizations assisting with school readiness

3.2 Justification of the proposed solution

There is a lack of cohesion and connection when serving children prenatal to age five between groups providing services, early learning centers, the KG-12 school system, and families. TEA has made it clear that it will not provide a cohesive system of support statewide and has left it to the local community to develop. Pine Tree Primary and the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition recognize that one of the first steps in development is to find out what programming and resources are already available in our area to support school readiness. Once homed in Pine Tree ISD, the coalition's goal is to expand this process to all communities in Gregg County. This process would involve a continuous process to identify, evaluate, and adjust support to meet families' needs and ensure their children are school-ready.

3.3 Study context and participants.

Participants:

- Families of Pine Tree Primary who completed the survey

- Families living in the Pine Tree area who have children who may eventually enroll in Pine Tree Primary

- Member and nonmember organizations of the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition who complete the survey

3.3.1 Strand 1-QUAN:

Strand 1 participants were identified using a convenience sampling method. Families living in the Pine Tree area with young children were sampled through built-in communications systems in the school district. The surveys were completed electronically or on paper. The survey was sent to all 4,600 students' families, of whom many would have young children not yet old enough to be in school. Links to complete the survey were also posted on the Pine Tree Primary website and Facebook page.

3.3.2 Strand 2-QUAL:

Before the implementation of this study, there were few opportunities for families to be included in any decision-making at Pine Tree Primary. After Strand 1, one follow-up focus group of four members and six interviews were conducted at parent engagement events, including Pirate Family Talks and School Tours. This is the first step in attempts to give families a voice and make sure that their needs are being met. Strand 2 sampling was intended to be a purposeful sample based on categories of families identified in Strand 1. Originally, purposeful sampling was used to create the focus groups. Families who speak languages other than English were invited to a focus group where a translator was present to assist with questions and answers. Families who already have children enrolled in Pine Tree Schools versus families who have their first child enrolling soon were invited to a group matching those areas. However, participation

was limited at times to one participant, so the planned focus groups turned into interviews. To improve participation in focus groups and interviews, sampling was nested within convenience sampling from Strand 1. All families were invited to participate. Focus groups and interviews consisted of families who had completed the Future Pirates Interest Survey or families who attended a school tour and were interested in becoming Future Pirates. Interviews were conducted in cases where a focus group was unable to be formed due to conflicts in the families' schedules.

3.3.3 Strand 3-QUAN:

Strand 3 sampling was conducted using a snowballing method. As new community groups who needed to fill out the survey were discovered, they were included in the research. Due to the lack of early learning centers within the coalition and only one public school-based provider, it is critical to identify other groups the coalition needs to contact. The sampling for the member organizations began with known members of the coalition. However, during the completion of the Future Pirates Interest Form, if a family indicated a service, provider, or group that is not a member of Family Bridge, efforts were made to have that group complete the survey to learn more about their program or resource. The last question asked for other groups that might also be future members of the coalition. Through this process, it was possible to identify other groups focused on school readiness, not yet members of the coalition, based on the available resources and capacity of the known groups.

3.4 Proposed research paradigm

Action research is "a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (Stringer, 2014, p.1). With

Family Bridge and Pine Tree Primary working together to find out what is needed to help

families achieve school readiness, a community-based approach is more effective. This approach

pulls in the stakeholders who live in the community and builds upon their knowledge base and

understanding of the problem (Senge and Scharmer, 2001). The emphasis on community

participation, joint planning, and shared ownership of the solution made possible by this

paradigm of action research can make the solution more sustainable (Esinger and Senturia,

2001). Family Bridge and Pine Tree Primary used a similar process to complete their ongoing

improvement plans using informal mixed methods action research. Combining the two programs'

resources in this study allowed for more understanding of the problem and potential solutions.

The use of a multistrand research model to integrate both sequential and concurrent

qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis was the best choice to gather more

information about the programming availability of Family Bridge and the perception of

achieving school readiness by the families of Pine Tree Primary. There was a need to find out

why community-based programs and resources which may assist with school readiness are or are

not being accessed. By combining the data collected in each strand, a more complete picture of

how families access resources for assistance with school readiness was determined. Ivankova's

mixed-method action research offers multiple points of intersection and analysis within her

reconnaissance phase (Ivankova, 2015). There were multiple integration points between

qualitative and quantitative methodologies during data collection, data analysis, and

interpretation of results to examine the relationship between the study groups (Creswell and

Plano Clark, 2017). A central conceptual framework that aligns with this view of mixed methods

research this study is built upon is pragmatism. This worldview suggests that different rules,

theories, and tools may be used based on the research context being studied. A primary focus of

pragmatism is the outcomes of the action as opposed to philosophizing. The knowledge learned

through this approach is based on the world's reality and within the context of the experience

(Leavy, 2017). This pragmatic view fits this study because both Pine Tree Primary and Family

Bridge Coalition sought to find actionable information on how to support families with school

readiness.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

3.5.1 Quantitative Collection Methods

Quantitative methods were primarily used to gather data during Strand 1 and Strand 3. In

this mixed-methods study, these two strands were conducted concurrently.

Strand 1. First, the Future Pirates Interest Form (see Appendix C) identified families

with preschool children and what the families currently accessed in community resources or

programs. Developed by the SBDM committee and special education faculty at Primary, this

survey sought to gather information about families with young children and families' needs for

support and identified which children need further evaluation for early intervention. The items

included background information about the family, children not enrolled in school, and a Likert-

type rating of parent self-efficacy. To determine what languages families spoke at home the

following questions were asked:

What language(s) do you speak at home? _____
What language would you like to receive communications from the school in?
  - English
  - Spanish
These questions do not determine language proficiency of the children who may potentially

enroll in school but to determine which families may speak languages other than English in the

home. The survey also includes a question where families can indicate if they have accessed any

programs and resources offered by Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition. There is also an option to write in answers if the choice is not available for selection.

Strand 3. Concurrently, The Family Bridge Coalition Partner Organization Survey (See Appendix B) is a survey used by the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition member organizations to understand better the community's programs and resources available to assist families. The first section asked for basic contact information of the partner organization and the mission, vision, or purpose statement. The second section of this survey drew upon the work of the Promising Practices Network on Children, Families, and Communities, which identified some key components to look at within an organization to see how it might benefit children and families (Kilburn et al., 2014). We determined what type of school readiness could be directly or indirectly impacted by the target audience and type of program setting. Programs goals and outcomes were also analyzed to see what each program or resource offered to assist families. The third section discussed establishing communication between the partner organization and Pine Tree Primary families. A final section asked the partner organization to share any information they feel would benefit the early learning coalition, potential ways to help the partner organization, and other organizations they feel should be contacted.

3.5.2 Qualitative Collection Methods

Qualitative data was collected in a sequential QUAN>->QUAL method using the data gathered from Strand 1 through the Future Pirates Interest Form to create the questions to be used in a series of focus groups and interviews. After the analysis of Strand 1 showed that many families chose to send their young children to early learning centers, more information was needed about their role in school readiness for families. There are currently few connections between Family Bridge, Pine Tree Primary, and early learning centers. Also, when nearly half of

49

the families indicated little to no participation in community groups and resources, more information was needed to be gathered to find out why. Krueger and Casey (2000) define focus groups as "carefully planned series of discussions, designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (p.5). While the Future Pirates Interest Form helped determine who the families of the future pirate might be, it did not answer the question about what families perceive school readiness to be. During the focus groups and interviews, clarifying questions were asked, allowing families to give more details about their journeys to school readiness.

Strand 2. Focus groups and interviews were developed based on how the families answered the questions about early learning opportunities, how they knew their child was ready for school, and what they perceived in school readiness. Focus groups contained families with children enrolled in early learning centers or at home with a caregiver. Focus groups consisted of semi-structured interviews asking how many define school readiness and what supports they wished the community and school provided to support school readiness. Focus groups for Strand 2 were conducted at Pine Tree Primary during the months of May and June in the Family Resource Center. Pirate Family Focus Talks and Primary School Tours were advertised on social media, with personal invitations issued to participants who fit the criteria that we wanted to learn more about their perceptions. The criteria were families who speak languages other than English, families with children already enrolled in Pine Tree, and families with children new to Pine Tree. Participants were recruited through the Future Pirates Interest Form. One focus group with four families was conducted along with six family interviews when focus groups could not be formed due to lack of participation. I was the moderator of the focus groups and interviews, with another Pine Tree Primary staff member available to translate for participants as needed. Questions were

developed based on the responses to the survey in Strand 1. Questions were developed to learn more about how families perceive school readiness based on their choices of early learning opportunities to learn how families knew their child was ready for school and what experiences they felt had been helpful to their child. To learn more about why community programs and resources were participated in or not by families, questions were developed to ask deterine barriers families may have that prevent participation in community programs and resources, as well as what types of programs and resources they would like to see in the future. Follow-up questions were used to further understand the participant responses during the focus group. Another consideration in the development of the focus groups is the accurate collection of the data from the group. Note-taking occurred during the focus groups and interviews. After each focus group or interview, notes were analyzed to see if questions asked during the focus group or interview needed to be adjusted to more directly find the answers to the research questions.

3.5.3. Integration of Mixed-Methods

There were several instances in this multistrand mixed-methods action research study where data collected in one strand did influence the other strands. Strand 1 to Strand 2 is a QUAN>QUAL design. First, during Strand 1, when families indicate a private therapy provider, early learning provider, or community program while completing the Future Pirates Interest Form, contact was made with the provider to have them complete the Family Bridge Coalition Partner Organizations Survey. Also, one of the focus group questions in Strand 2 was created to determine why families have chosen specific programs and resources to assist their families. These results in the quantitative information gathered in Strand 1 were further explained using the qualitative feedback from the focus groups and interviews in Strand 2. Results showed areas

where families seek assistance with school readiness that are not yet connected with Family

Bridge or Pine Tree Primary, creating opportunities for growth and change.

Strand 3 was implemented concurrently with Strand 1 and 2. There were connections

between programs and services provided by many partner organizations that were either listed in

the survey given in Strand 1 or discussed in focus groups with families in Strand 2.

3.6 Justification of use of instruments in context

Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition must conduct needs

analysis as part of each organization's continuous improvement plan. Therefore, survey

instruments developed by each group can be used for this study. Because I am a leader within

each group, I had a part in creating these instruments. However, the surveys were created

collaboratively using a team approach. To create the Future Pirates Interest Form, questions were

created and evaluated by the SBDM committee and the special education team. The PTA

leadership committee then reviewed them. Both the SDBM committee and PTA leadership

committee members contain current and future parents of Pine Tree Primary who could

participate in creating the Future Pirates Interest Form. The leadership team of the coalition

developed the Family Bridge Member Organization Survey.

3.7 Data Analysis Strategy

3.7.1 Strand 1-QUAN

Data analysis in Strand 1 was conducted to identify what programming and resources

families currently access to assist with school readiness and to identify programs and resources

currently accessed by groups connected to Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition. Using the

Future Pirates Interest Form, I analyzed demographic data regarding families of young children who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten. The fixed response categorical information was analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the family size, location, economic station, languages spoken in the home, and current access to community resources. The Likert-type questions were analyzed to look for trends in how confident families feel in how they help their child develop. Strand 1 influenced the focus groups formed in Strand 2. Families with similar patterns of answers were grouped for focus groups. For instance, families who speak other languages at home besides English were invited to participate in a focus group with translation services. However, all families who completed the interest form were invited to participate in a focus group or interview once initial participation was low.

3.7.2 Strand 2- QUAL

Data analysis in Strand 2 was conducted to answer research questions 2a and 2b to determine how family members perceive school readiness and identify programs and resources families might access to assist with school readiness. Focus groups and interviews formed during Strand 2 were asked a series of questions based upon the answers provided in the Future Pirates Interest Form, such as:

- How do you know your child was ready for school?

- What does school readiness mean to you?

- What daycares or early learning experiences were most beneficial for your child?

- What other information would you like to know about kindergarten readiness?

- What community resources and programs have you used?

    o   What are the barriers to participation?

    o   What types of programs and services would you like to see?

53

- What do you wish you had to help your children be ready for school?

An inductive approach was used to analyze the information provided during the focus groups and interviews. First, the data was organized and transcribed. Then the data was reviewed for overall meaning. Triangulation through the use of different types of participants increased the trustworthiness of the data. The data were categorized into themes and then interpreted to look for meanings that answered the research questions or influenced the data interpretation of the other strands (Ivankova, 2015). Data was then analyzed to look for patterns of areas in which Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge can improve in their efforts to support school readiness.

3.7.3 Strands 1 and 2-Mixed

Data gathered during Strand 1 and Strand 2 was analyzed to identify areas of convergence and divergence between what families perceive as school readiness and what programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness. This meta-analysis was conducted by comparing the results of the qualitative findings collected in Strand 2 to further explain the quantitative findings in Strand 1. For example, data were analyzed to answer research questions 1 & 2a to determine if family perceptions of school readiness explain what programming is accessed by the families. The data was then analyzed to answer research questions 1& 2b to determine if the programming desired by families reflects gaps and/or needs met given the programming and resources currently accessed to assist with school readiness.

3.7.3 Strand 3-QUAN

Data gathered in Strand 3 was used to answer research question 3 to identify programs and resources provided by Family Bridge member organizations and other community groups which may assist families with school readiness. Basic descriptive statistics of the survey data were used to identify correlations and frequency counts of the types of programs and resources

provided by the member organizations. Organizations can compare what types of programs and resources are currently offered to determine a gap in the known organizations that focus on school readiness. This process identified organizations offering educational programming for young children. The Family Bridge Coalition Partner Organization Survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine which organizations could affect families achieving school readiness who do not serve young children directly.

3.7.4 Strands 1, 2, and 3- MIXED

To answer the mixed research question 1, 2, & 3, a joint analysis was used to identify areas of convergence and divergence between family members and member organizations assisting with school readiness. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, data analysis determined what types of programs and services are needed to meet family needs for school readiness as well as potential areas for further research. Results from data were gathered and studied concurrently to answer the research questions using complementary data to discover themes found (Plano Clark and Ivankova, 2016). Kawamura et al. (2009) used a similar process by integrating survey data and interview data to draw comparisons between the two approaches in research. This same analysis was used to corroborate Strands 1, 2, & 3. First, the Family Bridge Coalition Partner Organizations Survey and the Future Pirates Interest Form were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Then, links between themes were identified as needed, and programs that match will be needed to understand whether or not there is a current capacity to serve the area for school readiness. Common themes identified in both the quantitative and qualitative strands were used to inform each other. For example, if a theme was found on the QUAL side, such as a need for health and wellness, the QUAN side was examined to see that programs matched those criteria. A conclusion drawn from this joint analysis demonstrated a

need for a specific program to add staff members or programming hours to accommodate the

increased need of the families. If no programs are currently identified in the QUAN strand, this

showed the need to either find more groups for the study sample or conclude that one does not

exist in this area.

3.8 Timeline

Table 2

Timeline

Topic	Approximate Date of Completion
Strand 1: Determine families with young children in the Pine Tree Primary area and what community resources they have accessed 1. Send Future Pirates Survey to all current Pine Tree ISD families to determine younger siblings. 2. Send Future Pirates Survey to local early learning centers. 3. Post Future Pirates Survey on all social media with a link to complete. 4. Monitor responses to the Future Pirates Survey weekly to determine when a sample size matches the school's demographics.	March-May
Strand 3: Determine the collective capacity and programming availability of Family Bridge towards school readiness 1. Send Family Bridge Survey to all known members of the coalition. 2. Send the Family Bridge Survey to all suggested partners listed in the survey. 3. Send the survey to any providers or resources listed by families who complete the Future Pirates Survey. 4. Monitor the responses weekly for completion.	March-May

Strand 1: Determine families with young children in the Pine Tree Primary area and what community resources they have accessed 1. Analyze the responses for common themes to determine questions for focus groups 2. Analyze survey responses to determine focus group membership	March-May

Strand 2: Determine family perception of school readiness and identify family needs towards achieving school readiness
 	
1. Conduct Focus Groups and Interviews
 	
    1. Primary PTA
 	
    2. Bilingual Families
 	
    3. Families with other siblings already in school
 	
    4. Families with no children already in school
	May-June

Joint Analysis: 1. Identify common themes between families and member organizations towards school readiness 2. Identify areas of gaps in service that could achieve school readiness	May-June

Joint Results:
1. Present findings of focus groups, interviews, and parent surveys to:
    a.   Family Bridge Coalition
    b.   Pine Tree Primary SBDM
    c.   Primary PTA
2. Create an action plan of how to fill perceived gaps for both Family Bridge Coalition and Pine Tree Primary Family Engagement for the next school year
	June-July

3.9 Reliability and Validity concerns or equivalents

3.9.1 MMR quality

When designing and implementing a mixed methods research study, it is essential to ensure the design quality is up to standard. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggest these

standards should include collecting both qualitative and quantitative data through rigorous data collection and analysis procedures that use different data sources to understand the problem better. Integrating the strategies of mixed-method research into a design can increase the quality of the method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). One way to improve the design quality is to increase the sustainability of the research design to have connections between the research questions (Teddie &Tashakkori, 2009). The participants of each strand were able to provide information about new participants who needed to be included in the process. Information from Strand 1 was used to form the basis of Strand 2, while groups mentioned in Strands 1 and 2 were asked to complete the survey for Strand 3. Another way to improve the quality of the research method is by examining the interpretive rigor to determine if the finding from many inferences is consistent. The results were presented to Pine Tree Primary SBDM, PTA, and Family Bridge. Based on the families' recommendations, the groups will use the information to plan programs and resources to support school readiness. The results of this study will be presented to members of the Primary SBDM, PTA, Family Bridge, and other community members who may be interested in the results increasing the catalytic validity of the research method. By sharing the procedures and results with participants, others reviewed the data interpretation for accuracy.

3.9.2 Validity and reliability of Strand 1

Validity and reliability were concerns within this study because there must be a way to measure the degree to which the surveys measure what they are supposed to consistently (Ivankova, 2015). To ensure reliability, Future Pirates Interest Form is used yearly to identify new families to Pine Tree ISD and new children born in the last year. Pine Tree Primary has used the Future Pirates Interest Form over the past two years to gather information about future students before the enrollment period in August. The SBDM committee developed the survey

with input from the special education department to gather information using questions and answer choices. Both groups would best help families connect with the school and community-based services. This survey was used to contact families not yet in our student information system and create a list of families who might need to be contacted for school-based services.

To ensure validity, the surveys being used for this study are used for many purposes within and outside the study context. This leads to many opportunities to check to ensure the surveys measure what is intended to be measured. First, the Future Pirates Interest Form informs the registration process of new students enrolling at Pine Tree Primary over the next few school years. Second, the specific information gathered about each child within a family will be used to inform Child Find efforts by the Primary Sped Team. To ensure the Future Pirates Interest Form gathers accurate and correct information, the Primary SBDM committee, special education department, and school staff who enroll students view the results and give input on survey changes. School staff will contact parents to verify that the information in the survey is correct.

3.9.3 Validity and reliability of strand 3

Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition members developed the Family Bridge Partner Organization Survey to gather more information about programs and resources offered. Several questions were adapted from the Anne E. Casey Foundation self-assessment and planning tool for nonprofits and schools (Boots et al., 2016). Using a format for categorizing the types of programs and resources available using common terminology to nonprofits and schools increases the validity and reliability of the survey because there is a collective understanding of what the terms mean.

Herr and Anderson (2005) established several criteria to assess the validity of a mixed methods action research study, including outcome validity, process validity, democratic validity,

catalytic validity, and dialogic validity. Validity can be defined as the degree to which the study

or instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Through outcome validity, the results of

this study informed both Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge about what families need to help

achieve school readiness. The results impacted the improvement plans of both organizations for

the following year. Throughout the research process, the results from each strand influenced the

process and outcomes of other strands, which ensured process validity.

3.9.4 Trustworthiness of strand 2

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest using the following four criteria to examine the

trustworthiness of a qualitative study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability. Credibility occurs when there are opportunities to ensure that the participants'

words and experiences are interpreted correctly. The focus group and interview participants' own

words were used in the data analysis and reporting. This study was designed and conducted

specifically to meet the needs of Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition

of Gregg County. Both Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge seek to use family focus groups to

understand the families' perceptions of school readiness. Therefore, groups were created to

reflect the demographics of the families of Pine Tree Primary and the variety of answers given.

There is an issue with the generalizability of the findings. The findings of this study may not be

generalizable to other schools in Gregg County or other early learning coalitions outside of

Gregg County.

3.9.5 Quality of the action research process

Ivankova (2016) presents several quality assessment criteria for use in the reconnaissance

or fact-finding stage of a mixed methods action research study. One criterion is the purpose

statement, and research questions must assess the problem or identify areas of improvement. The results of this study sought to shed more light on how families, schools, and the community can use programs and resources to improve school readiness. Another quality criterion addresses the extent the quantitative and qualitative data sources are chosen, collected, and analyzed within the reconnaissance phase. Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge members reviewed the surveys and results. Other action researchers will not peer-reviewed this research because the results are explicitly intended to be used in a local context. Both surveys used within this study do not have an end date by which participants can no longer complete the information. Because of the ongoing nature of the surveys, the data from each could be analyzed again at different times. This study was conducted during the Spring of 2022 to use the data collected and analyzed to inform a program evaluation and improvement plan for the 2022-2023 school year. If the study results inform future program evaluations and improvement plans, new data will need to be collected to determine if the needs identified in this study are similar. The Future Pirates Interest Form intends to be used yearly to identify new families to Pine Tree ISD and new children born in the last year. The Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition Partner Organization Survey may need to be updated as organizations adjust their programming to meet identified needs. The information gathered through the Family Bridge Survey will be used by the organizations to find ways to create partnerships that may be outside of the scope of school readiness. Because so many groups will be viewing and interpreting the information, this leads to member checking. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe this crucial process to ensure that all members have their ideas shared accurately as "the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p314). When the member organizations see what other groups have answered, it may spark discussion or adjustments to their survey answers to be more inclusive of the programming they offer.

61

3.10 Closing Thoughts on Chapter 3

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in this study gave a more comprehensive picture of the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition's ability to serve families of Pine Tree Primary and align with what families perceive will help them with school readiness. The surveys were used in conducting a needs analysis to determine what school readiness means to Pine Tree Primary families and how the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition can help families become healthy and school-ready.

CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS AND RESULTS/FINDINGS

4.1 Introducing the Analysis

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

Strand 1- (1)What programming and resources do families currently access to assist with school

readiness?

Strand 2- (2a) How do family members perceive school readiness?

(2b) What types of programming and resources would families like to access to assist

with school readiness?

Mixed- (1&2a) How do family perceptions about school readiness explain the programming and

resource they access with school readiness?

(1&2b) How does the desired programming of families reflect gaps and/or needs met given the

programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness?

Strand 3- (3)What programming is available through the member community organizations of

Family Bridge that will assist with school readiness?

Mixed Strands 1, 2, & 3- How does the programming available through the member

organizations of Family Bridge assist with school readiness and corroborate (converge or

diverge) the programming and resource accessed and needed to assist with school

readiness?

To understand the programming and resources that families currently access to assist with

school readiness, a survey was made available and sent to all families living in Pine Tree ISD

who have young children not yet enrolled in school. Focus groups and interviews were

conducted to understand further the data gathered in the survey, how families perceive school

readiness, and what programming they have used. The combined data from the surveys, focus

groups, and interviews were analyzed to determine if family perceptions on school readiness

affected the programming they accessed and what gaps families perceived in programming and

available resources. To understand what programming is currently available through member

organizations of Family Bridge, a survey was sent to known members of the coalition and

community groups that have attended Pine Tree Primary family engagement events. Finally, the

data collected from the families and community groups were analyzed to determine areas where

programming and resources converge and diverge from each group's perception of school

readiness.

School readiness has been defined in this ROS as the "mastery of skills that allow a child

to be successful in a formal school setting, both academically and socially" (Halfon et al., 2009,

p.432). In Chapter 2, two other frameworks for school readiness were presented outside the

skills-based approach discussed as readiness through environment and maturity. Throughout the

presentation of data, connections will be made to one or many of these frameworks on school

readiness.

4.2 Presentation of Data

4.2.1 Strand 1: Research Question 1

(1)What programming and resources do families currently access to assist with school readiness?

The Future Pirates Interest Survey, found in Appendix C, was chosen to answer question

1. This survey gathered data about the demographics of families living in Pine Tree with young

children and what programming and resources they access, which may be related to school

readiness. The first section of the survey gathers demographic information about the families

who completed the survey. One hundred six families completed the Future Pirates Interest Form

between February 2022 and May 2022. On average, Pine Tree Primary enrolls about 350 new students every fall. About a third of the potential new families completed the survey. Most families do not begin enrollment during official registration until August. Families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form gained early access to Primary events, information, and several online learning programs that can be used at home.

Table 3 shows the demographic data of the families who completed the survey. Sixty-five percent of households contain 4- 5 members, with 2-3 members being children. Forty percent of households who answered the survey have two adults living in the household. The survey did not ask for indicators of if the adults were parents, grandparents, grown siblings, other family members, or family friends. Sixty-two percent of families who completed the Future Pirates Survey have children already enrolled in Pine Tree ISD. Eighty-eight percent of families who answered the survey speak only English at home. Only 12% of the families answered in a language other than English. The Future Pirates Interest Form asked for what languages are spoken at home. This survey does not indicate the level of proficiency in speaking another language and is not directly associated with language testing for placement in school. Currently, Pine Tree Primary has approximately 25% of the families enrolled in school who speak a language other than English.

Table 3

Demographic Data of Families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form

	Number of People Living in the Household (n=116)	Number of Children in the Household (n=116)
1	-----	16%
2	3%	40%
3	20%	30%
4	40%	11%
5	25%	2%
6	8%	0%
7	2%	0%
No Response	2%	1%
Percent of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	62%	
Percent of families speaking a language other than English	12%	

Next, the survey asked for information about who has provided care for the child. This question was used to determine if the families have accessed any early learning centers and therapy providers who would be providing skill-based school readiness programming. The types of early learning opportunities provided through early learning centers and other caregivers are shown in Table 4. Table 4 indicates the results of the early childhood setting for all families, families who speak a language other than English, and families who already have children enrolled in Pine Tree ISD. Because children can experience multiple early learning and therapy settings during their early childhood year, the number of responses vary to show multiple children and multiple types of placements used by individual families.

Table 4

Types of Early Childhood Setting

Has the child attended any daycares, preschool, private schools, or public schools?	% of all families (n=116)	% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	% of Families who speak English (n=100)	% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	% of households new to PTISD (n=50)
Preschool, Daycare, Early Learning Center	49%	20%	51%	47%	50%
Parent stayed home with the child	21%	20%	23%	21%	24%
Public School	11%	20%	11%	14%	8%
Grandparent took care of the child while parent/guardian(s) worked	10%	28%	8%	6%	14%
Other family members took care of the child while parent/guardian(s) worked	3%	0%	3%	5%	0%
Home Daycare	3%	6%	2%	5%	0%
Mother's Day Out	2%	0%	2%	1%	3%
Trusted friend took care of the child while parent/guardian(s) worked	1%	6%	~ 1%	1%	1%

Note. Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

Forty-nine percent of families with young children indicated in the survey have spent part of their early learning education in a preschool, daycare, or early learning center. However,

among families who speak a language other than English, only 20% indicated early learning education in a preschool, daycare, or early learning center. Young children whose families speak languages other than English were more likely to have stayed home with a parent or grandparent than attend an early learning program that is not home-based. Forty-eight percent of these children stayed home with a parent or grandparent, while only 20% attended an early learning center. Twenty percent attended a public school. In Longview, an early headstart program is part of Longview ISD, which this group of young children would have most likely attended. The second most common response was that the child stayed home with a parent, with 21% of the children indicated. If the child was placed in a preschool, daycare, or early learning center, the families were asked to indicate which ones. Table 5 shows the most frequent responses to this question and whether the early learning center is in Pine Tree. Early learning centers in Pine Tree can access transportation and meal services provided by the school district. East Texas Montessori Prep Academy(ETMPA) houses the Head Start Program for all of Longview, Texas. ETMPA is part of the Longview ISD school system. All children who live within the Longview city limits eligible for Head Start attend either ETMPA, Playing for Keeps, or Longview Child Development Center. The combination of these programs will be shown as Longview ISD Early Head start in Table 5. Because Pine Tree Primary is in a separate school district, there is no direct connection between the Head Start program and Pine Tree programs.

Table 5

Most Frequently Accessed Early Learning Centers by Families

Name of Early Learning Center	% of all families (n=116)	% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	% of Families who speak English (n=100)	% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	% of households new to PTISD (n=50)
Applewood Academy and Daycare Center	7%	17%	6%	2%	13%
First Step	7%	33%	5%	0%	15%
Handprints Childcare	11%	0%	11%	13%	8%
Happy Hippo Daycare Academy	9%	17%	8%	11%	5%
Jordan Country Day School	7%	17%	6%	6%	8%
Kid Connection Preschool	4%	0%	5%	6%	3%
Kid Kountry	5%	0%	5%	6%	5%
Longview ISD Early Head start	15%	0%	15%	17%	13%
Seesaw Children's Place	8%	0%	8%	13%	0%
Other Early Learning Centers	27%	17%	36%	26%	30%

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

To determine what other programming and resources may have been accessed to assist with school readiness, families were asked to indicate any groups in which they have enrolled

their child. Groups listed as answer choices are known members of the Family Bridge Early

Learning Coalition. Forty-eight percent of families indicated they had not accessed any programs

and resources offered through the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition. The community

programs and resources accessed by families are shown below in Table 6.

Table 6

Community Programs and Resources Families have Accessed

Family Bridge Coalition Community Groups	% of all families (n=116)	% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	% of Families who speak English (n=100)	% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	% of households new to PTISD (n=50)
Boys and Girls Club	5%	11%	4%	5%	4%
Buckner Family Services of Longview	5%	0%	5%	2%	8%
Community Healthcore	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%
East Texas Food Bank	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%
East Texas Literacy Councils	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Expectant Heart Pregnancy Resource Center	5%	0%	5%	5%	4%
First Baptist Church MOPS	1%	0%	2%	0%	4%
HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters)	1%	11%	0%	2%	0%

HOPES (Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support) Project	1%	0%	4%	2%	4%
Lone Star Legal Aid	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Longview Public Library	14%	0%	13%	19%	4%
Partners in Prevention	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%
PAT- Parents as Teachers	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TAMU Agrilife Extension	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Wellness Pointe	17%	11%	18%	16%	17%
Windridge	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Indicated No Participation	48%	66%	45%	42%	54%

Percent of Respondents who are interested in information from these programs   37%

Note. Respondents were able to choose multiple responses or not to respond. 26% of families accessed one or more community groups.

Even though only 26% of the families have accessed any of the resources listed, 37% of the total respondents did indicate they were willing to receive information about the programs offered by community groups.

　　　　Finally, the Future Pirates Survey asked a series of Likert-Like questions to determine each family's level of confidence with various aspects associated with key parenting skills, which could indicate areas to support families with school readiness. Table 7 shows each question and how all families responded to families who speak a language other than English and families who have children already enrolled in Pine Tree ISD.

71

Table 7

Families' Confidence Levels Regarding Key Parenting Skills

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you that you can motivate your child to try hard in school?	1%	6%	5%	31%	57%
% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	0%	0%	15%	54%	31%
% of families who speak English (n=100)	1%	6%	4%	27%	625
% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	0%	10%	4%	23%	63%
% of households new to PTISD (n=50)	2%	0%	6%	45%	47%
How confident are you in your ability to connect with other parents?	4%	9%	12%	33%	42%
% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	0%	8%	8%	53%	31%
% of families who speak English (n=100)	4%	9%	11%	30%	46%
% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	6%	9%	11%	29%	46%
% of households new to PTISD (n=50)	2%	8%	10%	41%	39%

How confident are you in your ability to support your child's learning at home?	2%	2%	5%	16%	74%
% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	0%	0%	15%	54%	31%
% of families who speak English (n=100)	2%	1%	4%	12%	81%
% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	3%	3%	4%	19%	71%
% of households new to PTISD (n=50)	0%	0%	6%	16%	78%
How confident are you that you can help your child develop good friendships?	1%	7%	5%	30%	57%
% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	0%	0%	15%	54%	31%
% of families who speak English (n=100)	2%	2%	5%	12%	69%
% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	3%	4%	6%	27%	60%
% of households new to PTISD (n=50)	0%	0%	8%	27%	65%
How confident are you in your ability to make sure your child's school meets your child's learning needs? -	2%	3%	7%	20%	68%
% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	0%	0%	15%	46%	38%

73

% of families who speak English (n=100)	2%	2%	6%	15%	75%
% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	3%	4%	4%	19%	69%
% of households new to PTISD (n=50)	0%	0%	10%	21%	69%
How confident are you in your ability to make choices about your child's schooling?	1%	4%	4%	14%	77%
% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	0%	8%	0%	58%	38%
% of families who speak English (n=100)	1%	2%	4%	9%	84%
% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	1%	4%	4%	17%	73%
% of households new to PTISD (n=50)	0%	2%	2%	14%	82%
How confident are you in your ability to help your child deal with his/her emotions?	2%	5%	5%	24%	64%
% of families who speak another language besides English (n=16)	0%	14%	14%	43%	29%
% of families who speak English (n=100)	2%	4%	4%	21%	69%
% of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education (n=66)	3%	6%	3%	23%	65%

% of households new to PTISD (n=50)	0%	4%	8%	45%	43%

Several connections can be made by looking at the responses to key parenting skills through the lens of the school readiness and family engagement frameworks. First, the questions about how confident families are in their abilities to motivate their child to try hard in school and support their child's learning at home directly connect to the school readiness frameworks on students having the academic skills needed to be successful. This also directly connects to family engagement frameworks on parenting and learning at home. Second, the question about connecting with other parents directly links to family engagement frameworks that encourage family-to-family connections. Third, the questions about helping children manage their emotions and making friends connect to the ability of a young child to be school ready socially as well as academically. Finally, the question about making an educated decision for their child connects to a family's ability to make the best choices to make sure their young child is school ready.

According to the data collected from Strand 1, several generalizations about the families who answered the Future Pirates Survey were drawn to be able to form the focus groups for Strand 2. Families could be categorized in a few ways: families who were already a part of Pine Tree ISD, families who are entering K-12 education for the first time, families who speak English at home, and families who speak languages other than English. Data from this survey was used to inform the focus groups and interviews that were conducted during May and June of 2022. The focus groups and interviews were conducted in tandem with school tours where possible. Due to l lack of participation in the purposefully sampled focus groups, all families who filled out the Future Pirates Survey were invited to participate. Opportunities were offered

to provide translation services to families who do not speak English. The following questions were written based on the answers to the survey.

- How do you know your child was ready for school?
  - This question was asked to determine family perceptions on why families may have chosen specific early learning experiences when they completed the Future Pirates Interest Form.
- What does school readiness mean to you?
  - This question was asked to gain information about families' perceptions of school readiness which could not be answered in the Future Pirates Interest Form.
- What daycares or early learning experiences were most beneficial for your child?
  - This question was developed to find out more about early learning experiences after the results from Strand 1 indicated many families chose to enroll their young children in daycares.
- What other information would you like to know about kindergarten readiness?
  - This question was developed to help identify gaps in perceptions of school readiness between families, schools, and the community.
- What community resources and programs have you used?
  - This question was developed to make connections to Family Bridge programs and resources as well as determine what programs and resources families may be using that Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge are not yet connected to.
  - What are the barriers to participation?
    - This follow-up question was developed to try to find reasons why families may not be able to easily access programs and resources for school readiness.
  - What types of programs and services would you like to see?
    - This follow-up question was developed to identify areas for further study by Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge to ensure we are meeting families' needs.
- What do you wish you had to help your children be ready for school?

This question was developed to identify areas for further study by Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge to ensure we are meeting families' needs.

4.2.2 Strand 2: Research Question 2a

(2a) How do family members perceive school readiness?

To answer question 2a, a series of one-hour focus groups and interviews were conducted throughout the month of May and early June. Ten Families participated in either a focus group or interview for this data collection. Table 8 shows the information about the family demographics gathered or recorded during the process. Translation services were provided and advertised.

However, no family who participated spoke a language other than English. Table 9 shows the focus group and interview families Likert-type responses from the Future Pirates Interest Form indicating their level of confidence in regard to several parenting skills.

Table 8

Demographic Profiles of Participating Families in Focus Groups or Interviews

	# in Family	# of Children	Main Early Learning	Home Language	Focus Group or Interview
Family 1	3	2	stayed at home with grandmother	English	I
Family 2	5	1	stayed at home with mother	English	I
Family 3	3	1	daycare	English	I
Family 4	5	3	daycare	English	I
Family 5	5	3	unknown	English	FG
Family 6	3	2	stayed at home with grandmother	English	I
Family 7	3	1	daycare	English	FG
Family 8	3	1	daycare	English	FG
Family 9	2	1	daycare	English	FG
Family 10	4	2	daycare	English	I

Table 9

Focus Group and Interview Families' Confidence Levels Regarding Key Parenting Skills (n=9)

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you that you can motivate your child to try hard in school?	0%	14%	0%	14%	71%

How confident are you in your ability to connect with other parents?	14%	0%	0%	43%	43%
How confident are you in your ability to support your child's learning at home?	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%
How confident are you that you can help your child develop good friendships?	0%	0%	14%	14%	71%
How confident are you in your ability to make sure your child's school meets your child's learning needs?-	0%	0%	0%	14%	86%
How confident are you in your ability to make choices about your child's schooling?	0%	0%	0%	14%	86%
How confident are you in your ability to help your child deal with his/her emotions?	0%	0%	14%	14%	71%

Seventy-one percent of the focus group and interview families expressed a high confidence level in their ability to motivate their child in school compared to the survey participants' 57% confidence level. Eighty-eight percent of the focus group and interview participants expressed a high level of confidence in their ability to make sure the school meets their child's learning needs compared to 68% of survey participants. Family members expressed excitement about their child starting school in the fall during the interviews and focus groups. Participants were relaxed and eager to participate and share. Families were asked how they knew their child was ready for school and what school readiness meant to them. Table 10 shows questions and excerpts from the data collected to illustrate the answers given by the families.

Table 10

Family Responses on Perception of School Readiness

Question	Excerpt from Data	Themes
How do you know your child was ready for school?	"I don't know. It was just time to come to school." "We came to the information fair and got information about when to come to school." "I have felt lost about it." "He has been at daycare."	*Desire for knowledge of school readiness *Lack of communication from community programs and resources
What does school readiness mean to you?	"Nothing." "I wish I had known what you want a child to know" "It is what they have been working on at daycare."	*Desire for knowledge of school readiness
What daycares or early learning experiences were most beneficial for your child?	Families whose children attended a daycare, stated the daycare as the most beneficial experience "Watching educational programs" "Learning games on his tablet" "Medical appointments"	*Confidence in early learning centers
What other information would you like to know about kindergarten readiness?	"I wish I had known what to teach them at home." "How to help to get into daycares. They are too expensive. Help on how to enroll in programs."	*Desire for knowledge of school readiness

Most families did not answer what school readiness meant to them. Their child was old enough to be in school, and the family visiting the school and completing enrollment was getting the child ready for school. If the child was enrolled in an early learning program, there seemed to be an assumption that whatever was being done in that program was preparing the child for school. One grandmother, who had attended the Primary Information Fair, stated she started using the information she learned to change what she was doing at home to help her grandson prepare for school. One family considered the child coming to Primary to be where the child would be to

"get ready" for school. This perception has been observed outside of this study when I have had discussions with families who consider prekindergarten and kindergarten as not "real" and that the Primary was just another type of daycare. First grade is when real education begins. More questions about school readiness centered on ensuring vaccinations were updated, and proper paperwork was completed. Several themes emerged from this data:

- Desire for knowledge on readiness- Families indicated they did not know that school readiness was a topic that they needed to be aware of. There is not a clear understanding of what it means to be ready for school.

- Lack of communication from community groups- There is a gap in the ability of families to access school readiness information. Families do not know where to look for the information. Information is not readily available from community groups.

- Confidence in early learning centers- Families feel that the places where they send their children for early learning are providing what the children need to be ready for school.

4.2.3 Strand 2: Research Question 2b

 (2b) What types of programming and resources would families like to access to assist with school readiness?

To answer this question, during the focus groups and interviews, families were asked about what types of programs and services they would like to see. Families were not able to identify very many programs they had used. Reasons for this included that the children were in a daycare, the effects of the pandemic, and the lack of activities that families knew of that were geared towards young children. Families replied with some of the following in Table 11.

Table 11

Programs and Resources Accessed by Families

Question	Excerpt From Data	Themes
What community resources and programs have you used?	"Public Library" "None. We have been at home." "WIC" "We go to the pediatrician." "Events at the Primary" "They go to daycare."	*Desire for connection with the community
What are the barriers to participation?	"I did not know these programs existed." "Families who do not speak English may not know." "You have to find and do all the work yourself." "You have to know someone who knows what to do to get help." "I work at night." "It is hard to get into daycares." "I have to work."	*Lack of access to community programs and resources *Language barriers
What types of programs and services would you like to see?	"More activities geared to preschoolers" "More things for kids to do" "More openings in Head Start"	*Lack of access to community programs and resources
What do you wish you had to help your children be ready for school?	"I wish I had known what to teach them at home." "How to help to get into daycares. They are too expensive. Help on how to enroll in programs." "More things to do at home to learn" "That going to the doctor doesn't connect to the school."	*Desire for knowledge of school readiness *Lack of communication from community groups *Lack of connection between community-based programs and resources

Several themes emerged from this data that were also found in research question 1a, such as

Desire for Knowledge and Lack of Communication. Some new themes were discovered:

- Lack of access to programs and resources-Families mentioned there were few programs for young children. Many of the programs available are income based and not easily accessible to all families.

- Lack of connection between programs and resources- Families expressed concern that there is little connection between the resources they use, such as early learning centers and the pediatrician at Pine Tree Primary. There is no system for information sharing.

- Language- Even though the participants of the focus groups and interviews were all English speaking, several mentioned that a barrier for many families in the area could be the lack of materials and resources in their native language, and people who speak the language can help them. With only 12% of the survey participants being families who speak languages besides English and none participating in the focus groups, this idea of language barriers cannot be confirmed. However, it could be an area for further study by both Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge.

4.2.4 Strand 1 and 2 Mixed: Research Questions 1 & 2a

(1&2a) How do family perceptions about school readiness explain the programming and resource they access with school readiness?

While completing the Future Pirates Interest Form, very few families indicated that they had accessed any programs and resources provided by the community. To further explain why families were asked about school readiness and what they had used to assist with it. To answer this question, data collected in Strand 1 and 2 was combined to determine family perceptions about school readiness to explain the resources they access. During the focus groups and interviews, families indicated a desire for knowledge about school readiness and how programming and resources could affect school readiness. Families also indicated issues with

being able to access resources and programs. The joint analysis of the data from Strand 1 and 2 is

shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Display of Family Perceptions on School Readiness

Quantitative Results	Qualitative Results	Interpretation
Table 4.4 Community Programs and Resources Families have Accessed Forty-eight percent of families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form did not indicate that they have accessed any programs and resources provided by Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition.	Themes Identified: *Desire for knowledge on school readiness* "I don't know. It was just time to come to school." "We came to the information fair and got information about when to come to school." Nothing." "I wish I had known what you want a child to know." *Lack of access to programs and resources* "You have to find and do all the work yourself." "You have to know someone who knows what to do to get help."	Many families do not have a clear understanding of what school readiness means to them or what their role is. Families may be unaware of how community resources and programming can assist them with school readiness.
Table 4.2 Types of Early Childhood Setting About half of the families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form have had their child enrolled in an early	*Confidence in early learning centers* "It is what they have been working on at daycare." Families whose children attended a daycare stated the daycare as the most beneficial experience	Families who enrolled their children in early learning centers held the expectation that the care received would ensure the child was ready for school. Currently, there are very few formalized connections between Pine Tree

learning center for at least their early childhood years. Seventy-Seven percent of families who enrolled their child in an early learning center felt extremely confident in their ability to help their child learn at home, while 70% of families who did not use an early learning center felt the same level of confidence. **Table 4.5 Families Confidence Levels Regarding Key Parenting Skills** Most families feel confident that they can pick a school to meet their child's learning needs. Seventy-nine percent of families who enrolled their children in an early learning center felt extremely confident in their ability to choose a school for this child while 77% of families who did not use an early learning center felt the same level of confidence.		Primary, Family Bridge, and any early learning centers.

4.2.5 Strand 1 and 2 Mixed: Research Questions 1 & 2b

(1&2b) How does the desired programming of families reflect gaps and/or needs met given the

programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness?

To answer this question, data collected from the Future Pirates Interest Form and the

focus groups and interviews were analyzed to look for gaps and/or needs met, given the

programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness. Several themes appeared

to show gaps and needs in what families access to assist with school readiness. First, a gap

identified is that there was little family participation in any community resources and programs

offered by Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition. A reason for this gap in participation is that families may not know the programs exist that may support school readiness. However, families have a high confidence level in the early learning centers they enroll their children in to prepare them for school. This could open up an opportunity to connect early learning centers with Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge. Families indicated a willingness to participate in more activities geared towards helping their young children be school-ready. Table 13 outlines the qualitative and quantitative data used to identify these themes.

Table 13

Themes of Gaps and/or Needs Met of Desired Programming

Themes Identified	Quantitative Data Future Pirates Interest Form	Qualitative Data Focus Groups and Interviews
Little Participation in Family Bridge Coalition Member Organizations	26% of the families indicated the use of any community groups associated with Family Bridge.	There is a need for more opportunities for families with young children to participate in community programs and resources.
Barriers to Participation		Lack of Participation-Families indicated in the focus groups that the main reason for not participating in programs and resources was that they did not know the programs existed.
Confidence in Early Learning Centers	59% indicated the young child had attended an early learning center from birth to five. 91% of families had a high level of confidence in making choices about their child's schooling. 88% of families had a high level of confidence in making	Families who enrolled their children in early learning centers expected that the care received would ensure they were ready for school.

85

	sure the school met their child's needs.	
Opportunities to Connect	37% of the families indicated they were willing to receive information about community groups.	Families indicated a willingness to participate in more activities geared towards young children.

4.2.6 Strand 3: Research Question 3

(3) What programming is available through the member community organizations of Family Bridge that will assist with school readiness?

Thirty member organizations of the Family Bridge Coalition and other community groups participating in Pine Tree Primary engagement events were sent the Family Bridge Coalition Partner Organizations Survey to answer this question. Because many of the forced-choice response questions could be indicated by several selections, the results of this survey show the potential of the community groups in various areas. Each group could choose many answers for each question. Therefore, the tables in this section should be interpreted separately for each choice. For example, in Table 14, a respondent could be a community based provide and a school based provider. This means sixty percent of the groups provide community-based services and forty percent provide school-based services. The program settings of the community groups range from programming and resources provided directly to the child, parents, or families. Some of the programming provided within a childcare or school setting but also in and outside of the home. These types of settings offered by the community groups are shown below in Table 14.

86

Table 14

Types of Setting Through Which Programming is Provided (n=30)

Types of Settings	% Of Community Partners who offer this Type of Setting
Community-Based Service Provider	60%
School-Based	33%
Faith-Based	27%
Health Care Provider	27%
Out-of-School Time	27%
Home Visiting	23%
Child Care/Preschool	1%
Peer Learning	1%
Continuing Education	1%

Note. Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

Sixty percent of the community groups can provide their services through a community-based approach, meaning the family would be responsible for providing transportation to and from the services or would be directly participating. School-Based providers could be integrated into the school day and provided to the children while the family is potentially at work.

Next, the survey asked the community groups to identify which age range their community group supports. Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition focuses its initiative on the prenatal to age five range. Pine Tree Primary focuses its work on children once they are four by September 1st until they promote to first grade. Table 15 below shows the age ranges indicated by the community groups that they support.

Table 15

Age Ranges Supported by Community Groups (n=30)

Target Audience Age Range	% of Community Groups who support the age range indicated
Early Childhood (prenatal-5)	40%
All Ages	40%
Young Children (4-8)	23%
Adolescence (13-18)	20%
Middle Childhood (9-12)	3%
Adults (18+)	1%

Note. Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

Most community groups focus on the early childhood age range or all ages. Since most

respondents are Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition members, the age range focusing on

young children matches what would be expected.

Then, the survey asked what specific services and outcomes families provide to improve.

The types of services can be correlated to the frameworks on school readiness presented in the

literature. Because the respondents to the survey provide community-based services, improving

the environmental factors around the child is a significant focus of the Family Bridge Early

Learning Coalition and its member organizations. Results are shown below in Tables 16 and 17.

Table 16

Types of Services Provided by Community Groups (n=30)

Types of Services Provided	% of Community Groups Providers
Family Support	60%
Parent Education	30%

Health Education	43%
Case Management	33%
Health Care Services	33%
Youth Development	33%
Instructional Support	30%
Mentoring	20%
Providing Food	1%
Early Childhood Intervention	1%
College Readiness	1%
Spiritual Transformation	1%

Note. Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

Table 17

Outcomes Which Community Groups Work to Improve (n=30)

% Of Community Groups who support this outcome	
Cognitive Development/School Performance	50%
Mental Health	43%
Behavior Problems	36%
Physical Health	36%
Child Abuse and Neglect	30%
Poverty/Welfare	17%
Substance Use and Dependence	17%
Violent Behavior	17%
Teen Sex/Pregnancy	13%
Food Insecurity	13%
Juvenile Justice	1%

Note. Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

Table 18 aligns the responses from Tables 16 and 17 to indicate how the services provided by the community groups and their potential impact through improved outcomes align with the school readiness frameworks.

Table 18

Community Resources and Programs Connected to Readiness Frameworks

School Readiness Frameworks	Services Provided	Outcomes
Readiness through Skills	Early Childhood Intervention Parent Education Health Education Instructional Support Mentoring	Cognitive Development/School Performance Mental Health Physical Health Behavior Problems
Readiness Through Environment	Providing Food Family Support	Child Abuse and Neglect Poverty/Welfare Substance Use and Dependence Food Insecurity
Readiness Through Maturity		

4.2.7 Strands 1, 2, &3 Mixed: Research Question

How does the programming available through the member organizations of Family Bridge assist with school readiness corroborate (converge or diverge) the programming and resource accessed and needed to assist with school readiness?

The analysis of this question began by examining the data gathered from the surveys, focus groups, and interviews to look for areas of convergence between what families want to assist them with school readiness and what community groups offer. The data was organized to compare the types of programs families accessed and what families indicated they needed. Then

90

the data was compared to the programming that the member organizations of Family Bridge offered. Data was organized around the frameworks on school readiness to show areas of comparison between the two. There are some areas in which the needs of what families want to assist with school readiness align with what the member organizations offer. However, there are gaps in the ability of the member organizations of Family Bridge to assist families with what they need for school readiness. The combined information to illustrate these areas of need is shown in Table 19.

Table 19

Connections to School Readiness Frameworks

Readiness Framework	Programs Families Accessed	What Families Need	What Member Organizations Offer
Readiness Through Skills	Families who enrolled their children in early learning centers expected that the care received would ensure the child was ready for school.	Many families do not have a clear understanding of what school readiness means to them or what their role is.	There are no Early Learning Centers that are currently members. There are currently few formalized connections between Pine Tree Primary, Family Bridge, and any early learning centers.
	Families did not feel like there were very many activities for young children to learn readiness skills outside of early learning centers.	Families indicated a willingness to participate in more activities geared towards young children.	Member organizations offered opportunities to assist with readiness skills such as early childhood intervention, instructional support, and home visiting.
Readiness Through Environment	Most families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form did not indicate that they have accessed any programs and resources provided by Family	There is a need for more opportunities for families with young children to participate in community programs and resources.	Families may not be aware of how community resources and programming can assist them with school readiness. Communication is lacking between school, community, and home.

	Bridge Early Learning Coalition.		
Readiness Through Maturity	Families enroll children in school when they are ready.	More programming for young children is needed.	Programming for all ages

4.3 Results of Research-----what is the difference?

The results of each research question build upon each other. The results of this needs analysis indicate a better understanding of what the perceptions of stakeholders are on school readiness. The results also indicated areas of need for both Pine Tree Primary and the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition in their efforts to support families with school readiness.

4.3.1 Strand 1: Research Question 1

(1) What programming and resources do families currently access to assist with school readiness?

The data results indicated that 48% of families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form do not currently access many of the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition member organizations. More families indicated they either accessed no programs and resources or chose not to answer the question. There was an option to write in a choice that was not in the selected list. However, 53% of families had their children enrolled in early learning centers, daycares, or Head Start, focusing on school readiness at some point before kindergarten enrollment. Early learning centers can play a prominent role in making sure children are ready for school in kindergarten. Similarly, families indicated strong confidence in choosing the best school for their children. Seventy-seven percent of all families and 73% of families with children already in Pine Tree indicated a high level of confidence. In contrast, families who spoke languages other than

English indicated 38% extreme confidence, with 58% indicating they were quite confident. When looking at those who speak languages other than English, only 23% indicated they enrolled their children in early learning centers. These results reinforced my idea that because so many families of Pine Tree Primary enroll their children in childcare, there may be fewer opportunities to participate in other programs and resources for school readiness. After analyzing these results, I was led to want to know more about what families consider school readiness and why so few programs and resources were indicated outside of early learning centers. First, I wanted to know how families defined school readiness because I wondered if the confidence level in helping their child learn at home had more to do with the social aspect of school readiness than academics. Second, based on the number of families who enrolled their children in early learning centers, I wanted to know more about how they felt that affected their child's readiness for school. Finally, I wanted to see if there were any reasons why families did not access as many community programs and resources as I had anticipated.

4.3.2 Strand 2: Research Question 2a

(2a) How do family members perceive school readiness?

Overall, families who participated in the focus groups and interviews perceived school readiness as the process of being ready to enroll in school. Families who had their children enrolled in an early learning center assumed that the child would be ready for school because they were participating in the early childhood program. This was alluded to in the focus groups and interviews but also in the combined extremely or quite confidence levels in choosing a school for their child indicated in the Future Pirates Interest Form. Themes found as to reasons for the family's perceptions of readiness included a desire for knowledge about school readiness but a lack of communication between community groups and families, which could be a reason

for a gap in school readiness in the area. This high confidence level was higher than among survey participants and families who speak a language other than English. The overall perception I gained from these interactions was that most families do not clearly understand what school readiness means or their role.

The families in the focus groups felt a high level of confidence in their abilities to meet their children's needs, with 86% extremely confident. In many cases, it seems as if families did not realize they had a role to play outside of ensuring their child was enrolled in school. Families further confirm this perception placed a high level of confidence in their choices of the early learning center they had their child enrolled in. Families feel they make the best choices in getting their children ready for school. The next steps were identifying what families would like to access and what community groups offer to assist with school readiness.

4.3.3 Strand 2: Research Question 2b

(2b) What types of programming and resources would families like to access to assist with school readiness?

The focus group results indicated that families had used few programs and resources due to a lack of connection in the community for families to know not only what programs and resources exist but how to enroll and participate in them. Families indicated a desire to participate in more activities for young children but listed some barriers that affect their ability to participate in programs and resources. One reason listed was a lack of access to resources such as spots in daycare or programs that fit into a work schedule that are not during school hours. Families feel alone in helping their young children be ready for school if they are not in an early learning center. Families stated they would like to know more about what they could do at home to teach their children and how to access resources. Overall, families would be willing to access

more programming and resources for school readiness. They just do not know their identity or how to connect with them.

4.3.4 Strand 1 and 2 Mixed: Research Questions 1 & 2a

1&2a) How do family perceptions about school readiness explain the programming and resource they access with school readiness?

The combined analysis of data from the Future Pirates Interest Form and the focus groups and interviews showed some possible reasons for how family perceptions about school readiness explain the programming they access. After learning that 48% of families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form indicated that they had not accessed any programs and resources provided by Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition, the interview focused on why. Two reasons for this could be a lack of knowledge about enrolling in school and a lack of access to enrolling in school readiness programs. This could be because many families do not clearly understand what school readiness means or their role. Another explanation could be that families may not know how community resources and programming can assist them with school readiness. One area of school readiness not directly associated with Family Bridge that families did access for school readiness was early learning centers. Families who enrolled their children in early learning centers expected that the care received would ensure they were ready for school. There are currently few formalized connections between Pine Tree Primary, Family Bridge, and any early learning centers.

4.3.5 Strand 1 and 2 Mixed: Research Questions 1 & 2b

(1&2b) How does the desired programming of families reflect gaps and/or needs met given the programming and resources they access to assist with school readiness?

95

After analyzing the Future Pirates Interest Form data and the interviews and focus groups, some themes explain how the desired programming reflected gaps or needs met regarding families and their desire to assist with school readiness. First, even though there has been little participation in programs and resources provided by Family Bridge, families need more opportunities to participate in community programs and resources. There is a need for more opportunities for families with young children to participate in community programs and resources. A primary reason for the current gap is that many families did not know programs were available to assist with school readiness. This leaves a significant opportunity for family connection and programming geared towards young children to assist with school readiness. Even though the participants of the focus groups and interviews were all English speaking, several mentioned that a barrier for many families in the area could be the lack of materials and resources in their native languages and people who speak the language that can help them. This may be an area for Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge to further research in the future.

4.3.6 Strand 3: Research Question 3

(3) What programming is available through the member community organizations of Family Bridge that will assist with school readiness?

The Family Bridge Coalition Partner Organizations Surveys analysis data shows several areas where the programming and resources provided can assist with school readiness. Programming is available to families in many settings, providing multiple opportunities for families to receive services in their preferred setting. Programming is also geared toward all ages, with many community groups having resources available to meet families' different life stage needs beyond early childhood. Programming is geared explicitly towards school readiness through early childhood intervention and home visiting. Fifty percent of the groups offer services

focusing on cognitive development and school performance. Sixty percent of the groups focus on family support. Before completing the Family Bridge Coalition Organization Survey, member organizations knew little about each other outside of the fact that they each wanted to impact young children and families for the better. After the survey, more information is now known about how each organization focuses its work. Many organizations that are members of the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition have programs and resources available to assist families with school readiness.

4.3.7 Strands 1, 2, &3 Mixed: Research Question

How does the programming available through the member organizations of Family Bridge assist with school readiness corroborate (converge or diverge) the programming and resource accessed and needed to assist with school readiness?

    The purpose of this of Strands 1 and 2 of this study was to identify how families perceive school readiness and what programs and resources they access as a result of their understanding of school readiness. One significant finding was that many families access early learning centers because they feel the early learning center is the best to get their child ready for school. Strand 3 was to determine the programming and resources available through Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition to assist with school readiness. Strand 3 analyzed the results of Strand 1 and 2 to determine some areas where the two strands meet and where they divide. A primary area of convergence is that families and community groups want to assist young children with school readiness and are willing to work together. There is capacity in the availability of both groups who are ready to serve families and families interested in learning more about how they can access those groups. A main area of divergence is that community groups and families have not been able to connect to begin the process of ensuring all children are school-ready.

When determining families' definition of school readiness, most families did not clearly understand what school readiness means to them and their role. Family Bridge has several programs that could assist families with school readiness and understanding their role, such as home visiting. Families who had their children enrolled in an early learning center to assist with school readiness felt strongly confident that the program was meeting their school readiness needs. In can be concluded that families who enrolled their children in early learning centers assumed this meant their children would be school ready. Currently, Family Bridge does not have any early learning centers as member organizations. This is an area where there is a gap in service for families. A recommendation would be for Family Bridge to build connections with the early learning centers and families indicated in the Future Pirates Interest Form.

Family Bridge has many programs which can offer activities geared toward young children. However, families indicated they did not access many programs and resources because they did not know they existed. Families also indicated a lack of activities geared towards young children in the area. A recommendation for Family Bridge would be to find ways to increase communication between school, family, and home so that families know how to connect to programming which might meet their needs. One way this could be accomplished is through expanded connections with early learning centers that have built communication systems with their families, who could be more easily connected with other programs and resources. More robust communication systems could also help connect families who do not realize that there are actions they can take before their child enrolls, which increases school readiness.

4.4 Interaction between the Research and the Context

4.4.1 How did the Context Impact the Results

Since becoming an administrator at Pine Tree Primary 7 years ago, I have seen the need

to increase the partnership between school, home, and community for our youngest learners.

Before the pandemic hit, steps were being taken to plan for the rejuvenation of the Family Bridge

Early Learning Coalition, with Pine Tree Primary becoming a key partner. This partnership

allowed for this study to take place because I had easy access to the member organizations of

Family Bridge through our monthly meetings and community events. Without this partnership, it

would have been more challenging to have over thirty community groups complete the survey

needed for data collection in Strand 3.

Parts of this study, including the focus groups and interviews, have never been a part of

the culture of Pine Tree Primary or Pine Tree ISD. Family input on the actions taken by the

school and district has been minimal to this point. Some of the attempts to include family voice

were not as successful as I would have hoped because families do not hold expectations that their

input is needed or valued by the school. Therefore, I think that if the focus groups were

conducted a year from now, results may be different because there would be a year more of

building a culture that encourages parent opinion throughout the year intentionally.

4.4.2 How did the Research Impact the Context

The research conducted in this study interacted with the context in numerous ways based

on the participants in the study. Families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form gained

earlier access to programs and resources provided by Pine Tree Primary than they would have if

they waited for the traditional enrollment period in August. For example, families gained access

to a research-based online school readiness program that could be used for all the younger and early childhood-age children in their households. Families could also connect more easily with school staff such as myself. This has led to several families accessing early testing and placement for young children who have received outside services. Families who indicated the need to assist in enrolling in programs to provide food assistance and medical services were able to be contacted by one of the Family Bridge coalition member organizations within a week or two of completion of the survey.

4.5 Summary

This multi-strand mixed-method needs analysis identified areas of convergence and divergence between what families perceive as what might assist them with school readiness and what the organization members groups of the Family Bridge early learning coalition can provide through programs and resources. Results determined that families want to know more ways to help their children be school ready and are willing to participate in programming and resources provided by the community. Family Bridge has programming and resources to offer to assist families. However, gaps in the ability to connect families and community groups emerged as the central theme found throughout the data. Further research analysis must be conducted to connect families, programming, and resources efficiently. Recommendations include connecting with families enrolled in early learning centers and building more robust communication systems so families know that programming and resources exist to support them. After completing this needs analysis, the next steps would be to determine the first action steps to better connect currently available programs and resources with families. After current connections are made, further research on how to better help support the gaps of knowledge would need to be researched.

100

CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS AND RESULTS/FINDINGS

5.1 Summary of Finding from Chapter 4

Prior to analyzing the data from Strands 1, 2, and 3 of this study, I had some assumptions about what results might conclude. First, as an educator of young children for 20 years who has communicated with parents daily, I believed that families would have had a clearer understanding of the meaning of school readiness. Second, I expected that more families have access to more community programs and resources. Results of data analysis showed that a common obstacle discouraged families from fully accessing programs and resources to assist with school readiness. They simply did not know how to enroll in the programs which were being offered. A final assumption I held before analyzing data concerned families and early learning centers. I did not realize that so many families have already used the early learning centers because anecdotal evidence, through prior interaction with families, had led me to believe that fewer families were using early learning centers in our area. Discovering an established connection between families and centers indicates a far-reaching opportunity for Family Bridge to partner with early learning centers to coordinate programs and services which could benefit families and ultimately promote school readiness.

This needs mixed-methods study highlighted a few areas in the data where families and Family Bridge converged in their perception of school readiness. One perception held by families who enrolled their children in early learning centers was that the care received would ensure their children were ready for school. However, many families conceded that they do not clearly understand the scope of school readiness nor the families' role in providing such. Currently no early learning centers are active members of Family Bridge. There are few

formalized connections between Pine Tree Primary, Family Bridge, and early learning centers. Also, families did not feel like there were many activities for young children to learn readiness skills outside of learning centers. Families indicated a willingness to participate in more activities geared towards young children. Member organizations offer opportunities to assist with readiness skills such as early childhood intervention, instructional support, and home visiting. Families enroll children in school when they are ready and of the age to attend but are looking for opportunities for children before they are school age. This leaves many opportunities to connect with families through Family Bridge programming and resources.

5.2 Discussion of Results in Relation to the Extant Literature or Theories

Early learning coalitions have not been studied extensively to see if the work can improve early learning outcomes long-term. This may be partly due to the coalitions' lack of a sustainable organizational system (Brown, 2014). This study was a first attempt to understand better the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition's role in improving early learning outcomes. Using Stroh's systems thinking methods, the needs analysis conducted did result in a better understanding of the current landscape of school readiness for the Pine Tree Area (Stroh, 2015). Using the various frameworks for school readiness as a basis for understanding, connections were made to programs and perceptions on school readiness as a set of skills due to changes in the environment or the child's age. Because most of Family Bridge's work is community-based, there are more opportunities to provide families assistance with school readiness through programs and resources.

A community-based participatory approach implemented in this study included the voices of over one hundred families and thirty community groups in Pine Tree. This focus on using the knowledge of local experts means that action steps will be specific to the community's needs

(Esinger & Senturia, 2001; Ivankova, 2015; Leavy, 2017). The next step in this process is to choose what to change and then implement it. Results from this needs analysis will be presented to the Family Bridge Coalition leadership team and the Pine Tree Primary SBDM committee to be integrated into the next year's improvement plans. A primary recommendation from this study to both groups will be to increase the communication and planning between school, community, and early learning centers.

5.3 Discussion of Personal Lessons Learned

Many lessons were learned during this research study. One lesson I am still learning is not to take on too big of a project where you cannot see the future implications of the practice. This study had to be analyzed from many perspectives, and it probably would have been easier if I had not pursued a multi-strand mixed-method project. However, whenever I began to feel overwhelmed, I soon realized some pieces of the data I collected could be used in another context. For example, a grant written by Pine Tree ISD included information in the Future Pirates Interest Survey regarding access to a pediatrician to help with vaccines and wellness checks. This grant has led to a partnership to open a health clinic on the school district property. Pine Tree families now have access to vaccinations, physicals, and mental health services at no cost. Our clinic removes barriers for other families who may not have had time or money to complete required physicals and vaccinations for enrollment in school and extracurricular activities. I benefited by not having to leave work to find another place to complete my son's yearly physical for athletics by missing work.

Another lesson I learned is that sometimes your ideas concerning programs that families choose to participate in can be way off base. The initial idea to complete focus groups as Pirate

Family Talks garnered very little interest. On the evening of the family talk, where I would have a bilingual translator present, no one who expressed interest attended. Subsequently, I added focus groups and interviews to our school tours since these were better attended. Having a translator on hand for the family talk was not put to waste. She was a bilingual teacher who had been honored as District Teacher of the Year for her ability to connect to her fellow bilingual families. Since she was not needed for translating that evening, she allowed me to pick her brain about ways to connect with our Hispanic community so that these individuals feel more welcome to participate in their child's education and feel like equal partners. I learned that a current barrier in our community is that parents who may not hold the proper documentation for themselves are uninformed of processes to ensure their children born in the United States are eligible for the same opportunities as their peers. One common example is a driver's license. Mindsets of this sort can limit school readiness because many families may feel concerned they cannot access programs without proper documentation. Plans are already being made for workshops that will help walk parents through procedures and processes to help their children have the same opportunities for their children. Knowledge gained in these workshops is intended to help ensure their children have the same access as everyone else. These workshops will strive to demonstrate that parents' own lack of documentation isn't a consideration for public school programs.

A final lesson from this experience was that even if it seems like a small thing to you, it may be an essential thing to someone else. One of the ways that Pine Tree Primary tried to connect with the member organizations of Family Bridge was to invite the organizations to set up a table at any event families may be attending. Our campus provided a table and time for the community groups to connect in person with families. One of the groups, the Children's Defense

Fund, honored me with their Shining Star Award because Pine Tree Primary was one of the only

schools that welcomed them with open arms. This group helped many of our families access

healthcare and food by simply supplying space and ensuring they had a table. This gives me

hope for the future success of the work started through this ROS and my goal for every child in

Pine Tree to be ready for school.

5.4 Implications for Practice

5.4.1 Connect to context

This action research study has already impacted the family engagement efforts of both

Pine Tree Primary and the Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition. For the families involved in

the research through the completion of the Future Pirates Interest Form and subsequent focus

groups or tours, there have been several positive outcomes that were not in the original intent of

the needs analysis focus of this study but highlighted the potential outcomes from implementing

changes based on the information learned. A family in which the grandmother is the main

caregiver, who filled out the Future Pirates Interest Survey, was invited to attend a family

engagement event. The grandmother received information about skills her grandson would learn

in prekindergarten at the event. She stated during the focus group that just knowing that

information had helped her change some of the things they were doing at home, including adding

learning games to his tablet. Another family who filled out the Future Pirates Interest Form

indicated they were interested in learning about some of the resources provided by Family

Bridge, including signing up for Medicaid. Their information was given directly to a group that

enrolls families, and that family has now been able to get in with a medical group for wellness

visits. A final example was that during a focus group, some families who did not have roots in

Pine Tree connected that did not previously know each other are now doing activities together. These anecdotal stories show the potential power of the process developed within the needs analysis study to help connect families to programs and resources that can impact school readiness.

5.4.2 Connect to field of study

This record of study developed as a way for both Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge to include family input to determine the next steps in helping all children be ready for school. This study not only was able to highlight some areas of convergence and divergence, but the information gained through the study has also already benefited both the families and the community groups. This study is not generalizable to another setting since it is specific to addressing the needs of the Pine Tree Primary families. By continuing the systems process to enact changes based on the information learned, the future hope of Family Bridge is to develop a framework that will help other public schools build early childhood connections with their families. Furthermore, other public schools could potentially use this study to find more ways to include families as they strive to select the programming they need to support their families.

5.5 Lessons Learned

Many components of this ROS are connected to my daily work as a school principal that requires family engagement components. However, in the past, there was not a concerted effort to involve families in a way where their voices were heard. Improvement was sought through the work of focus groups and interviews. Unfortunately, the participation of families was not at the level that I had hoped. Two factors, I think, influenced the limited level of participation. One was that because the focus groups and interviews were conducted at the end of the school year, they

were not the priority of many families with other commitments and activities to attend. In the future, it may be better to ask the questions as part of the enrollment process in August when families are freshly thinking about what they are doing to prepare for school and not just at the end of the year. Another factor that influenced the lower participation is that our school district and area still do not have a robust communication system to connect with families who are not already enrolled in Pine Tree ISD. I think I may have participated more with families if I had connected more with the early learning centers in the Pine Tree area. They are not currently members of the Family Bridge Coalition, which means the leading providers of early childhood education in our area may not even be aware of ways their families can get more support. Because the early childhood and K-12 systems of learning are so disconnected from each other, this will continue to be a problem for me in the future until partnerships are built.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the research conducted in this study to conduct a needs analysis, several recommendations can be made for Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge as they examine the results of this study. This needs analysis aligned closely with a conceptual framework based on pragmatism, which includes ensuring the study and actions taken are based on real-world issues. The following recommendations are based upon actions or next steps both Pine Tree Primary and Family Bridge can take to better connect with families to improve school readiness. Recommendation #1: Results suggest that Family Bridge and Pine Tree Primary need to make more connections with local early learning centers, including determining how many centers there are in the area and how to make contact with the decision-making leaders of the centers. Such connections could generate opportunities to share information, making it easier for families to enroll in programs and resources that meet their needs. Additionally, this would allow

community groups to offer programs and services at early learning centers. Recommendation #2: Use the information learned about the programs and resources offered by community groups and find ways to build more robust communication systems which provide families with knowledge of these programs. The Future Pirates Interest Form has been used to gather information towards improving communication, but further surveys may need to be conducted of families to find out ways their access information to see the best avenues to connect to them. Recommendation #3: Build a database of young children living in Pine Tree to track areas where support can potentially be provided. The families can then be connected with programs and resources that match the young child's age to assist them with school readiness. Though this study was conducted specifically to glean information about families of young children in Pine Tree, the results could be used by the other schools in Pine Tree ISD to determine areas where family support may be needed as children grow.

5.7 Closing Thoughts

To indeed be able to improve the school readiness outcomes of young children, there must be a strong system of support linking school, community, and home. For Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition and Pine Tree Primary, a significant first step in this process was to conduct a needs analysis to determine areas where family needs are being met and where gaps could be identified. The inclusion of the family perspective to the extent of surveys, interviews, and focus groups had not been conducted by either group before this study. As a first step toward reinforcing the family as the first teacher, this study highlighted the importance of the family has an equal role in the process.

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IRB Letter of Approval

NOT HUMAN RESEARCH DETERMINATION

February 22, 2021

Type of Review:	Initial Review Submission Form
Title:	Early Learning Coalitions: How to Leverage a Community of Stakeholders to Impact School Readiness
Investigator:	Mary Margaret Capraro
IRB ID:	IRB2021-0168
Reference Number:	121781
Funding:	N/A
Documents Received:	IRB Application (v1.0)

Dear Mary Margaret Capraro:

The Institution determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations.

Further IRB review and approval by this organization is not required because this is not human research. You have indicated that the results of the activities described in the application will not be generalized beyond a single school system and will not be published. This determination applies only to the activities described in this IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made you must immediately contact the IRB about whether these activities are research involving humans in which the organization is engaged. You will also be required to submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Please be aware that receiving a 'Not Human Research Determination' is not the same as IRB review and approval of the activity. IRB consent forms or templates for the activities described in the determination are not to be used and references to TAMU IRB approval must be removed from study documents.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Administrative Office at 1-979-458-4067, toll free at 1-855-795-8636.

Sincerely,
IRB Administration

Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition Stakeholder Survey

Family Bridge Coalition Partner Organizations Survey

Please fill out the following information. We are searching for community partner providers that match the needs expressed by our families. This information will be used by staff to help connect families who might benefit from the programming and resources you provide to them. Links to your contact information and website will be added to our social media pages to help connect you with families.

This will also add you to the contact list to be invited to events at local schools and in the community. This is a great opportunity to connect with families. We usually have several hundred people at each event.

Contact Information

Name of Community Partner Provider-_____
Contact Name-_____
Position-_____
Address-_____
Phone Number-_____
Website Address-_____

What is your current mission, vision and/or purpose statement?

Primary Activities and Strategies
What is your target audience? Check all that apply.
- Early Childhood (prenatal-5)
- Young Children (4-8)
- Middle Childhood (9-12)
- Adolescence (13-18)
- Adults (18+)
- All Ages
- Other: _____

What is your type of setting of your program? Check all that apply.
- Child Care/Preschool
- School-Based
- Out-of-School Time

- Community-Based Service Provider
- Health Care Provider
- Home Visiting
- Peer Learning
- Other: _____

What other services does your provider provide to families while they are accessing your programs and/or resources?
- Meals
- Childcare
- nontraditional hours
- access to computers, printers
- translated materials
- translation services
- Military Families
- Homelessness
- Foster Care
- Other: _____

Does your program have a parenting and/or community advisory board?
- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

What types of services do you provide? Check all that apply.
- Case Management
- Family Support
- Health Care Services
- Health Education
- Instructional Support
- Mentoring
- Parent Education
- Youth Development
- Other: _____

What types of outcomes does your program hope to help improve? Check all that apply.
- Behavior Problems
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Cognitive Development/School Performance
- Juvenile Justice
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Poverty/Welfare
- Substance Use and Dependence
- Teen Sex/Pregnancy
- Violent Behavior

- Food Insecurity:
- Other: _____

What languages are supported by your program?
- English
- Spanish
- Other: _____

What are some of the activities and strategies your group participates in? Check all that apply.
- Community event planning (i.e., fairs, forums, etc.)
- Public education, messaging and social marketing campaigns
- Outreach to communities and family members
- Service inventory for the community (community mapping)
- Community resource book or database
- Providing and/or coordinating training opportunities? Please specify under Other.
- Increasing referrals across programs
- Reducing duplication of services
- Committing resources to family leadership development
- Identifying and beginning to fill service gaps
- Conducting and/or coordinating advocacy efforts
- Providing technical assistance? If so, what does this entail and how is it provided? Please specify under Other.
- Other: _____

Communication Mechanisms

The following questions will help us to identify the best way to help our families communicate with you as well as provide your program/resource information out to our families.

How do you communicate with potential clients?
- Advertisement
- Emails
- Facebook
- Face to face conversations
- Instagram
- Information board
- Mail outs
- Newsletter
- Phone conversations
- Twitter
- Website
- Other: _____

Please share any information about your programs that you would like for us to share with families or put on our website. You may also email rwalker@ptisd.org.

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One of our member organization's goals is to create a Family Resource Center at Pine Tree Primary. This will be a room for family training and access to computers for families. Do you have any resources that would help us with this project?
- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

Other Survey Information

Is there anything else you would like to share about your partnership?

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What would be helpful to support the work that you do?

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Who is Missing? Please list others that you know and believe might support our coalition. Also consider individuals who might not have the time to commit to ongoing work, but who would lend their support and influence for special circumstances. Please include Name, Organization, Phone, and Email.

Contact Name	Organization	Phone	Email

Pine Tree Primary Future Pirates Survey

<u>Future Pirates Interest Form</u>
Thank you for completing the following survey. This will be used to:
1. Begin the process to enroll at Pine Tree Primary
2. Identify programs and services that may be beneficial to your family.

Please fill this out one time per family. There are questions that are focused on the family and then on any children that are in the family even if they aren't in school yet.

Every family who completes the survey will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a gift card. A winner will be chosen every month.

<u>Family Questions</u>

Email-_____
Primary Parent/Guardian Contact Name-_____
Street Address-_____
Zip Code-_____
Do you live in Pine Tree ISD?
- Yes
- No
Phone Number-_____

How many people live in your household? _____
How many children in your household? _____
Do you have children already enrolled at Pine Tree ISD? Please list their name, grade, and campus.

Child's Name	Grade	Campus

What language(s) do you speak at home? _____
What language would you like to receive communications from the school in?
- English
- Spanish

<u>Questions about Individual Children</u>
<u>(This Section will be reproduced to be completed for up to three children.)</u>

All children who are not yet in school can join our Future Pirates Club. If you have children who are not yet old enough to go to Pine Tree ISD please list them below so they can become members of our Future Pirates Club.

Some children may qualify for school-based services beginning at age 3. The questions below will help us find children who could benefit from further evaluation by school staff.

Child's Name-_____
Child's Date of Birth-_____

Do you think they are delayed in one or more of the following areas? Check all that apply.
- Language/Communication
- Social-Emotional
- Cognitive (Learning, Thinking, Problem-Solving)
- Movement/Physical Development-
- No Concerns
- Other: _____

Does your child have a medical condition? Please check all that apply.
- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Down Syndrome
- ADHD/ADD
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Seizure Disorder
- Other: _____

Does the Child receive private therapy? Please check all that apply.
- ABA
- Counseling
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)
- Home Health
- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Physical Therapy (PT)
- Other: _____

Who provided the therapy services?

Has the child attended any daycares, preschool, private schools, or public schools? Check all that apply
- Daycare (early learning center)
- Preschool (early learning center)

- Home Daycare
- The parent stayed home with the child.
- Trusted Friend took care of the child while the parent(s)/guardian(s) worked.
- Grandparent took care of the child while the parent(s)/guardian(s) worked.
- Other Family Members took care of the child while the parent(s)/guardian(s) worked.
- Other: _____

If your child attended an early learning center, where did the child attend?
- ABC Sonshine
- Alpine Christian Academy
- Applewood Academy and Daycare Center
- Asbury House Child Enrichment Center
- First Step
- Handprints Child Care
- Happy Hippopotamus Daycare Academy
- Happy Hippopotamus Daycare Academy East
- Happy Hippopotamus Daycare Academy of Spring Hill
- Heero Kids Development Center
- Jordan Country Day School
- Kandyland Kampus Preschool
- Kid Connection Preschool
- Kid Kountry
- Longview Child Development Center
- Longview Christian School Early Learning Center
- Noah's Ark Children's Learning Center
- Oak Forest Montessori School
- Oakland Heights CDC
- Playing For Keeps Early Childhood Center
- Presbyterian Children's Center
- Primary Colors Preschool
- School For Little Children
- See Saw Children's Place
- Sharon's Kid Korner
- Small Steps Learning Academy
- We Learn Center
- Other: _____

Other Information

Do you know of another family who lives in Pine Tree and has children not yet enrolled in school? Please add any contact information you have so we can reach out to them.

| |
| |

What other information would you like to know from the school?

Pine Tree has a community feeding program that is available to serve breakfast and lunch on weekdays to any child aged 1-18. Would you like more information on how to
- Free Breakfast and Lunch on Weekdays for Children aged 1 to 18
- Backpack Program through East Texas Food Bank
- Other programs that provide meals and food resources to families
- Other: _____

We partner with the Children's Defense Fund of Texas to provide application assistance for Medicaid, SNAP, and CHIP for our students and future pirates.
- I would like to be contacted about how to sign up for Medicaid, SNAP, and/or CHIP.
- I have Medicaid, SNAP, and/or CHIP currently but I would like to be contacted about renewing benefits.
- I have Medicaid, SNAP, and/or CHIP currently, but do not need assistance with renewing benefits.
- I do not need assistance at this time.

Do you have a pediatrician that you use for vaccination and well-child checkups?
- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

Who is your pediatrician?

Have you participated in any activities/programs or received resources from any of our community partners?
- Boys and Girls Club
- Buckner Family Services of Longview
- Buckner HOPES (Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support) Project
- Community Healthcore
- Expectant Heart Pregnancy Resource Center
- East Texas Literacy Councils
- East Texas Food Bank
- HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters)
- Lone Star Legal Aid
- Longview Public Library
- Partners in Prevention
- PAT- Parents as Teachers
- TAMU Agrilife Extension

- Wellness Pointe
- Windridge
- Other: _____

We work with many community partners to provide services to our families. Would you like information about what community groups work with us?
- Yes
- No

The following questions will help us determine what topics may be offered as training in our new Family Resource Center.

How confident families are with regard to key parenting skills.

Item	Responses				
How confident are you that you can motivate your child to try hard in school?	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to connect with other parents?	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to support your child's learning at home?	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you that you can help your child develop good friendships?	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to make sure your child's school meets your child's learning? needs?	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to make choices about your child's schooling?	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident

How confident are you in your ability to help your child deal with his/her emotions?	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident

(Gehlbach, 2015)

What other topics would you like to see the school other trainings about?

Focus Group and Interview Protocols

Venue: Library of Pine Tree Primary School, School Tour (various locations) of Pine Tree Primary School

Length: 30-60 minutes

Agenda:
- Welcome
- Introductions of participants
- Overview of how this meeting will be used to help families
- Questions and Follow Up
- Closing- Thanks for Participating

Invitations:

Questions:
- How do you know your child was ready for school?
- What does school readiness mean to you?
- What daycares or early learning experiences were most beneficial for your child?
- What other information would you like to know about kindergarten readiness?
- What community resources and programs have you used?
    - What are the barriers to participation?
    - What types of programs and services would you like to see?
- What do you wish you had to help your children be ready for school?

School Tour Stops:
1. Start in Office
2. Families can take pictures in front of the bulletin board. There are signs on the Round Brown Table.
3. Gym- Talk about getting PE 2 days a week plus 3 recesses.
4. Walk down Land Hall- Peek in 2 classrooms- talk about hands on learning, how we create readers, writers, and thinkers
    1. Ask questions about school readiness and early childhood experiences.
5. Playgrounds- 5 minutes to play
    1. Ask questions about connections to community programs and resources
6. Cafeteria- free breakfast and lunch
7. Library- mention music science; and art lab specials as well
8. End in Office-Give out Blue Bags and registration information
9. Students can get a Treasure
    1. Ask and answer any follow up questions

Presentation of Results of Needs Analysis of School Readiness

Family Engagement Plan

Goal 1: Facilitate family-to-family support

Goal 2: Establish a network of community resources

Goal 3: Increase family participation in decision making

Goal 4: Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning

Goal 5: Develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning needs

Goal 6: Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement

5
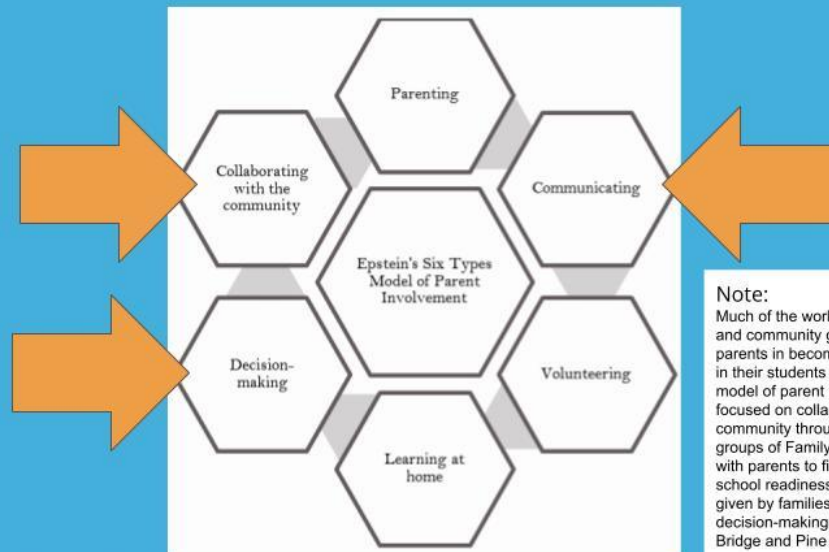
Note:
Much of the work done through schools and community groups to engage parents in becoming active participants in their students learning is based on this model of parent involvement. This study focused on collaborating with the community through connecting with the groups of Family Bridge, communicating with parents to find out their views on school readiness, and uses the input given by families to influence future decision-making process of Family Bridge and Pine Tree Primary.

Reading with Mom: Reading Habits among Rural Readers in Sarawak - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Figure-1-The-Epstein-model-Epstein-et-al-2009_fig1_338448004 [accessed 14 Mar, 2022]

6

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory
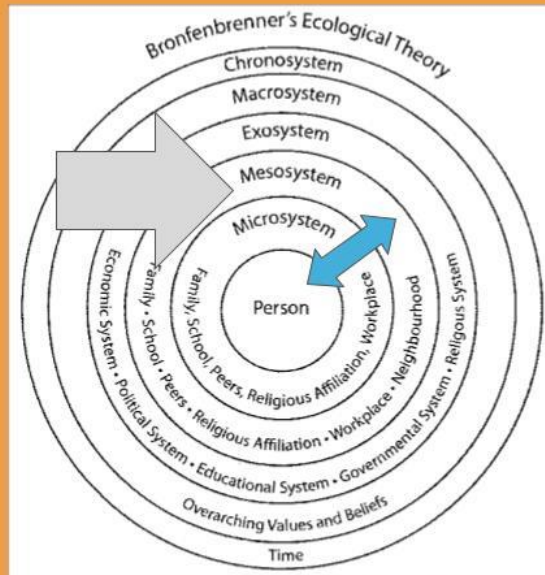
Notes:
Much of the work done in early childhood education is based on the socio-ecological theory where the child is in the middle. The closest influences to a child are in the home and school then into the community. This study sought to find ways to better connect and support families in the mesosystem in order to better support the learning of young children

Moving "eco" back into socio-ecological models: A proposal to reorient ecological literacy into human developmental models and school systems - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/An-adapted-illustrated-model-of-a-Bronfenbrenners-Ecological-Theory-Adapted-from_fig1_285232380 [accessed 14 Mar, 2022]

7

1.

Who are the families of Pine Tree Primary?

Results from the Future Pirates Interest Form
Spring 2022
Over 100 families completed the survey

Note:
Participants in the presentation will be given a copy of the Future Pirates Interest Form and the Family Bridge Member Organization Survey. The Future Pirates Survey results and explanations of questions will be discussed over the next few slides.

8

Table 3

Demographic Data of Families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form

	Number of People Living in the Household	Number of children in the household
1	-----	16%
2	3%	40%
3	20%	30%
4	40%	11%
5	25%	2%
6	8%	0%
7	2%	0%
No Response	2%	1%
Percent of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education		62%
Percent of families speaking a language other than English		12%

Note:
Participants will be asked to describe any trends they notice about families and/or their responses over the next few slides. The goal is to see Family Bridge Coalition members connect to the results anecdotally or if there may be recognizable gaps due to coalition members work with other parts of Gregg County and areas in East Texas.

Table 4

Types of Early Childhood Setting

Has the child attended any daycares, preschool, private schools, or public schools?	% Of All Families	% Of Families who speak another language besides English	% Of Families who speak English	%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	%Of households new to PTISD
Preschool, Daycare, Early Learning Center	49%	20%	51%	47%	50%
Parent stayed home with the child	21%	20%	23%	21%	24%
Public School	11%	20%	11%	14%	8%
Grandparent took care of the child while parent/guardian(s) worked	10%	28%	8%	6%	14%
Other family members took care of the child while parent/guardian(s) worked	3%	0%	3%	5%	0%
Home daycare	3%	6%	2%	5%	0%
Mother's Day Out	2%	0%	2%	1%	3%
Trusted friend took care of the child while parent/guardian(s) worked	1%	6%	~1%	1%	1%

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

Table 5

Most Frequently Accessed Early Learning Centers by Families

Name of Early Learning Center	% Of All Families	% Of Families who speak another language besides English	% Of Families who speak English	%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	%Of households new to PTISD
Applewood Academy and Daycare Center	7%	17%	6%	2%	13%
First Step	7%	33%	5%	0%	15%
Handprints Childcare	11%	0%	11%	13%	8%
Happy Hippo Daycare Academy	9%	17%	8%	11%	5%
Jordan Country Day School	7%	17%	6%	6%	8%
Kid Connection Preschool	4%	0%	5%	6%	3%
Kid Kountry	5%	0%	5%	6%	5%
Longview ISD Early Headstart	15%	0%	15%	17%	13%
Seesaw Children's Place	8%	0%	8%	13%	0%
Other Early Learning Centers	27%	17%	36%	26%	30%

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

Table 6

Community Programs and Resources Families have Accessed

Family Bridge Coalition Community Groups	% Of All Families	% Of Families who speak another language besides English	% Of Families who speak English	%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	%Of households new to PTISD
Boys and Girls Club	5%	11%	4%	5%	4%
Buckner Family Services of Longview	5%	0%	5%	2%	8%
Community Healthcare	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%
East Texas Food Bank	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%
East Texas Literacy Councils	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Expectant Heart Pregnancy Resource Center	5%	0%	5%	5%	4%
First Baptist Church MOPS	1%	0%	2%	0%	4%
HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters)	1%	11%	0%	2%	0%
HOPES (Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support) Project	1%	0%	4%	2%	4%
Lone Star Legal Aid	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Longview Public Library	14%	0%	13%	19%	4%
Partners in Prevention	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%
PAT- Parents as Teachers	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TAMU Agrilife Extension	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Wellness Pointe	17%	11%	18%	16%	17%
Windridge	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Indicated No Participation	48%	66%	45%	42%	54%
Percent of Respondents who are interested in information from these programs			37%		

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple responses or not to respond. 26% of families accessed one or more community groups.

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you that you can motivate your child to try hard in school?	1%	6%	5%	31%	57%
% Of Families who speak another language besides English	0%	0%	15%	54%	31%
% Of Families who speak English	1%	6%	4%	27%	625
%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	0%	10%	4%	23%	63%
%Of households new to PTISD	2%	0%	6%	45%	47%

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to connect with other parents?	4%	9%	12%	33%	42%
% Of Families who speak another language besides English	0%	8%	8%	53%	31%
% Of Families who speak English	4%	9%	11%	30%	46%
%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	6%	9%	11%	29%	46%
%Of households new to PTISD	2%	8%	10%	41%	39%

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to support your child's learning at home?	2%	2%	5%	16%	74%
% Of Families who speak another language besides English	0%	0%	15%	54%	31%
% Of Families who speak English	2%	1%	4%	12%	81%
% Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	3%	3%	4%	19%	71%
%Of households new to PTISD	0%	0%	6%	16%	78%

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you that you can help your child develop good friendships?	1%	7%	5%	30%	57%
% Of Families who speak another language besides English	0%	0%	15%	54%	31%
% Of Families who speak English	2%	2%	5%	12%	69%
%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	3%	4%	6%	27%	60%
%Of households new to PTISD	0%	0%	8%	27%	65%

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to make sure your child's school meets your child's learning needs? -	2%	3%	7%	20%	68%
% Of Families who speak another language besides English	0%	0%	15%	46%	38%
% Of Families who speak English	2%	2%	6%	15%	75%
%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	3%	4%	4%	19%	69%
%Of households new to PTISD	0%	0%	10%	21%	69%

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to make choices about your child's schooling?	1%	4%	4%	14%	77%
% Of Families who speak another language besides English	0%	8%	0%	58%	38%
% Of Families who speak English	1%	2%	4%	9%	84%
%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	1%	4%	4%	17%	73%
%Of households new to PTISD	0%	2%	2%	14%	82%

Confidence Levels of Families	Not confident at all	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Quite confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to help your child deal with his/her emotions appropriately?	2%	5%	5%	24%	64%
% Of Families who speak another language besides English	0%	14%	14%	43%	29%
% Of Families who speak English	2%	4%	4%	21%	69%
%Of households with children already enrolled in Pine Tree for K-12 education	3%	6%	3%	23%	65%
%Of households new to PTISD	0%	4%	8%	45%	43%

Note:
Participants will be asked to describe any trends they notice about families and/or their responses over the next few slides. The goal is to see Family Bridge Coalition members connect to the results anecdotally or if there may be recognizable gaps due to coalition members work with other parts of Gregg County and areas in East Texas.

2.

What do families need?

Results from the Future Pirates Interest Form and Focus Groups
Spring 2022

Family Responses on Perception of School Readiness

Question	Excerpt from Data	Themes
How do you know your child was ready for school?	"I don't know. It was just time to come to school." "We came to the information fair and got information about when to come to school." "I have felt lost about it." "He has been at daycare."	*Desire for knowledge of school readiness *Lack of communication from community programs and resources
What does school readiness mean to you?	"Nothing." "I wish I had known what you want a child to know" "It is what they have been working on at daycare."	*Desire for knowledge of school readiness
What daycares or early learning experiences were most beneficial for your child?	Families whose children attended a daycare, stated the daycare as the most beneficial experience " watching educational programs" "Learning games on his tablet" "Medical appointments"	*Confidence in early learning centers
What other information would you like to know about kindergarten readiness?	"I wish I had known what to teach them at home." "How to help to get into daycares. They are too expensive. Help on how to enroll in programs."	*Desire for knowledge of school Readiness

Note: Participants will be asked to identify other themes they have noticed in the data and/or give other examples of how families they have interacted with would have responded to these questions.

21

Programs and Resources Accessed by Families

Question	Excerpt From Data	Themes
What community resources and programs have you used?	"Public Library" "None. We have been at home" "WIC" "We go to the pediatrician" "Events at the Primary" "They go to daycare"	*Desire for connection with the community
What are the barriers to participation?	"I did not know these programs existed" "Families who do not speak English may not know" "You have to find and do all the work yourself" "You have to know someone who knows what to do to get help" "I work at night" "It is hard to get into daycares" "I have to work"	*Lack of access to community programs and resources *Language barriers
What types of programs and services would you like to see?	"More activities geared to preschoolers" "More things for kids to do" "More openings in Head Start"	*Lack of access to community programs and resources
What do you wish you had to help your children be ready for school?	"I wish I had known what to teach them at home." "How to help to get into daycares. They are too expensive. Help on how to enroll in programs." "More things to do at home to learn" "That going to the doctor doesn't connect to the school"	*Desire for knowledge of school readiness *Lack of communication from community groups *Lack of connection between community-based programs and resources

22

142

Age Ranges Supported by Community Groups

Target Audience Age Range	Number of Community Groups who support the age range indicated
Early Childhood (prenatal-5)	12
All Ages	12
Young Children (4-8)	7
Adolescence (13-18)	6
Middle Childhood (9-12)	5
Adults (18+)	3

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

Note:
Participants will be asked to identify other themes they have noticed in the data and/or give other examples that were not listed in these questions. This may lead to identifying more organizations to survey.

25

Types of Services Provided by Community Groups

Types of Services Provided	Number of Community Groups Providers
Family Support	18
Parent Education	15
Health Education	13
Case Management	10
Health Care Services	10
Youth Development	10
Instructional Support	8
Mentoring	6
Providing Food	2
Early Childhood Intervention	1
College Readiness	1
Spiritual Transformation	1

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

26

Outcomes Which Community Groups Work to Improve	
Number of Community Groups who support this outcome	
Cognitive Development/School Performance	15
Mental Health	13
Behavior Problems	11
Physical Health	11
Child Abuse and Neglect	7
Poverty/Welfare	5
Substance Use and Dependence	5
Violent Behavior	5
Teen Sex/Pregnancy	4
Food Insecurity	4
Juvenile Justice	3

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

27

Community Resources and Programs Connected to Readiness Frameworks		
School Readiness Frameworks	Services Provided	Outcomes
Readiness through Skills	Early Childhood Intervention Parent Education Health Education Instructional Support Mentoring	Cognitive Development/School Performance Mental Health Physical Health Behavior Problems
Readiness Through Environment	Providing Food Family Support	Child Abuse and Neglect Poverty/Welfare Substance Use and Dependence Food Insecurity
Readiness Through Maturity		

28

Types of Setting Through Which Programming is Provided

Types of Settings	Number of Community Partners who offer this Type of Setting
Community-Based Service Provider	18
School-Based	10
Faith-Based	8
Health Care Provider	8
Out-of-School Time	8
Home Visiting	7
Child Care/Preschool	3
Peer Learning	2
Continuing Education	1

Note: Respondents were able to choose multiple responses.

29

4.

What are the next steps?

Note:
Participants will be asked to identify other themes they have noticed in the data and/or give other examples of how they interpret the data presented. Discussion will be had on what pieces of these next steps will be added to future coalition meeting agendas.

Suggestions for how to connect with Families

30

Connecting to Early Learning Centers

Families who enrolled their children in early learning centers held the expectation that the care received would ensure the child was ready for school.

Many families do not have a clear understanding of what school readiness means to them or what their role is.

There are no Early Learning Centers that are currently Members that completed the sruvey. Currently there are very few formalized connections between Pine Tree Primary, Family Bridge, and any early learning centers.

31

Connecting to the Community

Families did not feel like there are very many activities for young children to learn readiness skills outside of early learning centers.

Families indicated a willingness to participate in more activities geared towards young children.

Member organizations offered opportunities to assist with readiness skills such as early childhood intervention, instructional support, and home visiting.

32

147

Connecting Families to Family Bridge

The majority of families who completed the Future Pirates Interest Form did not indicate that they have accessed any programs and resources are provided by Family Bridge Early Learning Coalition.

There is a need for more opportunities for families with young children to participate in community programs and resources.

Families may not be aware of how community resources and programming can assist them with school readiness. Communication is lacking between school, community, and home.

33