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Adaptive Leadership Organizational Viewpoints: Charter School Decision-Makers and Supports for Students with Emotional Disturbance Through Shifts in Policy

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Adaptive Leadership Organizational Viewpoints:

Charter School Decision-Makers and Supports for Students with Emotional Disturbance

Through Shifts in Policy

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Meredith Ann McOlvin

2018

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Adaptive Leadership Viewpoints:

Charter School Decision-Makers and Supports for Student with Emotional Disturbance

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by

Meredith Ann McOlvin

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

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Students with emotional disturbance (ED) show consistently low rates of academic success and high rates of drop out and incarceration. These students require multiple levels of support to address the barriers to education presented by their mental health and social-emotional needs. Former California policy, AB-3632, mandated interagency collaboration between school districts and the Department of Mental Health to ensure that students would receive the appropriate supports required to access the school environment, even when those supports extended beyond the capacity of school staff. However, AB-114, a budget bill signed in 2010, repealed the funding for interagency collaboration mandated by AB-3632. In response, the Los Angeles

Unified School District (LAUSD) and affiliated charter schools shifted the responsibility for providing counseling and social-emotional supports to school-based staff.

This mixed methods study used the validating quantitative data model of triangulation design to explore and describe how a unique population of LAUSD-authorized charter schools responded to AB-114 and the extent to which they exhibited adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints. This study introduces Option 3 charter schools as an area of education with limited existing scholarship and describes decision-makers' experience of responding to a specific change in policy. Analysis included data from 47 survey respondents, a document review of publicly available student achievement records by subgroup, and 8 semi-structured interviews.

The findings of this study suggest that *expertise* is imperative for understanding and responding to policy, but is also an area where decision-makers display mixed levels of confidence. Data indicate a range of confidence in understanding policy intent and impact, ranging from thorough understanding to total lack of knowledge. Recommendations include shared responsibility across multiple levels of educational authority regarding policy expertise and implementation, as well as continued research concerning Option 3, AB-114, and adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints.

Key words: policy, Adaptive Leadership, charter schools, expertise, AB-114, Option 3 SELPA

The dissertation of Meredith Ann McOlvin is pending approval.

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2018

DEDICATION

To my family, my partner, my Fridas, and my Rufus. Without my village, none of this would have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study investigated how a particular change in California policy affected how special education leaders (referred to as *decision-makers* throughout this study) make decisions to support students with Emotional Disturbance (ED). These decision-makers came from Option 3 charter schools in Los Angeles that are authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The investigation involved collecting data that revealed how decision-makers, such as principals or directors, interpreted and responded to the change in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114 through the lens of the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints. Students with the most significant need tend to represent the smallest numbers, so this study strove to provide insight into how charter schools in Los Angeles responded to this shift in policy to build support for these students and to determine if there was evidence of adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints in their responses.

Problem Background

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), a federal law, defined the eligibility for ED in a way that leaves room for interpretation. States and local decision-makers, then, have some room to differentiate how they identify students with this eligibility. This perceived sovereignty has led to a variety of state and local choices around service provision for students with ED (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004; Sullivan & Sadeh, 2014). Federal law provides an outline without a precise, universally accepted definition of ED, which leads to discrepancies in identification. The lack of a commonly understood meaning (Merrell & Walker, 2004) understandably leads to variation in student identification and state

decisions regarding the development and provision of special education services (Sullivan & Sadeh, 2014) for students with ED.

Context

In 2011, the city of Los Angeles shifted the responsibility for providing intensive counseling supports to students from mental health providers to school-based staff. As the result of a change in California policy, the mandatory interagency collaboration between public schools and mental health agencies was dissolved, effectively removing mental health providers from school-based supports in LAUSD. Henceforth, counseling services for students with ED shifted from certified mental health providers to school-site staff, such as school psychologists or school counselors. For the 25 years proceeding this shift, mental health professionals provided mental health services to students to address barriers that limited student access to education (Lawson, 2013; Lawson & Cmar, 2016; United Advocates for Children and Families, 2016). Due to this shift in policy, the same services were renamed and relegated to school-site staff (Lawson, 2013; Lawson & Cmar, 2016). This change occurred despite data showing that this subset of students needs support that may extend beyond the expertise of school site staff to achieve academic and school-based success (Anderson, Kutash, & Duchnowski, 2001; Mattison, 2015; Mattison & Blader, 2013; Siperstein, Wiley, & Forness, 2011).

From 1986-2011, AB-3632 required agencies (such as public schools and the Office of Mental Health) to coordinate in order provide appropriate services for students with disabilities to access education (Lawson & Cmar, 2016). This state policy was the result of a court decision in 1983 that mandated county mental health departments to fund and provide all required mental health-related services to students with special education needs (United Advocates for Children and Families, 2016). This policy intended to recognize that students' needs may extend beyond

the capacity of school-site staff and ensure the provision of support by highly qualified mental health professionals. California education budget bill AB-114 (Lawson, 2013), which was signed in 2010, included a one-line repeal of AB-3632 (United Advocates for Children and Families, 2016).

The impact of this change in policy can be seen sharply in charter schools authorized by LAUSD. Due to differentiated funding streams, these charter schools may not be able to hire their own psychiatric social workers. Therefore, school-based staff, such as school psychologists or counselors with little or no mental health experience tend to provide all counseling services (Lawson & Cmar, 2016). However, charter schools—especially Option 3 schools—have some flexibility that traditional district schools do not. Therefore, the perceptions and understanding held and actions taken by charter school administrators can provide great insight into the impact of this policy change, as well as some steps taken in response to it.

Proposed Research

This study examined how charter school decision-makers in Los Angeles responded to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114 in order to meet the needs of students with ED. Data came from Option 3 charter school decision-makers in Los Angeles authorized by LAUSD. The study focused on how charter school decision-makers, chosen due to their flexibility within the district, responded to the shift in policy mentioned previously and how they reflect on the development and implementation of mandated services for these students. This study strove to add to the research on adaptive leadership, educating students with ED, and Option 3 charter schools, as well as suggesting further research on how policy impacts service provision.

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. In Option 3 charter schools, what, if any, adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints are evident in the decision-maker (leader) population in responding to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114?
    a. Are there differences related to organization size?
2. How do the responses of different Option 3 charter school decision-makers compare and contrast?
    a. Are schools that are more *successful* exhibiting more or less Adaptive Leadership tendencies, if at all?
3. What knowledge and collaborators do charter school decision-makers identify as being necessary for planning for post AB-114 service provision for students with ED?

Methods Overview

A mixed methods research design was utilized to best answer the proposed research questions. Collecting both qualitative and quantitative data provided a deeper understanding of the research problem, serving to integrate or increase involvement of the researcher within the charter school community (Creswell, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Mixed methods also provide a means of triangulating data from different perspectives by collecting data around perception and practice through the quantitative survey and document review, and also providing decision-makers with an opportunity to share more in-depth information about their experience through a qualitative semi-structured interview. Data from both the quantitative and qualitative methods were analyzed to gain results, with the researcher utilizing triangulation design via the validating quantitative data model variant. These data were used to examine the decision-making of charter school leaders in providing support to students with ED post AB-114, as well as to provide insight into how this population responded to that change.

The survey was sent first to decision-makers of all known Option 3 charter schools authorized by LAUSD, asking how they interpreted the shift in policy, developed staff members, and carried out change during the 2016-2017 school year. Data were quantified to show the degree and variation of response by charter schools after the shift from AB-3632 to AB-114. Initial survey and thorough document review data were used to inform the selection of interviewees. The interviews gathered detailed qualitative data about the experience of different charter school decision-makers. The interviews worked as a means to elaborate on the experience of leading through a shift in policy and provide more nuanced perspectives than those collected in the survey.

Site

A specific group of charter schools from Los Angeles was selected for this study due to their status as public schools in Los Angeles that have sustained oversight provided by the local district. This oversight ensures appropriateness and legality. Just like traditional school districts, charter schools are required to follow "both federal and state mandates, they operate as individual entities, developing their own cultures and systems based on the distinctive needs of their communities, staff, and students" (Lawson & Cmar, 2016, p. 3). Charter schools that have Local Education Authority (LEA)-like status make decisions about how to use public funds to develop programs and provide services for students that are typically made by the district at large. However, these charter schools are allowed a controlled amount of flexibility for making decisions on how they build their programs and support their students. This flexibility allows charter schools to spearhead innovative programs that may look different from those at their larger, district-run counterparts. In LAUSD, charter schools with the most LEA-like status are those that participate in the Charter Operated Programs (COP) Option 3 Special Education Local

Plan Area (SELPA). For this reason, COP Option 3 SELPA schools are the chosen group of recruited participants. For this study, these schools are referred to as *Option 3 charter schools*.

Option 3 charter schools consisted of 141 individual public schools of varying size, demographics, and locations across the Los Angeles region during the 2016-2017 school year. All known decision-makers from within this group were recruited as survey participants to provide a variety of perspectives from the target population through a purposive sampling strategy. The intention was to collect data to generate a description of how Option 3 decision-makers responded to a shift in policy through the lens of adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints. Decision-makers from all known Option 3 charter organizations were asked to participate (except for schools affiliated with the researcher). The first few questions on the survey established the general size and demographics of the organization to ensure representativeness as well as comparative purposes. Since the survey offered the researcher an opportunity to gain a more significant amount of data, the quantitative piece was the primary source of data collection. Document review and semi-structured interviews were used to add nuance to the descriptive nature of the study and to further capture how this group responded to the phenomenon of policy change.

A detailed document review coincided with the survey to provide a more comprehensive view of the population in order to establish how the sample population fits into the broader context as well as to identify the specific organizations for follow-up semi-structured interviews. Eight interviewees were chosen to represent the variety of organization size found in the Option 3 SELPA charter school population and to provide a differentiated sample that shows a range of success in supporting students with special needs. This selection was purposeful in that it allowed participants to share a variety of experiences, strategies, and responses due to their LEA-

like status. Data controlled by organization size and relative success identified potential variation and increased both validity and generalizability of findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants

Survey participants were invited to contribute due to participation in LAUSD's COP, Option 3 SELPA because of their LEA-like status. The participants in this research were school site decision-makers: those who hire, train, evaluate staff and make decisions for program development, such as the programs for students with disabilities and ED. These same decision-makers are also the primary audience for study results. Decision-maker titles in charters may vary from site to site, but can include principals, directors, and CEOs to name a few. Data collection came from charter school organizations authorized by LAUSD that were active participants in the Option 3 SELPA during the 2016-2017 school year. The individuals from within each charter school organization were identified via the publicly available SELPA distribution list and cross-checked through the school information page on the California Department of Education (CDE) database website.

Data collection through mixed methods was utilized to answer the research questions and provide a descriptive view of how this population responded to a shift in policy. Data were analyzed to identify trends or patterns in the areas of decision-maker understanding, knowledge gathering, and leading through change through the adaptive leadership viewpoints lens to address the research questions. These data were also analyzed to identify if any differences in these trends exist due to organization size or relative success in supporting students with disabilities.

Public Engagement

This study collected data on how Option 3 charter school decision-makers responded to a change in policy. The study also provides insight into how staff members are developed to meet

student need in charter schools since the California policy shift in 2011. Findings will be disseminated by offering an information session through LAUSD's COP Option 3 SELPA, which will include a researcher-provided session during a monthly SELPA meeting, or a presentation during the annual COP Option 3 SELPA Summit during the 2018-2019 school year. A snapshot of study findings will be sent to all Option 3 charter schools, regardless of participation in the study. Option 3 members will benefit from this research by being able to see trends developing across the SELPA. These trends identify both areas of strength and growth within the population, concerning the impact of policy and development of staff members to support students with ED post AB-114. Option 3 SELPA's mission is "to facilitate a community of charter schools working together to provide innovative, high-quality educational services for students with unique needs" (Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.c, para. 3). The Option 3 mission aligns with goals of the study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2014, 2018), 362,000 students qualified for special education with an ED eligibility in the 2012-2013 school year. Of those students with ED, 38% dropped out of high school and 1.7% ended up in a correctional facility. Both federal law and state policies affect how students with disabilities are identified and also how students receive their special education services. The impact of policy is evident in the struggles of students with the eligibility of ED. This review investigates bodies of research that explore the development and impact of supports for students with ED, supplementing a study that examined how charter schools have responded to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114. This study asked, *How do Option 3 charter school decision-makers perceive the impact of and response to this shift?*

The first section of this chapter highlights the full scope of problems facing students with the disability of ED and provides background on their progress. Next, the synthesis focuses on current issues faced by such students, such as the barriers presented by both federal and local policy to developing and providing support to students with ED: a subgroup of students with disabilities with some of the most significant need. The focus then narrows to the role of the decision-maker (leader) in developing supports for these students. The final section outlines the theoretical framework for this study.

Key to this investigation is how law translates into policy and how it affects the development of student support. Decision-makers are critical in how services are developed and provided to students with ED. These decision-makers must be adaptive and lead their sites to work through a change in policy and ensure support to students. The building of programs and

support of staff to meet the social-emotional needs of students with ED at Option 3 charter schools in Los Angeles exemplifies this type of development. These are publicly funded schools with increased flexibility and unique challenges. The ideas explored in this synthesis are grounded in the theory of adaptive leadership by examining how decision-makers as leaders foster development through change. More studies are needed regarding how a specific policy shift in the state of California affects services for students with ED, and even more specifically, the impact on the development of services by decision-makers in schools.

Emotional Disturbance (ED)

ED Definition and Eligibility Criteria

Services for students with disabilities begin with the eligibility criteria laid out in federal law. IDEA (2004) defines eligibility for ED vaguely, leaving room for interpretation. Therefore, states and LEAs have some freedom to decide how they identify students with this eligibility. This freedom leads to various choices around service provision for students with ED from state to state (IDEA, 2004; Sullivan & Sadeh, 2014). Additionally, legal rulings on educational decisions are critical because "special education identification occurs at the nexus of science, professional ethos, and law" (Sullivan & Sadeh, 2014, p. 451).

Since federal policy around a universally accepted definition of ED is vague, identification and exclusion criteria vary (Merrell & Walker, 2004; Sullivan & Sadeh, 2014). IDEA (2004) defines ED as a disability category determined by specified characteristics that hinder the student's educational performance over a "long period of time" (Wright & Wright, 2014, p. 194). IDEA lists these characteristics as (a) an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors, (b) a failure to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers, (c) inappropriate types of behavior or

feelings under normal circumstances, (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, and (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. This definition includes phrases such as "a long period of time," and excludes the undefined group of "socially maladjusted" students (Wright & Wright, 2014, p. 194), lending room for interpretation.

A lack of a commonly understood eligibility definition (Merrell & Walker, 2004) leads to discrepancies in both diagnostic criteria and decisions regarding state policy for provision of services (Sullivan & Sadeh, 2014). For example, out of all 50 states in the US, only four consider the nonspecific characteristic of *social maladjustment* when qualifying students for the ED eligibility. These four states (Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) have a higher incidence rate of students who qualify for ED. There is a 1.03% prevalence average in those four states compared to a 0.54% prevalence for states that exclude social maladjustment as a determining factor for special education eligibility (Sullivan & Sadeh, 2014). Furthermore, the ambiguity of the federal definition can lead to barriers to building supports and meeting the requirements of the IDEA for students with ED.

Concerns for Students with ED

IDEA (2004) outlines the purpose of special education as ensuring access to students with disabilities as follows:

> The purpose [of IDEA is]… to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. (p. 118)

Studies completed in since 2001 have shown that students with the eligibility of ED consistently show little to no academic progress (Anderson et al., 2001; Mattison, 2015; Mattison & Blader, 2013; Siperstein et al., 2011). Also, according to the most recently released reports from the

National Center for Education Statistics (2013), 38% of students with ED dropped out of high school during the 2011-2012 school year. Further, 1.7% of students with ED ended up in a correctional facility. ED is a federally recognized disability category; although it is recognized as a disability category, these data reveal a gap in success unequaled by other special education subgroups. Federal definition ambiguity leads to some discrepancy in local policy.

Local Policy

Background

Federal law, state, and local policy continue to impact students with disabilities. State and local policy changes in California starting in 2011 reflect this impact. Due to a change in state law, the city of Los Angeles shifted the responsibility of providing students with social-emotional supports. For more than 25 years, former policy AB-3632 required agencies (such as public schools and the Department of Mental Health) to coordinate in order provide appropriate services for students with disabilities to access education (Lawson & Cmar, 2016). According to Disability Rights California (n.d.), under AB-3632, the mental health department from each county was responsible for implementing necessary mental health services that extend beyond the capacity of school counseling or guidance in order for children to benefit from special education. AB-3632 intended to provide students access to high-quality mental health services while recognizing that students' needs may extend beyond the capacity of school-site staff.

School districts in California expressed concern that AB-3632 caused the loss of local control and an increase in alternative placements for students with ED in the most restrictive environment (i.e., special schools, hospitals, and residential treatment facilities). In a study completed by Lawson and Cmar (2016) involving three California school districts, representatives from those districts all noted the excessive number of recommendations for

placement in the residential setting by the Department of Mental Health (DMH). However, the involvement of DMH in providing services to students with ED was also seen as valuable because these students had access to "the full scope of services" (Lawson & Cmar, 2016. p. 10). According to Benner, Kutash, Nelson, and Fisher (2013), students with ED can gain access to academics through a variety of entry points, including explicit teaching in large or small groups, push in or pull out support, and adult assistance in the classroom, in addition to access to agency supports outside of the school (Robertson et al., 1998), such as the DMH.

Despite this research, in June 2010, AB-114 a California education budget bill (Lawson, 2013) was signed by then-governor Schwarzenegger that included a line item eliminating all funding from the county to continue AB-3632 (United Advocates for Children and Families, 2016). This repeal occurred in response to a budget crisis that led the State of California to cut $133 million in funding for interagency collaboration for the provision of mental health services in schools (Lawson & Cmar, 2016). As a district, LAUSD opted to provide services by school-based staff instead of continuing to pay for interagency collaboration on their own.

This decision relegated responsibility to public school staff in LAUSD for providing services once provided by mental health professionals, all due to a change in state law (Lawson, 2013; Lawson & Cmar, 2016; United Advocates for Children and Families, 2016). The shift in policy transferred the responsibility for both funding and provision of mental health services related to education away from the county departments and back to the schools. The intention of the policy shift was budgetary and did not reflect the same consideration of student need outlined in AB-3632. Although the repeal of funding for AB-3632 was stated simply in one line in AB-114, it had significant implications for the provision of services to a small percentage of students with a considerable amount of need across the state of California (Lawson & Cmar, 2016). This

shift happened despite data showing that students with social-emotional needs may require support that extends beyond the expertise of school site staff to achieve academic and school-based success (Anderson et al., 2001; Mattison, 2015; Mattison & Blader, 2013; Siperstein et al., 2011).

Impact of Policy Shift

The change in providers mentioned previously raises the question of whether students with ED (those most affected by this shift) are receiving the appropriate support needed to access the curriculum and make adequate educational progress: What decisions are school site leaders in California making due to this change? This question is significant since studies over the last 15 years have shown that, as stated earlier, students with the eligibility of ED show little to no academic progress (Anderson et al., 2001; Mattison, 2015; Mattison & Blader, 2013; Siperstein et al., 2011). For example, Mattison (2015) sampled 182 students in secondary school with ED eligibility and found that they were behind two to three grade levels on average. Also, according to the reports released from 2011-2012 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics (2013) showed that 38% of students with ED dropped out of high school, and 1.7% of students with ED ended up in a correctional facility. These data suggest that, currently, students with ED are not making the adequate progress promised by IDEA.

ERMHS to ERICS

In spite of data showing that students with ED need more coordinated supports, this specific change in policy has decreased the involvement of mental health professionals in school sites in California since 2011. First, in 2011 AB-114 replaced AB-3632, and removed the need for services by mental health professionals. Then in 2014 the related service previously titled *Educationally Related Mental Health Services* (ERMHS) changed to Educationally Related

Intensive Counseling Services (ERICS). This change officially removed any mental health component from special education services in LAUSD schools.

The change in policy had far-reaching effects across California schools. In LAUSD, the second largest school district in the nation, the impact is evident in both traditional and authorized charter schools. Charter schools authorized by LAUSD reflect the most significant impact. Due to restricted funding and smaller student populations, these charter schools cannot hire their own psychiatric social workers or manage change in the same way a large district like LAUSD can. Therefore, school-based staff—such as School Psychologists or academic counselors—now provide counseling services to students with ED (Lawson & Cmar, 2016). This change in counseling providers highlights how decision-makers understand and make decisions based on policy: decisions that affect the development of services for students. Charter schools in Los Angeles are smaller educational environments with more flexibility; decision-makers have more responsibility (considering finances and staffing) when responding to changes in policy such as these. Since charters have both versatilities and challenges, they offer a unique opportunity for investigation.

Option 3 Charter Schools

LAUSD Charter Schools Background

Charter schools in Los Angeles have become an essential option in public school choice over the last 20 years. According to the California Charter Schools Association (n.d.a), charter schools are defined as independently operated public schools that provide students with rigorous, standards-based curriculum, and are allowed the opportunity to provide unique approaches to education. Charter schools are publicly funded, are free of tuition, and traditionally practice open enrollment for all students. Typically, their local district, such as LAUSD, are responsible for

authorizing charter schools. If the local district denies a charter petition, the charter may petition the county and then the state for authorization. California law sanctioned the creation of charter schools for the first time in 1992 (Whitmore, 2016).

LAUSD authorized its first charter schools in 1993 and has since become the largest authorizer of charter schools in the United States (Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.c; Whitmore, 2016). Charters authorized by LAUSD vary greatly. Some charters begin as start-ups or entirely new schools developed by the charter. Others are conversions that come from pre-existing traditional public schools and are re-branded as charters. Charters also have options for authorization. Some charters become affiliated schools and remain connected to and dependent on the district, whereas others develop autonomously as independent charters (Lauen, Fuller, & Dauter, 2015). As of 2016-2017 school year, there are approximately 280 charter schools in LAUSD, with 230 of them independent charter schools (Los Angeles Unified School District. n.d.c). Currently, charter schools in Los Angeles represent 23% of the student population, with the waitlist for charter school enrollment exceeding 41,000 students for the 2016-2017 school year (Whitmore, 2016). Independent charter schools, specifically those provided with the most autonomy and flexibility from the district to create schools for their local area, were of most interest for this study.

Option 3 Charter Schools

Independent charter schools have particular kinds of autonomy and thus decision-making responsibility. Independent charter schools are defined as "fully autonomous public schools governed by their own Board of Directors and operate in accordance with the California Charter Schools Act. These schools must also follow Special Education, Modified Consent Decree, and LAUSD Policy on Charter Schools Authorization" (Los Angeles Unified School District, Public

School Choice, n.d., para. 6). Independent charter organizations have the autonomy to operate as single site schools or run multi-site locations through a Charter Managed Organization (CMO). Studies of organizations, both educational and not, indicate mixed correlations between size and success that have led to continued debate over the benefit of size. A study conducted by Guthrie in 1979 indicated increased efficiency and equity as benefits of larger districts. However, this same study indicated concerns of leadership capacity affiliated with larger districts. Leadership capacity concerns are echoed in more recent studies by McPherson (1988) and Waters and Marzano (2007) that elaborate on these concerns to include issues of centralization and managerial effectiveness. Similar research on small district is not as prevalent. Due to the variety of organization size within the Option 3 population and the focus on decision-makers, size was used in this study as a method for comparing response.

Although independent charter schools of all organization size receive their funds directly from the state and can apply for revenues such as Title I funding, they are required to pay LAUSD 1-3% for oversight purposes. There is also a percentage of funding, known as the Fair Share Contribution, which is a required payment to LAUSD per AB-602 for special education (California Charter Schools Association, 2017). The percentage of Fair Share Contribution is essential to this study since it indicates how much funding charter schools receive directly and how much they must relinquish to the district while still being held responsible for providing special education services such as ERICS.

All schools in the state of California are required to participate in a SELPA. The California Master Plan for Special Education of 1974 required participation in a SELPA to ensure more equitable opportunities for students with disabilities in the state of California. SELPAs were created to ensure that schools understood the process of creating and sustaining

programs for students (California Charter Schools Association, n.d.b). In order to provide support to charter schools, LAUSD created the COP SELPA: a unique SELPA created by the district specifically for charter schools. The level of participation in the district's COP SELPA determines the amount of funding that charter schools must provide to the district for the Fair Share Contribution.

Independent charters have the opportunity to prove that they can participate as Option 3 members, the level with the highest amount of autonomy from the district concerning special education, and the lowest percent of Fair Share Contribution. Charters in Option 3 are expected to operate independently from the district regarding special education, and although they do not technically have LEA status, they will function independently with a similar role. According to federal law, an LEA is defined as a publicly funded institution within a state that has "administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state" (Wright & Wright, 2014, p. 53).

Option 3 charters assume all responsibility for students' "special education instruction, program and services, related services, placement, due process, and supports" (Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.b, para. 5). Option 3 charters typically contribute around 20% of their special education funding back to the district (Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.b). Option 1 and 2 charters, the other two levels of participation in the SELPA, have less personal responsibility, are more closely tied to the district regarding special education, and therefore pay more in their Fair Share Contribution. This study describes the unique population of Option 3 charter schools, those with LEA-like responsibility who balance both increased flexibility and diminished funding, and how they responded to a specific change in policy.

Charter School Responsibility

Since charter schools operate as public schools, they are required to have open enrollment for all students, regardless of disability. Therefore, they are also responsible for serving students with disabilities per all applicable federal and state law, as well as local policy (California Charter Schools Association, n.d.a). With the flexibility provided to charter schools, they are in an excellent position to create innovative programs to meet students' needs. However, they are often at a disadvantage in both funding and increased oversight. This disadvantage can create barriers to finding and staffing appropriate service providers, especially those that may be required to meet the needs of students with ED.

Oversight

The balance of increased flexibility and compliance with California law that requires increased accountability for charters is part of the responsibility faced by decision-makers. Oversight for charters is two-fold: it is conducted by the charter's board, and there is required oversight also conducted by the charter school authorizer. Both internal and external requirements create increased oversight for these schools. Charter schools are mandated to meet the requirements of California Education Code sections 47605 and 47607, and LAUSD sets the criteria for meeting these requirements (Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.c). Although charters are intended to be able to have locally controlled decision-making, they are still obliged to follow all state and federal laws (California Charter Schools Association, n.d.a). These requirements create a barrier of multi-leveled oversight for charters in LAUSD.

A study completed in 2008 by Harr, Oliver, Ramanathan, and Socias investigated the increased oversight of schools in the LAUSD during a 4-year period from 2003-2007 as a result of a consent decree. This study was a large-scale evaluation of the provision of special education

services in the district that utilized a representative sample to monitor progress. The results showed that by increasing oversight with direct attention to service provision, the percentage of tracked services did increase by about 29.5% during the first year. Conversely, that growth then decreased by 6.6% in the remaining years, and still did not have the intended outcome of supporting LAUSD schools in reaching their goal for service provision per the consent decree. With increased oversight at traditional district schools, there was some evidence of initial benefit, but even over a 4-year period, increased oversight did not achieve the ultimate goal. This study is an excellent example of how oversight can be both beneficial and ineffective. Charter schools in Los Angeles are beholden to the same oversight as their traditional district partners and have additional oversight requirements as well.

Oversight in charter schools begins locally, with school-based design, control, and fiduciary responsibilities handled by the non-profit charter board of directors. Then, LAUSD and the California State Board of Education provide oversight for that board of directors concerning compliance with the law and use of funding (Los Angeles Unified School District, Public School Choice, n.d., para. 6). Charter schools have yearly oversight visits conducted by LAUSD and must be renewed by the authorizing district every 5 years (Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.a). Regular oversight requirements provide the authorizer with the power to review and ensure that charters are operating lawfully (California Charter Schools Association, 2017).

Charter schools in LAUSD also participate in the District Validation Review (DVR) at least once every 4 years. DVRs are specific special education and compliance reviews per the Modified Consent Decree (MCD; Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.b). Charter schools have the same legal responsibility as traditional public schools, but often face obstacles with increased oversight and diminished funding. These obstacles place a significant burden on the

decision-makers at charter schools to balance large-scale responsibility to law and policy, local accountability to their authorizer, and their responsibility to meet the specific needs of each subgroup of students, including the social-emotional needs of their students with ED.

Decision-Makers

Background: Decision-Makers and Special Education

Decision-makers—defined here as school-based administrators in charge of hiring, developing, and evaluating staff—play a complex and imperative role in special education (Cameron, 2016; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Pennington, Courtade, Jones-Ault, & Delano, 2016; Steinbrecher, Fix, Mahal, Serna, & McKeown, 2015). Decision-maker titles can include principals, assistant principals, instructional leaders, directors, etc. On top of school-based responsibilities, decision-makers are also responsible for ensuring that their organizations are compliant with federal and local laws and policies (Cameron, 2016: Pennington et al., 2016). Therefore, they have a critical role in the implementation of special education (Cameron, 2016). The responsibility of decision-makers is great, regardless of their depth of understanding of the complexity of special education law and practice (Cameron, 2016; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Pennington et al., 2016; Steinbrecher et al., 2015).

Specifically, school leadership affects collaboration, evidence-based practices, attitudes toward special education, professional development, relationships with families, and the balance of political understanding with resistance to political pressures (Cameron, 2016). An equilibrium of these pedagogical skills and a working knowledge of special education law and disability categories is necessary (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Research has shown that few decision-makers grasp the scope of special education and the most appropriate and research-based practices for providing services (Steinbrecher, 2015). Even though IDEA requires that

students with disabilities are provided equal access to the general education curriculum, it fails to delineate how this should occur (Olson, Leko, & Roberts, 2016). In addition to the lack of suggested implementation to guide decision-makers, their training is not sufficient to prepare them for the scope of the job.

As of 2006, only five states in America required decision-makers to complete coursework in special education prior to gaining an administrator license or credential; this requirement has continued over the last 10 years (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Steinbrecher et al., 2015; Wakeman, Browder, Flowers, & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2006). Decision-makers do not need to be experts on disabilities to be effectual, but they do need to be skilled in special education leadership. This leadership includes the ability to identify their student population need and knowledge of (or means to identify) research-based interventions (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Many new school site decision-makers lack this fundamental knowledge at the beginning of their career, and more experienced decision-makers sometimes struggle to keep up with changing policy (Conner, 2012; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Moreover, the views that these decision-makers bring to their school sites have an impact on the provision of special education supports and services, the organization of special education, the prevalence of services, and the structures created to foster growth for both general and special education students (Pennington et al., 2016).

The beliefs and actions of decision-makers translate into the type of development structures they provide to their staff. These structures have a direct effect on the development of practice by teachers—both general education and special education—and service providers. Therefore, leaders influence effectiveness and implementation of supports by staff (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Not only are decision-makers responsible for identifying the need

within their student population and hiring appropriately, but they must also continue to develop and guide service provision at their site. This responsibility encompasses both large-scale needs, such as teachers and support staff for all students, and smaller-scale needs, such as social-emotional supports for the subgroup of students with ED.

Charter School Decision-Makers

Charter school decision-makers face their own unique set of advantages and challenges in supporting special education at their sites. The main advantage is the expectation of innovation from charter schools. A major complication for charter schools is the requirement to remain consistently compliant with special education law, such as IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act—often as small organizations with limited resources (Baily, 2004; Lange, Rhim, & Ahearn, 2008). Also, since charter schools developed in part due to cries for public school reform, they are often in the public eye. As schools of choice, charters have both a public mission and identified goals they are expected to reach. Uniquely, these decision-makers must balance the legal and practical responsibilities outlined previously, with innovation and concrete plans toward meeting established goals (Shealy, Sparks, & Thomas, 2012). Additionally, charter school decision-makers are also responsible for facilities management—such as finding and maintaining school site locations—that distinguishes their role in leadership from traditional district-based leaders. Moreover, charter school decision-makers must accomplish all of these goals with less funding than their traditional district school counterparts (California Charter Schools Association, 2017; Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.c).

Lange et al.(2008) best described the nuanced role of a charter school decision-maker in facing special education decisions; “among the considerable challenges facing charter schools in

the area of special education, those most often discussed include fiscal needs and operation, programming, knowledge of the law, and counseling of students with disabilities" (p. 19). The complexity of charter schools' role is evident in their responsibility for understanding federal and state law, policy regarding special education, what—if any—rules they are exempt from, alongside how these laws and exemptions intersect with an understanding of state charter school law. Since there may be some conflicts in regulatory special education law and state charter school law, it can be confusing to navigate special education for charter schools (Lange et al., 2008).

Under these circumstances, charter school decision-makers are responsible for hiring and supporting their staff, just like their district peers. This responsibility includes hiring professionals that provide counseling and mental health services. Furthermore, hiring remains a difficult task. Urofsky and Sowa (2007) surveyed 174 charter school decision-makers and found that 98% of respondents believed that targeting the mental health needs of their students was essential for a positive school environment; however, they found that these same administrators were not sure who to hire to meet those needs. The subjects responded with numerous job titles for who would be responsible for these services. Many stated a teacher or administrator, indicating a lack of understanding of which professionals can meet student mental health and social-emotional needs.

Since charter school decision-makers have more flexibility in how they build their programs, variety is found in hiring practices and the development of supports to meet the social-emotional needs of students when compared to LAUSD. This latitude, along with a variety of unique challenges and intense oversight, make charter school decision-makers in LAUSD an apt focus for this study on adapting to a change in policy.

Adaptive Leadership

Charter school decision-makers are leaders that have the responsibility of guiding their site(s) in the creation of supports and services for students with disabilities. As leaders, decision-makers require the ability to construct problem-solving practices, even in the face of change, as a necessary skill (Northouse, 2015). Charter schools are required to adjust and adapt to change in federal, state, or local policy, and their decision-makers are responsible for guiding their schools through this change. As a result, the frame of this study was the theory of adaptive leadership.

Adaptive leadership refers to the behaviors in which leaders engage and the actions they take to support others in responding to change. Within the literature on leadership, adaptive leadership is commonly identified as the "practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive" (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linksy, 2009, p. 14). This theory identifies decision-makers as balancing four organizational viewpoints in supporting their site(s) through the process of change: the leader's expertise in problem-solving and planning, the ways in which the school is staffed and developed to evolve when faced with change, the interaction of systems within the organization, and finally the ways in which the school staff accomplish the tasks required to address change (Northouse, 2015).

As seen in the research questions, this study investigated the degree to which decision-makers in charter schools utilize their expertise or understanding in responding to a specific change in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114. The study also examined how the decision-makers have mobilized, employed, and developed staff to respond to this change, and what information and collaboration partners are necessary for planning and supporting schools through change. Accordingly, this study is firmly grounded in the four viewpoints of adaptive leadership theory, known as the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints.

Implications

Although studies have been conducted regarding the supports for and progress (or lack thereof) of students with ED, as well as research into both federal and local policy that affect students with disabilities, there is a shortage of scholarship on how charter school decision-makers have responded to specific changes in policy to meet student need. As noted previously, Option 3 charter schools in Los Angeles balance the freedom of having leeway to develop programs and supports for students while also facing unique challenges in both funding and oversight. Option 3 charter public schools are uniquely positioned to respond to recent changes in policy that impact the state of California in supporting students in a post-AB-114 landscape. There has not been any research on how decision-makers in Option 3 charter schools respond to change, leverage their leeway while dealing with challenges, and lead their sites in adapting to change to satisfy new policy requirements. This study strove to begin to bridge the gap in research by connecting policy to the decision-maker and utilizing the distinctive position of LAUSD Option 3 charter schools as a sample population.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

ED is a federally recognized disability category of students with low rates of matriculation and high rates of incarceration. As with all special education eligibility categories, changes in policy affect the provision of services. As such, policy change in the last few years has shifted the responsibility of social-emotional supports from mental health professionals to school-based employees in the state of California. Option 3 charter schools in Los Angeles that have LEA-like status are in the unique position of having increased flexibility and maintained oversight by the local district. Therefore, this population is apt for this study. The goal of this study was to investigate how charter school decision-makers in Los Angeles responded to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114, to plan for meeting the needs of students with ED. The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. In Option 3 charter schools, what, if any, adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints are evident in the decision-maker (leader) population in responding to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114?
    a. Are there differences related to organization size?
2. How do the responses of different Option 3 charter school decision-makers compare and contrast?
    a. Are schools that are more *successful* exhibiting more or less Adaptive Leadership tendencies, if at all?
3. What knowledge and collaborators do charter school decision-makers identify as being necessary for planning for post AB-114 service provision for students with ED?

Research Design and Rationale

A mixed methods research design was utilized to capture both quantitative and qualitative data and respond to the aforementioned research questions. Since the study aimed to capture and compare trends within a diverse population of schools when facing a shift in policy, combining both qualitative and quantitative data provided the opportunity to integrate the strengths of both methodological approaches to gain a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena explored through the research questions (Creswell, 2015). This descriptive mixed methods design study collected exploratory data on Option 3 charter school decision-makers in order to investigate a population where little research currently exists.

The quantitative aspect captured demographic information and the self-evaluation of adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints by decision-makers used to respond to the shift in policy from a sampling frame of 129 Option 3 charter schools. The data illuminate what decision-makers know, how they came to know it, and who they work with to plan support for their students with special needs, specifically students with ED or social-emotional needs. However, quantitative methods alone cannot capture the narratives of perceptions or the impact the shift in policy has had on the actions of the decision-makers. Complex decision-making such as this involves aspects of staffing, planning, and collaborating. Therefore, eight decision-makers were chosen through a document review process and interviewed to provide a more in-depth analysis of the experiences and operations of decision-makers (Creswell, 2014) within the Option 3 charter network. The qualitative methodology offered the researcher the opportunity to gather additional data that provided either detailed examples of what the data showed from the survey or reveal another perspective than that of the quantitative data.

Although this study could have been quantitative only, the research would not have been able to obtain an in-depth understanding of how leaders make decisions in the face of change and the perceptions of how knowledge is gained and used at specific school sites. The qualitative piece invited decision-makers to share their experience openly in acquiring necessary knowledge about what decision-makers know, how they came to understand it, who they work with to plan and make decisions that affect practice, and finally what services look like at their school site. Qualitative methods allowed them to use their own words to share their experience. In contrast, although the study could also have used only qualitative techniques to capture the perceptions of decision-makers, the quantitative data allowed for the tracking and comparing of trends in adaptive leadership viewpoints pertaining specifically to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114 across a vast spectrum of school sites. Mixed methods provided an opportunity to gain a more rich assessment of the impact of the shift in policy on Option 3 charter schools decision-makers (Merriam, & Tisdell, 2016). Triangulation design with the validating quantitative data model variant was utilized during this project to collect, analyze, and then merge data to gain results that provided an overall interpretation.

Triangulation design was chosen to allow the researcher to collect different types of data that were complementary but spoke to the same topic within the same relative timeframe. The validating quantitative data model variation of triangulation design was most appropriate for this study since it is the model that is used in mixed methodology research to augment survey data with through qualitative data. With this methodology, the researcher utilizes the qualitative data set to expand on the quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006). As such, this method allows the researcher to flesh out the quantitative data findings (survey and document review) with the qualitative data (semi-structured interviews).

For this study, the survey and interview protocols were created together, with the intention of revealing nuanced experiences of decision-makers to expand on the descriptions found within the survey and document review, offering perspectives and experiences that were unable to be captured through quantitative data alone. The survey was sent first, and after 2 weeks of data collection and identification of initial results, the researcher selected a variety of charter organizations to target for semi-structured interviews based on not only size but also relative success for comparative and representative purposes. *Success* is defined as having higher than average achievement rates for the students with disabilities subgroup when compared to the entire Option 3 population, and lower than average suspension or expulsion rates. A more detailed discussion continues later in this chapter. These initial results were utilized to select the appropriate type of charter organizations and interviewees within the Option 3 charter community that could provide appropriate representation for validation purposes. Both the quantitative and qualitative data sets were collected and analyzed for results. During the analysis phase for the quantitative data, comparisons on the basis of size were introduced to test for potential differences in response due to organizational size through a one-way ANOVA. During the analysis phase of the qualitative data, groups were separated by relative success to test for differences in response. The results of the survey, document review, and semi-structured interviews were merged to create an overall interpretation and provide the basis for the descriptive study regarding how Option 3 charter school decision-makers responded to the phenomenon of a shift in policy (see Figure 1).

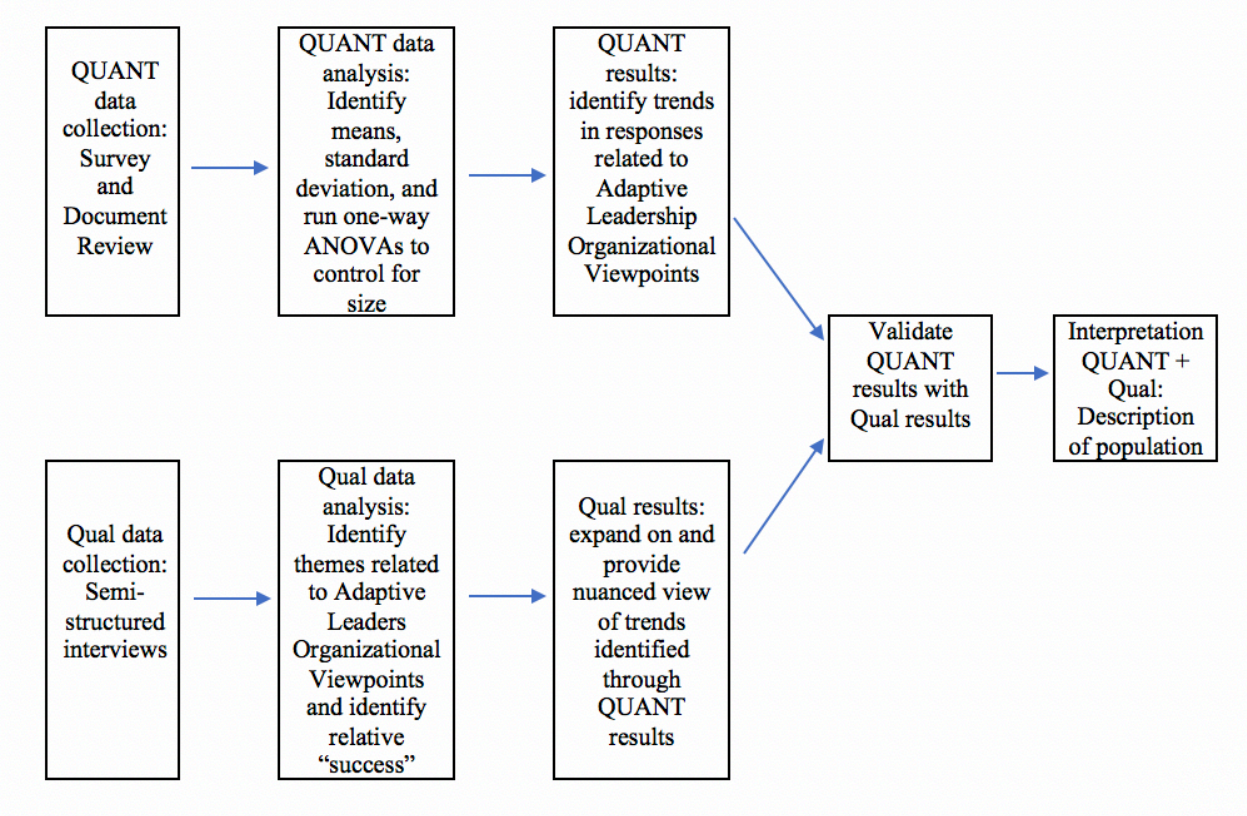

Figure 1. Triangulation design: Validating quantitative data model as applied to this study.

Since Los Angeles Option 3 charter school decision-makers have some level of flexibility provided by the charter movement, they were deemed appropriate for this study. This study investigated a sample population from the 141 Option 3 charter schools operating during the 2016-2017 school year, providing a variety of perspectives and experiences in developing supports post AB-114. Option 3 charter schools represent a range of schools that span the entirety of Los Angeles County.

Population

Charter schools are required to adjust and adapt to changes in federal, state, or local law and legislation, and their decision-makers are responsible for guiding their schools through this change. Option 3 charter schools are present in all six LAUSD local area regions (see Figure 2). Since Los Angeles charter schools have been provided with flexibility to create publicly-funded

programs while still maintaining oversight by the local district, the decisions made by these leaders can be innovative yet legally sound. Option 3 charter schools have LEA-like status, and leaders make decisions about how to utilize public funds to develop programs and provide services for students that are typically made by the district at large.

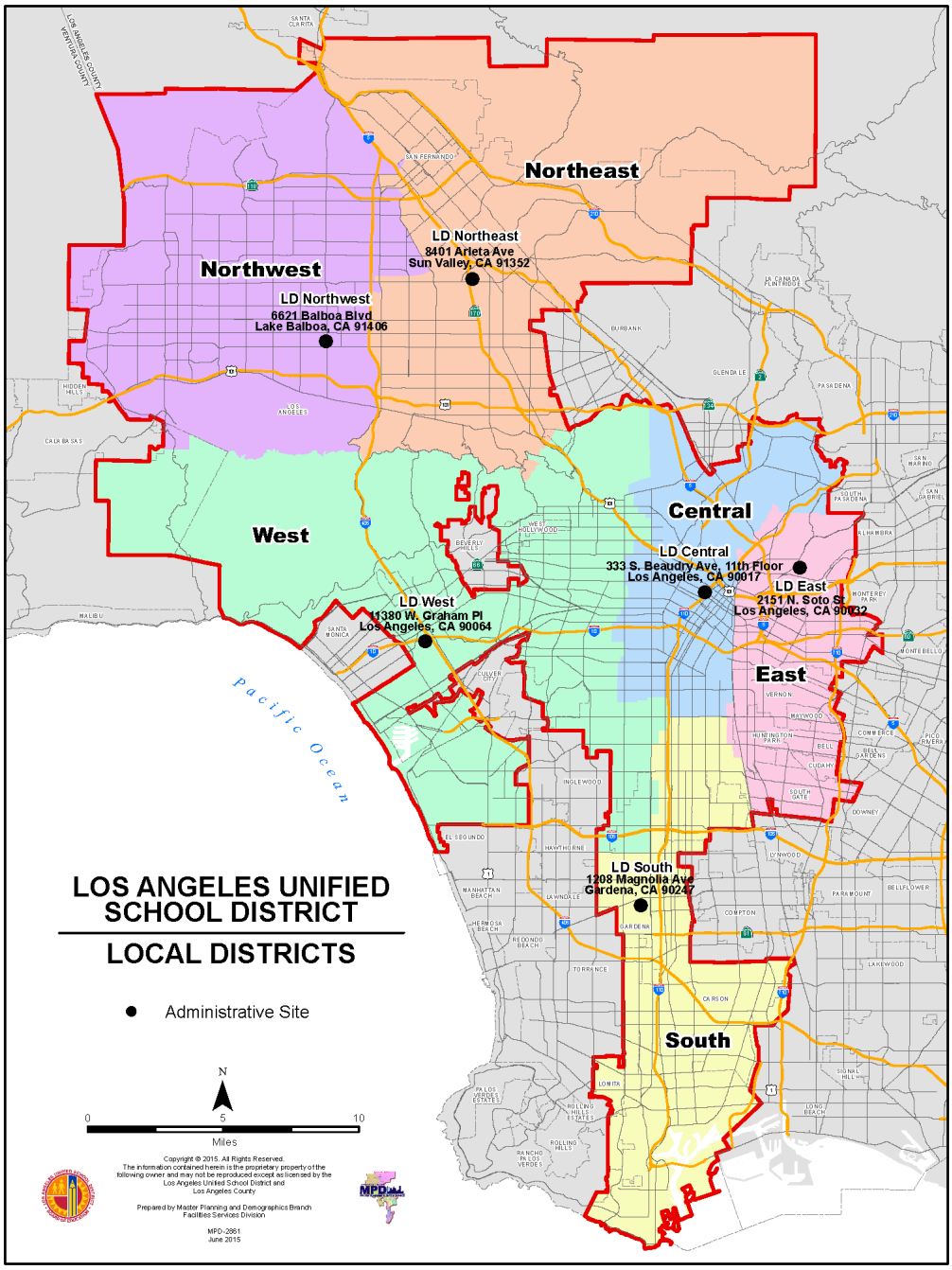

Figure 2. LAUSD local area regions map. From "LAUSD Maps – Local District Map" by Los Angeles Unified School District, 2015 (https://achieve.lausd.net/domain/34). In the public domain.

Just like school district LEAs, charter schools are responsible for "developing their own cultures and systems based on the distinctive needs of their communities, staff, and students" (Lawson & Cmar, 2016, p. 3). Charter school decision-makers' increased flexibility allows them to spearhead innovative programs that respond to the needs of the students in their regions (See Table 1 for the breakdown of LAUSD Option 3 charter schools by grade level and region). Since these programs may differ from traditionally created district-based programs, they can provide alternative options for public school consideration.

Table 1

LAUSD Authorized Option 3 Charter Schools by Grade Level and Region

Region	ES	MS	HS	TK-8	TK-12	K-3	K-5	K-6	K-8	4-8	6-8	6 & 9	7-8	6-12	9-12	10-12	Total
Central	6	8	11			1	1	1	5					1			34
East	11	7	6								1		1		1		28
Northeast	7	4	3						1	1		1		4			21
Northwest	3	3	4	1	1				1		1		2				16
South	6	3	7											1			17
West	7	7	7				1					1		2			25
															TOTAL:		141

Sample Population

Population Context

Schools that participate in LAUSD's COP Option 3 SELPA included 46 charter organizations and 141 individual schools. Since the researcher is a decision-maker that represents 12 of those schools, the survey and interview data excludes those specific sites. The remaining 129 Option 3 charter schools from the 2016-2017 school year can be found in all local area regions of LAUSD (see Figure 1) and exist alongside their traditional public-school peers.

Aggregate data describing the SELPA population does include the excluded 12 schools to provide a comprehensive view of the charter population. The document review offers context that reveals Option 3 charter schools match or exceed their district partners in areas associated with success for students with disabilities. These areas are: graduation rate, percent of proficient students (English language arts [ELA] and math), and suspension and expulsion rate for students with disabilities. Suspension and expulsion rate data are collected by subgroup, and data reflected in the table are for students of all grades within the subgroup of *students with disabilities* found on the CDE Data and Statistics website. This information includes students from all 1,302 LAUSD schools, and all 141 Option 3 schools. Table 2 includes data on graduation and dropout rates for this subgroup as well. This information is shared to show how the population of this study fits into the larger context of LAUSD schools.

Table 2

Success of Students with Disabilities by Population (Population and Subgroup Data)

	LAUSD *1,302 Schools**	Option 3 SELPA *141 Schools*
Proficiency Data ELA	8%	12%
Proficiency Data Math	6%	8%
Suspension Rate	1%	2%
Expulsion Rate	1%	1%
Graduation Rate	*78%*	*91%*
Dropout Rate	*13%*	*6%*

*Data for LAUSD Schools include charter school data.

Recruitment and Outreach

The participants for this research were Option 3 charter school leaders, described here as decision-makers: those who hire, train, and evaluate staff and make decisions for program

development (i.e., those involved in the IEP process and oversight for service provision for students with disabilities/ED). Survey participants were recruited to provide a variety of perspectives from the target population with a goal of gaining a census sample (with the exclusion of the study author). This recruitment began through a partnership with the director of the Option 3 SELPA to ensure the support of the SELPA and the legal approvals to conduct the study. Option 3 email distribution was utilized to gain contact information for the decision-makers; this list is publicly available through the SELPA's website. The contact information was cross-checked through a search of the CDE website of school information. The director of the SELPA's support also gave the researcher an opportunity to address decision-makers through public comment at a meeting. Interview participants were recruited to represent not only the variety in organization size found within the SELPA, but also different levels of success in supporting students with special needs. Outlined subsequently are the detailed outreach methods utilized.

Survey and Document Review

Decision-makers from 129 of the charters participating in LAUSD's COP Option 3 were invited to participate in an online survey. The publicly identified 121 decision-makers from the 46 charter organizations that constituted LAUSD's COP Option 3 SELPA during the 2016-2017 school year received the email invitation. After the first 2 weeks of survey data were collected, it became clear that respondents (i.e., decision-makers) included a mix of CEOs, directors, school site administrators (i.e. Principals, or Assistant/Vice Principals), coordinators, and/or coaches. These titles represent a variety of decision-makers that have special education oversight and staff development responsibility and represented a variety of charter organizations within the SELPA. Participants represented single site charter schools and small, medium, and large CMOs. During

this time, the researcher also conducted a thorough document review of publicly available data to identify and target qualitative participants per the initial survey data in combination with the document review results. The document review included the most recent publicly available reports on student achievement data (Adequate Yearly Progress Reports 15-16SY), suspension data (California Suspension 16-17 SY), expulsion data (California Expulsion Report 16-17 SY), and graduation and dropout (Cohort Outcome Data) rates, all accessed through the CDE's Data & Statistics website based on California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) Reporting.

All decision-makers were sent personalized invitation emails per organization, using the SELPA's public distribution list. The researcher followed up with a mass email to the entire distribution list as a reminder 2 weeks later, then personalized follow-up emails a week after that to round out the quantitative data collection. In between the last two email correspondences, the researcher handed out fliers and briefly presented at an Option 3 meeting. Further, the researcher offered a $5 Starbucks e-gift card for the first 15 participants to complete the survey. The number of survey respondents totaled 47 for a 38% response rate.

Document Review and Semi-Structured Interviews

After the first 2 weeks of initial survey and document review data collection, the researcher identified initial results based on 17 responses, which led to the identification of eight specific organization types to target for participation in semi-structured interviews. The targeting of these organizations types was based on organization size and a thorough document review of publicly available data regarding success for students with disabilities per research questions one and two (How did this population of decision-makers respond and did organization size matter? How do responses differ, if at all, and does relative success matter?) Success is defined by

schools having a low to no expulsion rate and evidence of above average academic achievement for the subgroup of students with disabilities in comparison to the SELPA data at large. When applicable, data regarding high school graduation and low dropout rates (for those with high schools) were collected as well, but since they were not applicable for all schools, they were not required to determine success (this is detailed further in the Analysis section, presented subsequently). Document review data were used to describe the population, provide context for comparison, and identify interview participants.

All interview participants were offered a meal, coffee, or $5 Starbucks gift card for participating in the interview. Additionally, all interview participants were entered into a raffle for a $100 Amazon gift card that was allocated once all interviews were completed. The purpose of the interviews was to collect more detailed information regarding the unique experience of different charter school decision-makers in responding to the shift in policy and developing programs to meet student need, adding nuance and detail to the quantitative data collected. Eight interviewees participated and represented the breakdown of size and success desired for this study.

Access and Role Management

In my current position as a special education decision-maker in an Option 3 CMO, I am the representative member for our schools in Option 3 SELPA Coordinating Council; therefore, I have access to the special education personnel at every Option 3 participating school within LAUSD's boundaries. I am in constant contact with the Director of COP SELPA (which includes Option 3) and the Coordinator of COP, who have both been aware of this study since the proposal. They were involved in the development of the study proposal and assisted in gaining clearance and providing avenues for outreach. Initial communication to decision-makers about

the study occurred during the beginning of the 17-18 school year. The survey was accessible online through Qualtrics, and participants were provided ample time to respond. Email reminders were sent, and incentives were offered to encourage participation (as detailed previously).

Throughout the 17-18 school year, I continued to build and strengthen my relationships with Option 3 SELPA decision-makers and utilized those relationships to encourage participation in both the survey and semi-structured interviews. I made sure to establish and differentiate my role when engaging as a colleague and participating as a researcher. For example, all outreach related to my study was done through my personal email and cell phone, whereas all outreach pertaining to our SELPA collaboration was done through work email and cell phone. As a researcher, I was flexible with interview scheduling, inviting participants to meet at an off-campus location or through the Zoom platform online. Participants were able to select times through Google Calendar appointment scheduling and provide feedback on their preferred location/method of participating. As detailed previously, incentives were also offered to encourage participation in this portion of the study as well.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection Methods

As a mixed methods study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected, utilizing the same constructs and concepts for both methods (Creswell, 2014). The data collected from all aspects of the validating quantitative data model—survey, document review, and semi-structured interviews—provided an overall interpretation that created the basis of description for addressing all three research questions. The researcher utilized the three levels of multilevel research (theory, measurement, and analysis) to complete a triangulation design for this mixed methods study. Theory is discussed for data collection purposes, and again for data analysis. Measurement

and analysis are described in the data analysis section, presented subsequently. The study and protocols used to collect data were grounded in the theory of adaptive leadership. This theory continued to root the research in analysis methods as well and, therefore, is the foundational level of research for this study (Creswell, 2014; Lopes Costa et al., 2013).

Quantitative data were the primary source for this study, with qualitative data collected to validate and add nuance to the trends found in the quantitative data set. The survey was web-based, utilizing the Qualtrics online survey platform, and was sent to charter school decision-makers at 129 of the Option 3 SELPA schools. Email addresses were accessed through publicly available distribution lists and cross-checked through the CDE school location records. The goal was to obtain as many decision-makers from each size charter organization represented in Option 3—single site charter schools and small, medium, and large CMOs. With monthly in-person meetings hosted by the SELPA, the researcher had the opportunity to offer quick in-person reminders and pass out fliers, as well as send ongoing e-mail encouragements to participate.

Survey

The purpose of the survey was to capture a sample that represented the Option 3 charter population. This dataset was used as the basis for identifying the trends in policy knowledge and understanding and development of/collaboration with staff in response to a change in policy, providing the foundation for this descriptive study. The survey included information on how decision-makers gain knowledge and understanding of special education policy, reflections on their own understanding of AB-114, and information on what has been developed in their organizations to support students (specifically those with ED or social-emotional needs) post AB-114. The survey instrument assessed one's self-concept—regarding agreement, confidence, or involvement—for addressing the shift in policy through four scales that corresponded with the

adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints (expertise, staffing and development, interaction of systems, and tasks for change).

As the theoretical framework of this study, it is necessary to understand what the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints are and how they are utilized to provide a foundation for examining how decision-makers responded to a shift in policy. As one of the four organizational viewpoints of adaptive leadership theory, expertise is defined as the leader's knowledge that is utilized for problem-solving and planning while supporting his/her organization through the process of change. Regarding this study, participants self-evaluated their expertise concerning the shift in policy, their ability to gain information, their desire for more information, and their confidence in leading their organization through change. Staffing and development, the second organizational viewpoint of adaptive leadership, is defined as how school staff are developed and evolve when faced with change. Survey participants also self-evaluated in this area regarding the shift from AB-3632 to AB-114 as it pertained to evaluating staffing and need, reliance on the input of others, reflection on the current state of counseling and systems for evaluating compliance, and finally the impact of the shift on staffing at the school sites.

The adaptive leadership organizational viewpoint of interaction of systems is defined as the systems utilized within the organization to support through change. Participants self-evaluated in this area regarding identification and valuation of collaborators, the use of formal collaboration systems, and the impact of AB-114 on systems of collaboration within the organization. The last organizational viewpoint of adaptive leadership, tasks for change, is defined as how the schools accomplish the tasks required to address the change. For this study, survey respondents reflected on what systematic supports are used to build the capacity of staff to complete tasks associated with a change in policy. These supports include systems of proactive

professional development, systems of coaching and professional learning communities (PLCs), conferences, and outside professional development opportunities. Decision-makers are asked to then reflect on whether these systems provide confidence in whether or not staff members are well-supported.

The survey had six sections and required 46 responses, with four optional open-ended opportunities to elaborate on survey responses. The two introductory sections (Area I - Participant and Organization Information, and Area II - Demographic and Student Population) collected demographic data for sorting and sampling purposes. The demographic, participant, and organization information was located at the beginning of the survey for ease of response. These responses were all to be selected by range, and participants were not asked to share the name or location of their organization to ensure anonymity.

The next four sections (Area III – Expertise, Area IV – Staffing and Development, Area V – Interaction of Systems, and Area VI – Tasks for Change) are statements that required a Likert scale response. These scales were intended to understand Option 3 charter school decision-makers' confidence and knowledge in how they responded to the specific change in policy. Each section required decision-makers to rate their level of agreement on the individual statements on a scale of 1-4, with a 1 response indicating that they *strongly disagree*, to a 4 response indicating that they *strongly agree* with the stated sentiment. Some sections were amended to a 1-3 or 1-5 scale when rating impact. For example, in Area III - Expertise, statements such as, "I feel confident that my organization/SELPA provides me with necessary information regarding special education policy change" and "I have a good understanding of California AB-114," asked respondents to self-evaluate on a scale of 1-4 for agreement. Also, questions such as, "How would you characterize the impact the shift from AB-3632 to AB-114 has had on the provision of

services for students with emotional disturbance at your school site(s)?" utilized a different scale. These statements, which asked the decision-maker to respond on a 1-5 scale rating impact from *extremely negative* to *extremely positive*, were included to gain more insight into the decision-makers' understanding. Table 3 outlines the breakdown of Likert scales found on the survey.

Table 3

Survey: Likert Scale Key

		Scales		
Area	Subcategory	1-4: Agreement	1-5: Impact	1-3: Involvement
Area III: Expertise	Info on Policy (SELPA)	X		
	Desire for More Training	X		
	Confidence in Finding Information	X		
	Understanding of AB-114	X		
	Desire to learn more	X		
	Confidence to Lead through Change	X		
	Impact of AB-114	X		
Area IV: Staffing and Development	Staffing Need	X		
	Awareness of Need	X		
	Reliance on Others	X		
	Counseling Provided	X		
	Counselor Need	X		
	System of Compliance	X		
	AB-114 Impact (Staff)	X		
	Unaware of Impact (Staff)	X		
Area V(a): Interaction of Systems	Collaboration Partners	X		
	Valued Input	X		
	Formal Collaboration	X		
	AB-114 Impact (Program)	X		
	Unaware of Impact (Program)	X		
Area V(b): Interaction of Systems	Self			X
	School-based Admin			X
	Home Office/District			X
	Special Ed. Teacher			X
	School Psychologist			X
	School Counselor			X
	General Ed. Teacher			X
	Parent			X
Area VI: Tasks for Change	Proactive Professional Development	X		
	System of Coaching	X		

	Conferences/Outside PD	X
	Professional Learning Communities	X

Semi-Structured Interviews and Document Review

Option 3 decision-makers participated in personal semi-structured interviews after the initial 2 weeks of data from the surveys had been collected and reviewed for initial results. During this time a detailed document review was conducted of data made available publicly through the CDE Data and Statistics website. The selection of interviewees was purposeful to ensure appropriate representation from the survey population, as well as a contrast of success as identified through the document review to assess if the relative success of a school affects adaptive leadership tendencies. The interviews were utilized to gain supplemental information for all research questions and enrich the data collected by the survey. The interviews provided an opportunity to learn a more nuanced understanding of the unique perspective of a variety of decision-makers and their experience in responding to AB-114. This experience includes how they staff their school sites, how they plan to provide services to students, and what they identify as strengths or challenges when providing services post AB-114, if at all. All questions from the semi-structured interview were categorized by adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints, just like the questions on the survey.

Eight interviewees were invited and participated, representing different types of charter school Option 3 participants by size (single site charter schools and small, medium, and large CMOs). These participants also represented a variety of Option 3 schools; half were determined to be above average in success for their subgroup of students with disabilities, and half were below average when compared to the data for the entire Option 3 charter school population. The data from these interviews provide more in-depth perspectives on necessary knowledge and the process of making decisions and developing programs to meet students' needs post AB-114. Just

like the survey, questions were separated by section, beginning with questions around general background and experience, where decision-makers were asked to share their leadership story, describe their school/charter organization and explaining how they gain knowledge around special education policy. Probing questions were used if respondents did not provide detailed enough descriptions of their organization (such as years in operation, number of school sites, general demographics, and information regarding their special education and ED eligibility population). After questions about the leader and their organization, decision-makers responded to questions that aligned with the four adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints.

Interviewees were asked to share more about their own experience through the lenses of expertise, staffing and development, interaction of systems, and tasks for change. These questions intended to gain more nuanced information around how decision-makers responded to the shift in policy, and where their responses fit within the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints. To expand on the viewpoint of expertise, interviewees were asked to share about their own experience with AB-114, such as how they became of aware of this policy, their general understanding thereof, and how they view its impact (if at all) on their organization. Next, in regard to staffing and development, interviewees were asked to speak about how they hire in order to support students with social-emotional needs. When necessary, probing questions were posed to ensure a complete picture of the response, such as inquiring about the type of staff needed (by credential or title), if the staff members are full- or part-time, and what supports look like at their organizations.

Continuing with the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints structure, for interaction of systems, interviewees were invited to discuss the resources they access, and with whom, if anyone, they collaborate when planning for and providing support for students with

ED. As necessary, the probing questions for this section included asking how these resources may have changed throughout the years and identifying what staff or collaborators are most valuable when planning for challenging students. The tasks for change section asked interviewees to discuss how the team is developed throughout the year to meet the needs of challenging students, specifically those with ED, and what other systems their school/organization uses to support teacher and staff development. Decision-makers were asked probing questions for this section as well. Items included inquiry about professional development scope and sequence, identifying who develops the staff that supports students with ED, and if any additional supports are provided (such as mentors, coaching, PLCs, etc.) to the team. Finally, interviewees were asked to reflect on their current systems and practice and share any additional information that may have been relevant to the study. Participants were probed to share strengths of their organization, areas for growth, and anything they would feel the organization would need to be able to better support students.

Interviews were between 45 to 75 minutes in length and were audio-recorded utilizing the Rev.com app on an iPhone X, as well as video and audio recorded on the Zoom computer platform for backup. Video recordings were not saved to protect anonymity. During each interview, two audio recording devices were used to ensure appropriate audio recording. The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of questions about the specifics of the interviewees' understanding of the impact of AB-114; how the school has responded through hiring, program development, and oversight; and information on the systems of knowledge utilized when planning for supporting students with ED. The protocol has the same six sections as the survey. These sections include general information and the adaptive leadership viewpoints. Similar protocol structure allowed for more detailed information on what viewpoints are present in this

population's response to a shift in policy, how responses may compare or contrast when viewed through the lens of success, and finally what knowledge and collaborators Option 3 charter school decision-makers identify as being necessary, per the research questions. Interviews occurred outside of school hours, at off-site locations, and through the Zoom online meeting platform. This flexibility prevented the interruption of job requirements and increased participants' willingness to engage. Space and time to be vulnerable in responses allowed decision-makers to be free to discuss strengths and deficiencies they may perceive at their organizations.

Data Analysis Methods

This descriptive study utilized mixed methods research and analysis, including data from a survey, document review, and semi-structured interviews to gain an overall interpretation that responded to the three research questions. Both the survey and semi-structured interviews included general demographic information for charter decision-makers and organization, as well as items relating to expertise, staffing and development, interaction of systems, and tasks for change. The adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints and demographic categories combined to provide data to respond to the research questions. Comparisons by organizational size identified any similar or differing trends in response to survey data and organization success in supporting students with special needs for interview data. Analysis of both survey and interview data revealed trends in the understanding of policy and change management, knowledge gathering strategies, and the development of practice across a large spectrum of school sites relevant to all three research questions (RQs). The analysis of these data describes how adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints manifested in Option 3 decision-makers during a shift in policy (RQ1), provides intra-population comparison by size and then by success

(RQ1a and RQ2), and provides insight into the knowledge and collaborators this population identified as being necessary to support students post AB-114 (RQ3), which provided a description of how this population responded to the phenomenon of policy change.

The survey collected organizational data, such as general demographics and how decision-makers evaluated their organizations' response to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114 and how reactions scale within the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints. This survey provided the foundation of the quantitative data for analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed to answer questions about which of the viewpoints were evident, to what extent differences may exist due to organization size, and what knowledge and collaborators decision-makers identify as being necessary to support students post AB-114. The primary analysis of the quantitative data was done via a one-way ANOVA to compare the means of the dependent variables (i.e., adaptive leadership categories listed previously) to the independent variable of organization size. This analysis is best suited for describing comparisons and contradictions in dependent variables through the lens of the independent variable. To ensure the accuracy of population description, the researcher assessed if organizational size affected results in order account for potential differentials. The Bonferroni adjustment procedure was utilized as a technique to limit the risk of committing Type I errors due to running multiple tests.

Additionally, the document review and semi-structured interviews added another layer of data that provided the researcher with more nuanced information from individual decision-makers. Responses provide examples of trends regarding adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints and the identification of necessary knowledge and collaboration partners. These methods occasionally offer another perspective that cannot be captured in the quantitative data only and provide triangulation of data. Initial survey data were analyzed first to look for trends in

responses, specifically in regard to the viewpoints when controlled for size and coincided with the document review. These initial results helped identify interviewees as a representative sample of not only survey participants but also success levels defined within the Option 3 charter population. Qualitative data were utilized to expand on quantitative data and provides the necessary context for a descriptive study.

The organizational data provide context and comparison for this mixed methods study, based on the grounding theory of adaptive leadership through the organizational viewpoints. Data from the survey, document review, and the semi-structured interviews were collected, coded—by themes of experience, understanding, and adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints—and analyzed to obtain results that provided the researcher with a basis for overall interpretation of data in response to the research questions.

Survey Data Analysis

The survey collected a range of responses from Option 3 charter school decision-makers and captured a measure of their perceptions and indicators of the degrees to which they believe their schools represent adaptive leadership viewpoints when supporting schools and students post AB-114 (Schein, 2010). A multistage sampling process was utilized to compile and organize data collected from the large sample. Using the responses shared in the first two sections of the survey (Area I – Participant and Organization Information, and Area II – Demographic and Student population), data were separated into four groups—single site charter schools and small, medium, and large CMOs—for comparison in response to the research questions.

From the population of charter schools that participate in Option 3 SELPA, it is necessary to break down the survey participants in comparison to the overall population in order to show how participants are representative of the Option 3 charter population. These breakdowns are

presented in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 compares the demographics of the survey respondents (n = 47) to the demographics of the Option 3 SELPA population. Although the entire population is large (129 known decision-makers) the percentage breakdown is similar enough to be considered representative. The majority of the respondents represent single-site and small CMOs (30% and 38%, respectively), with a smaller percentage of respondents representing medium and large CMOs (17% and 15%, respectively). As shown in Table 4, the population of the SELPA distribution skews slightly higher for single-site charters (59%) when compared to the survey distribution (30%) but shows that medium and large CMOs do represent a similarly small percent of the overall SELPA population (11% and 9% respectively). Organization size was a controlling factor in comparison to determine if it had an impact in the evidence of adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints, or if the responses to a shift in policy were perhaps more universal in this population. Thus, the distribution is important to this study.

Table 4

Proportional Distribution of Decision-makers by Organization Size and SELPA Population

	Survey Distribution	SELPA Distribution
Single Site Charter	30%	59%
Small Charter Managed Organization	38%	21%
Medium Charter Managed Organization	17%	11%
Large Charter Managed Organization	15%	9%

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Sample Population of Survey Participants (n = 47)

Variable	Percent
Title	
Executive	7.27%
Director	32.73%
Principal/Assistant or Vice Principal	41.82%
Coordinator/Facilitator/Coach	14.55%
Other	3.64%

(continued)

Variable	Percent
Experience (in years)	
0-4	57.45%
5-10	34.04%
11-15	6.38%
15+	2.13%
Organization Age (in years)	
0-4	10.64%
5-10	27.66%
11-15	23.40%
16+	38.30%
Organization Size	
Single	29.79%
Small	38.30%
Medium	17.02%
Large	14.89%
Enrollment	
101-500	40.48%
501-1,000	21.43%
1,000+	38.10%
Number of Students with IEPs	
11-25	11.90%
26-10	26.19%
50+	61.90%
Number of Students with ED	
0	16.67%
1-5	66.67%
6-10	7.14%
11+	9.52%

For the 2016-2017 school year, other demographic measures collected from respondents in the survey was not publicly available for all charters in the Option 3 SELPA. Table 5 provides frequency distributions for decision-maker title, experience, organization age, organization size, enrollment, number of students with individualized educational plans (IEPs), and number of students with ED eligibility. These data are valuable because they provide more detailed context for the descriptive nature of this study. A plurality of survey respondents reported their title as "Principal/Assistant or Vice Principal" (32.73%,. whereas only 7.27% of decision-makers identified as "Executive." Slightly more than half of the respondents stated that they are in the

first few years of experience in their current role (57.45%), which provides context around who "decision-makers" are within this sample population. The plurality (40.48%) of schools are between the range of 101-500 students enrolled, accounting for the general size of schools among the Option 3 survey respondents. All schools had at least 11 students with IEPs, with the majority of respondents (61.90%) working with at least 50 students with IEPs during the 2016-2017 school year. Finally, a supermajority (83.33%) of respondents had at least one student with ED eligibility. Due to the small size of the subpopulations of two of the groups, it is important to note that participants representing medium CMOs and large CMOs are proportionately representative; however, they comprise a relatively a small number of people (eight and seven, respectively).

Document Review and Semi-Structured Interview Data Analysis

The document review was also utilized to target specific organizations for interview participation based on size and relative success for comparison purposes. Organization size was an important consideration because a variety of organization size is found within the SELPA, providing an avenue for comparing the data that aligns with survey methods. To identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data, a thematic analysis of interview data was conducted (Maxwell, 2013) per demographic and organizational information and adaptive leadership viewpoint perspectives. Finally, the relative success of each interviewee's organization was analyzed to reveal potential discrepancies.

Transcribed audiotaped sessions from Rev.com provided the qualitative dataset to be analyzed. Data were input into Quirkos and categorized according to leadership experience, demographic information, and the adaptive leadership viewpoints (expertise, staffing and development, interaction of systems, and tasks for change) for analysis. These data provided

nuanced information for all three research questions: description of the viewpoints in the population (and if there is any difference when compared by size), comparisons in responses and relative success of the organization, and the identified knowledge and collaborators on which this population relied when supporting students post-AB-114.

Since charter school decision-makers are leaders that must guide their site(s) in the creation of supports and services for students with disabilities, they must be able to construct problem-solving practices, even through change (Northouse, 2015). The semi-structured interviews revealed the unique perspective of leaders from a variety of organizational sizes and levels of success. Success for this schools in this study was defined as either *Above Average Success* or *Below Average Success*. Above Average schools exceeded the average achievement for the subgroup of students with disabilities and had a lower rate of suspension or expulsion. Table 6 shows how interview participants fared in comparison to the Option 3 SELPA population and LAUSD at large to provide context for the chosen population, so that the reader can make generalizations in regard to the research questions appropriately.

Table 6

Secondary Data Analysis: Success of Students with Disabilities by Population (Subgroup Data)

	LAUSD	Option 3 SELPA	Interviewees
ELA Proficiency Rate	8%	12%	15%
Math Proficiency Rate	6%	8%	9%
Suspension Rate	1%	2%	2%
Expulsion Rate	1%	1%	0%
Graduation Rate	*78%*	*91%*	*88%*
Dropout Rate	*13%*	*6%*	*9%*

Schools categorized as Above Average Success match or surpass the average percent of the Option 3 SELPA population in more than two of the required categories (Proficiency Data ELA, Proficiency Data Math, Suspension Rate, and Expulsion Rate). Below Average Success

refers to schools that did not meet the Option 3 SELPA population average in two or more of the required categories. Of the eight interview participants, four classified as Above Average Success, and four were classified as Below Average Success. The breakdown of interviewees is shown in Table 7. Interview participants are coded by number (1, 2, 3, etc.) and organization size (SI – Single, SM – Small, MD – Medium, LG – Large). For example I1:SM = Interviewee # 1 from a small organization. Graduation and dropout rates are not considered required categories for comparison in this study since some of the interviewed charter organizations do not have schools at the high school level, and therefore these data cannot be compared across all participants (this is represented by "NA" in Table 7). This information is imperative when considering if successful schools exhibit more adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints, per research question two.

Table 7

Interviewed Schools: Success of Students with Disabilities Breakdown for Comparison

	I1:SM	I2:SI	I3:SI	I4:LG	I5:MD	I6:LG	I7:MD	I8:SM
Proficiency Data ELA 15-16 SY	8%	23%	26%	22%	22%	7%	13%	6%
Proficiency Data Math 15-16 SY	7%	26%	6%	20%	9%	0%	6%	4%
Suspension Rate 16-17SY	1%	4%	2%	2%	1%	0%	5%	13%
Expulsion Rate 16-17SY	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Graduation Rate 15-16 SY	*87%*	*89%*	*NA*	*NA*	*90%*	*87%*	*NA*	*NA*
Dropout Rate 15-16 SY	*5%*	*7%*	*NA*	*NA*	*10%*	*9%*	*NA*	*NA*

Note. Green Shading indicates Above Average Success; Red Shading indicates Below Average Success.

Data in Tables 6 and 7 present the most recent available data from the CDE. Suspension and expulsion rates capture the 2016-2017 school year, whereas the most recent data available for graduation and dropout rates are from the 2015-2016 school year. For proficiency data, the most recent available data are the 2016 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Reports. The Every

Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into federal law in December of 2015, mandating states to come up with new accountability systems that were required to go into effect during the 2017-2018 school year. California created and proposed a new accountability system called the Local Control Funding Formula in September 2016, with the goal of the new accountability measures being available in 2017. Despite the new online accountability system being released at the time of the writing of this paper, some data are still missing that would be necessary for comparison. These data are slated to be added for the formal roll out during the 2018-2019 school year for all schools. Missing data points included the breakdown of student achievement, suspension, and expulsion data by subgroup for all schools, which was integral to this study. Therefore the researcher utilized AYP reports for proficiency data and CALPADS reporting for suspension and expulsion rates.

The findings, presented in detail in the following chapter, are established within the context shared here. Accordingly, interview participants are given pseudonyms to protect anonymity when discussing these findings. Table 8 outlines the participants per the aforementioned designation (i.e., "I1:SM"), provides the associated alias, and offers a brief description of the organization they represent and their experience for context. Data from the document review provides framework and means for comparison, whereas data from the semi-structured interviews give nuance to the quantitative findings. Altogether, the results present a detailed description of the sample population's reflection of leading through the phenomenon of policy change.

Table 8

Interviewed Participants: Pseudonyms and Descriptors

Designation	Pseudonym	Years of Experience in Education	Description
I1:SM	Sandra	11-15	Small Charter-Managed Organization Non-special education background
I2:SI	Dottie	20+	Single Site Charter School Non-special education background
I3:SI	Elisa	20+	Single Site Charter School Special education background
I4:LG	Kristin	15-20	Large Charter Managed Organization Special education background
I5:MD	Liz	5-10	Medium Charter Managed Organization Special education background
I6:LG	Susan	15-20	Large Charter Managed Organization Special education background
17:MD	Marie	5-10	Medium Charter Managed Organization Special education background
I8:SM	Ventura	11-15	Small Charter Managed Organization Special education background

Ethical Issues

Since confidentiality and participation were essential components of data collection for this study, steps were taken to protect participants' identities and ensure they knew their participation was voluntary at all stages of the process. Before participation, all members received a study information sheet, which included a description of the study, participant rights, and a clear statement on the voluntary nature of participation to protect them from deception. Beyond the study information sheet, reminders of the voluntary nature of the study were given in all email outreach, in the directions section of the survey, and orally prior to engaging in the interview. All communications also noted the necessary precautions that were taken to ensure that shared information would not be traceable back to participants' identities to ensure anonymity. These precautions included a web-based survey that was not connected to the participants' email address or identifiable information without collection of any personally identifiable information required for participation in the survey. Measures were taken to ensure

interview subjects would not be identifiable. Interviews were scheduled away from site-based locations and were transcribed without names or identifying information before analysis (more details around transcription and coding can be found previously in the data analysis section).

Both the researcher and the director of the SELPA assured all decision-makers who participate in Option 3 SELPA would receive feedback on the research to share the benefits of this study, regardless of their participation. The researcher has offered to present the findings during the 2018-2019 school year through a SELPA monthly meeting, provide one on one debriefs or sessions as requested, and distribute "at-a-glance" handouts to all members of Options 3 to ensure dissemination of information from the study to all interested parties.

Validity and Reliability

Gathering data from different types of charters involved in Option 3 (ranging from single-site charter schools to large CMOs that operate like small districts) allowed the researcher to investigate data from a range of organizations within the SELPA. To identify potential variation within the sample population, the researcher conducted a comparison of subgroups by size and success. Comparing on the basis of size increased both the validity and generalizability of findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The selection of participants was purposeful to reflect a variety of charters that may have developed different strategies to address the change in policy due to their LEA-like status. Collecting data from a variety of schools and through the use of mixed methods allowed for the triangulation of data from a diverse population by combining both qualitative and quantitative data. The usage of mixed methodology allowed the study to offset weaknesses found in quantitative or qualitative research alone. It provided extensive evidence from which to draw conclusions by utilizing all methods possible to address the research questions at hand.

Generalizability and limitations are discussed to promote credibility and trustworthiness for this study. Generalizability refers to "extending research results, conclusions, or other accounts that are based on a study of particular individuals, settings, times, or institutions to other individuals, settings, times, or institutions than those directly studied" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 136). As a mixed methods study from a sample population of diverse charter school settings, there is potential for both internal and external generalizability of the findings. For internal generalizability, the depth of data will allow decision-makers within the SELPA to infer conclusions about information that may not be represented directly (Maxwell, 2013). There is also the potential for some external generalizability since the data will be collected from a diverse group of schools and therefore could apply to other public school institutions (Maxwell, 2013). Since diversity is found within Option 3 charter schools in Los Angeles (in terms of size, demographics, and location), there is the potential for some generalizability to extend beyond charter, and beyond Los Angeles to other areas of California. Also, since all schools are subject to the same federal regulations, the reader may find some generalizability beyond of the state of California as well. Readers may strive to identify relevance and usefulness for themselves and apply the theory outlined in the study in their schools; however, results may vary, since data from this study comes from a specific and contained sample population.

To further enhance the validity of the study, the researcher practiced standardized and systematic data collection measures. Both survey and interviews protocols linked all questions to predetermined sections, such as demographics, the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints, and established RQs. I practiced interviewing, listening, and rapport-building skills before engaging in the study. The use of systematic data collection through utilization of the same interview protocol ensured that all participants were asked the same questions to increase

honest responses and diminish the impact of other factors such as prior relationship. Some probing and follow up questions were predetermined and practiced to encourage the appropriate amount of detail during interviews. I employed reflective interview practices by listening to recorded conversations to find ways to improve my skills (both during practice rounds and throughout the study). The certified transcription service Rev.com transcribed all interview data. Finally, data collected from the survey and interviews of a variety of Option 3 charter schools were analyzed and compared to ensure triangulation of data.

Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter presents the findings from a mixed methods descriptive study, comprised of a survey, document review, and semi-structured interviews of Option 3 charter school decision-makers. The study examined what adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints (referred to from here on as *adaptive viewpoints*) these decision-makers showed when responding to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114, and if responses differed when compared on the basis of organization size. I also looked at how responses compared and contrasted, and investigated if schools that are more successful in supporting students with special needs (as measured by proficiency data and suspension and expulsion rates for this subgroup) had leaders with more or less adaptive leadership tendencies. Finally, I examined what knowledge and collaborations decision-makers identified as being necessary for planning post AB-114, per the research questions. Findings reflect how, if at all, the adaptive viewpoints (expertise, staffing and development, interaction of systems, and tasks for change) manifest within this population, as the foundation of this descriptive study. The adaptive viewpoints provide the theoretical framework for analysis as they define the behaviors in which leaders engage and the actions they take to support others in responding to change.

A key finding is that Option 3 decision-makers, for the most part, responded in similar ways to a shift in policy regarding adaptive viewpoints. Even when compared on the basis of organizational size and relative success, this population showed little variation. The survey data show that participants felt most strongly about their schools'/school's/staff's ability to conduct *tasks for change*. Respondents identified systems of support and a confidence that their staff members are well-supported to carry out these tasks. *Interaction of systems* closely follows *tasks*

and describes participants' confidence in the use of systems for planning and the involvement of specific collaboration partners. The survey showed participants had mixed confidence in the area of *expertise*. Participants were confident in their ability to receive information regarding policy change; however, they were less satisfied with their own personal knowledge of AB-114. In the area of *staffing and development,* participants identified confidence in their ability to staff and provide support for students. However, they expressed mixed confidence in the decision-making associated with the development of staff. These survey results received nuanced support from semi-structured interviews. Also found in both the survey and interview data was a theme of loss from the shift in policy. Participants indicated feeling a loss of funding and resources, comprehensive mental health supports, and clarity around process for support and placement options for students.

Overall, there is very little statistical difference in decision-maker responses to the survey, even when compared by size: single site charter schools and small, medium, and large CMOs . These findings are echoed and elaborated through the interview data, which represent a mix of success in Option 3 organizations. Only six subcategories of adaptive viewpoints—a desire for more training, decision-maker understanding of AB-114, the use of AB-114 for planning, a desire to learn more about AB-114, and the identification of home office/district staff, and parents as collaborators—showed a statistically significant difference between groups when comparing based on organizational size. These subcategories are all found within the expertise and interaction of systems areas, and showed a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$). It is important to note that despite the participation of schools exhibiting different levels of success, the interview data did not indicate a difference in trend or response based on this comparison. Therefore it is to be assumed that success did not lead to more or less adaptive leadership

tendencies in responses, and the interview data is utilized solely for providing nuance to the survey data. In sum, data indicate that schools within the Option 3 SELPA show reasonably consistent responses in displays of adaptive viewpoints. But participants had different confidence in each, from expertise to staffing and development, and on to interaction of systems and tasks for change.

Expertise

The results of the survey showed that participants had mixed confidence in the area of expertise. This viewpoint provides the knowledge identified as necessary for a leader to problem-solve and plan for change. Overall, participants expressed confidence in their ability to receive information and training regarding policy, as evidenced by strong confidence that the SELPA provides information on policy, that they would be able to find information if needed, and that they can lead through change. However, participants expressed less confidence in their understanding of policy and their ability to utilize that knowledge to plan for student supports. Finally, participants reflected a less than favorable view of the impact AB-114 has had on the services provided to students at their school. Interview data provides insight into the survey data findings for this viewpoint.

Table 9 displays the data from the survey that frame the discussion of findings including mean and standard deviation by organizational size. It is important to note that all answers on Table 9 except for one (indicated by the *) are on a 1-4 scale for level of agreement. The last response is on a 1-5 scale for level of impact (see Table 3 in Chapter 3 for a thorough breakdown of scales by subcategory). The findings from the survey indicate a statistically significant difference between respondent groups when compared by organizational size when considering a desire for more training, decision-maker understanding of AB-114, the use of AB-114 for

planning, and a desire to learn more about AB-114, all found in the ability to receive information section, presented subsequently.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics – Expertise

	Single Site (n = 13)		Small CMO (n = 10)		Med CMO (n = 7)		Large CMO (n = 7)		Combined (n = 37)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Info on Spec Ed Policy (SELPA)	3.23	.60	3.20	.79	3.00	.00	3.57	.54	3.24	.60
Desire for More Training	2.31	.75	3.70	.48	3.57	.79	2.71	1.25	3.00	1.00
Confidence in finding information	3.46	.66	3.40	.70	3.29	.49	3.43	.54	3.41	.60
Understanding of AB-114	3.08	.64	1.90	.99	2.57	.79	2.86	1.07	2.62	.95
AB-114 for planning	2.92	.76	1.90	.88	2.71	.95	3.14	1.07	2.65	.98
Desire to learn more about AB-114	2.54	.77	3.40	.97	3.57	.79	2.86	.69	3.03	.90
Confidence to Lead Through Change	3.62	.51	3.20	.63	3.43	.54	3.57	.54	3.46	.56
*Impact of AB-114	3.62	.78	3.00	1.16	3.00	.58	3.00	.00	3.16	.63

Note. All responses on 1-4 scale except Impact of AB-114, which used 1-5 scale. Table captures only valid survey respondents, where all questions were answered. While 47 people participated, valid responses total 37.

Ability to Receive Information

Overall, survey participants expressed strong confidence in their ability to receive information from their SELPA (M = 3.24; SD = .597), find information about special education policy when needed (M = 3.41; SD = .599), and lead their organizations through a change in policy (M = 2.82; SD = .758), as seen in Table 9. These data show that participants trust that they will be able to gain the necessary information about policy that will provide them with the understanding needed to lead through change. However, participants also expressed keen interest in learning more about AB-114 (M = 3.03; SD = .897), but when compared by size, this area showed a statistically significant difference between the responses for single site and large CMOs, as well as their small- and medium-sized counterparts. The results from the one-way ANOVA can be found in Table 10.

Table 10

Results from the One-Way ANOVA for Expertise

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Info on Spec Ed Policy (SELPA)	Between Groups	1.189	3	.396	1.125	.353
	Within Groups	11.622	33	.352		
	Total	12.811	36			
Desire for More Training	Between Groups	13.988	3	4.663	6.990	.001
	Within Groups	22.012	33	.667		
	Total	36.000	36			
Confidence in finding information	Between Groups	.145	3	.048	.125	.945
	Within Groups	12.774	33	.387		
	Total	12.919	36			
Understanding of AB-114	Between Groups	8.308	3	2.769	3.746	.020
	Within Groups	24.395	33	.739		
	Total	32.703	36			
AB-114 for planning	Between Groups	8.324	3	2.775	3.507	.026
	Within Groups	26.109	33	.791		
	Total	34.432	36			
Desire to learn more about AB-114	Between Groups	6.771	3	2.257	3.355	.030
	Within Groups	22.202	33	.673		
	Total	28.973	36			
*Impact of AB-114	Between Groups	1.084	3	.361	1.180	.332
	Within Groups	10.105	33	.306		
	Total	11.189	36			

Data from the interviews echo the survey findings concerning the ability to receive information and training. Of the eight decision-makers interviewed, six come from a special education background, and two did not; this information was gleaned in the interviews. All eight interview participants shared that they received information and training regarding special education policy change from the Option 3 SELPA. In an opinion echoed throughout interview responses, Marie shared, "Probably the number one way in which we receive information about special education policy, changes in law, et cetera, are through our affiliation with COP [Option 3 SELPA]." Although all participants shared that Option 3 was a primary source for receiving information, all interview participants shared at least one other avenue for gaining information about policy. In addition to Option 3, interview participants shared that can find additional information regarding policy from the CDE, credentialing programs, professional organizations

such as the California Charter School Association and legal counsel. Kristin captured the theme of using gained information to lead a change when she said,

> I think it gives me…greater ability to really say, "This school needs a program and here's how we're going to do it." And I just go to the school leader and say, "We're opening a program," and they're like, "Oh, okay, you're handling it?" I'm handling it, 'cause [sic] I'm the expert, right?

Kristin's confidence exemplifies the ability to gain necessary information (through the SELPA, or to find other avenues) and to utilize that information to lead one's organization through shifts in policy, which mirrors the confidence survey participants expressed in the same subcategories. Despite feeling confident in the ability to gain necessary information and lead through change, participants did not display the same level of confidence when reflecting on their own personal knowledge of AB-114.

Personal Knowledge

Overall, survey participants had less confidence in their understanding of AB-114, with a mean of 2.82 (SD = .953), and showed even less confidence in their use of policy knowledge when planning for supporting students (M = 2.65; SD = .978). Lower confidence in policy knowledge appears connected to survey respondents' desire to learn more (M = 3.03: SD = .897) and desire for more training (M = 3.00; SD = 1.00). Although participants expressed uniformity in their ability to gain information, consistency is not similarly evident in their reflections on their own understanding of policy.

The researcher used a one-way ANOVA to examine whether there were differences in average ratings according to the size of the respondents' organizations. Table 10 summarizes the results of these analyses. Significant differences were found for four of the seven personal knowledge subcategories: desire for more training (p = .001), understanding of AB-114 (p = .020), use of AB-114 for planning (p = .026), and desire to learn more (p = .030). These

areas are statistically significant because the significance level of is less than .05, and is therefore very unlikely to have occurred given the null hypothesis.

Understanding. Interview data elaborated upon the overall rate of less confidence in personal understanding found in survey data ($M = 2.82$: $SD = .953$). When asked to reflect on their own knowledge, half of the interview participants (Elisa, Kristin, Liz, and Susan) indicated competence in understanding the specific policy and spoke about the impact on their organizations. Susan explained her perspective succinctly,

> My understanding of AB 114 is the transition from the Department of Mental Health related services to ... when we were basically made responsible to provide all of our mental health support at the school level when the Department of Mental Health basically was taken out of the equation for them to be provided those services.

Susan went on to state explicit knowledge of the impact of this policy shift. Her explanation included themes of school site staff not having the level of training and scope of available supports that mental health professionals do. Additionally, she reported feeling constrained by the limited time during the school day to meet both academic and social-emotional needs of students with mental health concerns. Elisa, Kristin, and Liz echoed those themes. Susan said,

> I think the biggest impact right now… we have been made responsible to provide the level of care that I would say some of our staff is not trained to provide. And also just the time in which it needs to be provided. I think a lot of people don't understand that counseling based on DIS services is a little bit different than educationally related mental health services. I think that the level of care and the level of therapy care that is required for students who require a higher level of need, it's different than what we can do at the school site. The other thing is that the impact has come from having to basically be able to serve during the school day. You're basically looking at conflict of priorities.… You're like, how am I going to be able to do all the instructional time and all the other services while they also need these specific mental health support? I think that when we were able to outsource it to the Department of Mental Health, it was a lot more support that was also going on afterschool, and also to the family.

Susan captured how half of the interviewees understood the policy and the impact the shift had on their organizations. Even though they expressed this understanding, these interviewees still

had questions about how best to support students who have a wide variety of needs within the context of the school day, while still maintaining the commitment to providing access to the academic curriculum. The other four interviewees did not express the same level of confidence in their own personal knowledge.

Sandra, Marie, and Ventura all asked clarifying questions about AB-114. Marie and Ventura asked directly for an explanation, sharing that they were unaware of the policy altogether. Dottie did not ask a clarifying question. However, throughout the entirety of the interview, she did not indicate an understanding of the policy. When asked probing questions on knowledge of the policy and how it provides support for students, she gave no description or elaboration. Her lack of elaboration indicated to the researcher that Dottie did not have confidence in her understanding of the policy. There is a divide in interview participants' feelings of confidence in personal understanding that mirrors the lower confidence shown in survey participant responses. However, when analyzing the survey data further, there is more information to be gleaned from this subcategory.

Understanding of AB-114 is a subcategory with a statistically significant difference when comparing the understanding of AB-114 for single site charters (M = 3.08: SD = .641) and Small CMOs (M = 1.90; SD = .876). Single site charters showed greater confidence in their own understanding of the policy than their small CMOs counterparts. One interviewee from single-site charters spoke knowledgeably about the policy and its impact. Elisa explained how the transition led to confusion and ultimately made the schools feel that they were now solely responsible for funding and providing mental health support of students, even if their needs may extend beyond the school staff's expertise.

> By the time I got to [charter school], it was almost right about the time that AB-3632 went away and it got handed over to schools. My initial impression from those early

> days, and this is what happens with any kind of policy transitions, nobody knew what in the heck was going on. I mean they were really confused. They weren't sure who was responsible for what. They didn't know where the funding was coming from, when the funding was coming, what it was going to be used for. We changed acronyms a couple times. There was a lot of confusion and initially I feel like the feeling was, "Okay now the school's just responsible for everything and you can call it a different name, but that doesn't mean you have any more funding for it. It's something else you need to do now."

Although Elisa's statement captures an understanding of the policy and how it affected staffing at her site, Dottie (the other interviewee from a single-site charter) did not indicate the same level of understanding or reference to impact. When asked probing questions on knowledge of the policy and how it provides support for students, she gave no description or elaboration. For instance, Dottie said only, "I would think it has not been a big change for us." Dottie's simple reflection indicated to the researcher that she did not have confidence in her understanding of the policy.

Meanwhile, both interview participants from small CMOs expressed confusion when responding to the same question and provided examples that elaborated on the survey findings of low confidence for this group. Interviewees from this group shared minimal understanding of the policy and or asked clarifying questions about it. Sandra shared a brief overview of her knowledge and then asked, "Is that correct?" Before answering, Ventura asked, "Can you familiarize me with that?" She went on to express that she was unaware of the impact of the shift in policy and that more training or understanding may be necessary. Ventura stated simply, "I don't know a lot about that." In fact, half of the interview participants (Sandra, Elisa, Marie, and Ventura) asked clarifying questions about AB-114, and all expressed that more training or understanding may be necessary. The lack of confidence in one's own knowledge appears to relate to the desire to learn more or require additional training in regard to AB-114.

Desire for more. When responses are compared based on organizational size, survey participants showed a split in both the desire to learn more and the desire for more training in AB-114. When asked to reflect on their desire to learn more about AB-114, single site ($M = 2.54$; $SD = 5.06$) and large CMOs ($M = 2.68$; $SD = .690$) expressed less interest in learning more than their small- ($M = 3.40$; $SD = .966$) and medium-sized CMOs ($M = 3.57$; $SD = .787$) counterparts. A similar split is also seen in the desire for more training, with single site and large CMOs again stating a less than average desire ($M = 2.31$; $SD = .751$, and $M = 2.71$; $SD = 1.254$), and small ($M = 3.70$; $SD = .483$) and medium CMOs ($M = 3.57$; $SD = 7.87$) expressing more interest. This split indicates a statistically significant difference because the significance level is less than .05, and is therefore very unlikely to have occurred given the null hypothesis (see Table 11).

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics – Staffing and Development

	Single Site ($n = 13$)		Small CMO ($n = 9$)		Med CMO ($n = 7$)		Large CMO ($n = 6$)		Combined ($n = 35$)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Staff Counseling Need	3.38	.961	3.22	1.202	3.57	.787	3.67	.516	3.43	.917
Aware of Staffing Need	3.85	.376	3.44	.882	4.00	.000	3.83	.408	3.77	.547
Rely on Expertise of Others	1.77	.599	2.56	1.236	2.14	.690	2.50	1.225	2.17	.954
Receive Counseling with Fidelity	3.77	.439	3.50	1.069	3.86	.378	3.67	.816	3.71	.676
Need More Counselors	1.77	1.166	1.78	.972	1.29	.488	1.33	.816	1.60	.946
System of Compliance	3.69	.630	3.56	.882	4.00	.000	3.67	.516	3.71	.622
AB-114 Staffing Impact	2.69	1.109	2.33	.500	2.43	.976	2.17	1.169	2.46	.950
Unaware Staffing Impact	1.85	1.144	2.44	1.130	3.00	1.00	1.83	.983	2.23	1.40

Note. All responses on 1-4 scale of agreement. Table captures only valid survey respondents, where all questions were answered. While 47 people participated, some did not respond to certain questions due to survey error described in chapter 5.

Much like the split seen previously in the Understanding section, the desire for more training subcategory on the survey indicated a similar difference when comparing single site charters to small CMOs. This difference similarly appears when looking at those same two groups and their desire to learn more (see Table 11). Small CMOs expressed more of a desire to

learn and gain training than their counterparts in single site charters. For the most part, this distinction was echoed within the interviews as well.

Ventura and Sandra, both from small CMOs, expressed limits to their understanding of AB-114. When reflecting on needs she saw to address the shift in policy, Ventura said, "I'm really looking for ways to provide some professional growth opportunities for the SPED staff." Sandra also shared specific desires for more training. In contrast, Elisa (quoted previously in Understanding) shared a great depth of awareness for AB-114 by explaining in detail how her charter takes advantage of all the support and training offered and then utilizes that to build the capacity of her staff to meet student need. Interestingly, as noted previously, Dottie (the other Single Site Charter interviewee) did not exhibit the same level of confidence in her own personal knowledge of AB-114, but she did share that her staff is well-trained. She noted that the information from the SELPA has been helpful, and stated simply, "Teachers have been trained." When looking at this finding in connection with participants' confidence, the level of confidence one feels in their knowledge is related to their desire to learn more. Single site charters showed evidence of this by expressing more confidence in knowledge and less of a desire to gain more information, and small CMOs expressed less confidence in knowledge and a stronger desire to learn more; these trends emerged in both survey and interview data.

Despite some perceived differences when compared by size, survey participants expressed some uniformity in responding to issues relating to expertise. Overall, survey participants from Option 3 charter schools self-evaluated as confident in their ability to gain information on policy from the SELPA or other identified avenues. However, when addressing their own personal knowledge, which includes evaluation of understanding and a desire to learn more, respondents displayed a mixed response. This finding indicates that when it comes to the

expertise viewpoint, the sample population is confident that the information on policy is accessible to them, they do not necessarily feel confident in their own understanding, and confidence is related to their desire for more training on AB-114.

Staffing and Development

Within the staffing and development area of the survey, responses continued to be generally uniform across respondents. This organizational viewpoint captures how staff are developed and evolve in the face of change. Participants displayed confidence in their staffing, as evidenced by a firm belief that decision-makers are aware of staffing need, that staff is hired based on student need, that there is no existing staffing need, and that students receive counseling with fidelity. Survey participants showed some mixed results for decision-making regarding the development of staff. Mixed results are evidenced by confidence in the implementation and review of a system of compliance to identify needs, but less confidence in the need to rely on the expertise of others to hire and develop those staff, as well as being aware of the impact of AB-114 on staffing to meet students' needs. Overall descriptive statistics are shared in Table 11 and reflect a 1-4 Likert scale. The trend of common response to the subcategories is evident in this area for the sample population. The staffing and development area of the survey showed no subcategories with statistical significance when compared by organizational size using the one-way ANOVA. Table 12 summarizes the results of these analyses. This section will describe the responses from the survey and provide detail and nuance from the interviews.

Table 12

Results from the One-Way ANOVA for Staffing and Development

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Staff Counseling Need	Between Groups	.891	3	.297	.333	.802
	Within Groups	27.680	31	.893		
	Total	28.571	43			
Aware of Staffing Need	Between Groups	1.424	3	.475	1.682	.191
	Within Groups	8.748	31	.282		
	Total	10.171	34			
Rely on Expertise of Others	Between Groups	4.084	3	1.361	1.570	.217
	Within Groups	26.887	31	.867		
	Total	30.971	34			
Receive Counseling with Fidelity	Between Groups	.561	3	.187	.387	.763
	Within Groups	14.498	30	.483		
	Total	15.059	33			
Need More Counselors	Between Groups	1.775	3	.592	.641	.595
	Within Groups	28.625	31	.923		
	Total	30.400	34			
System of Compliance	Between Groups	.818	3	.273	.686	.567
	Within Groups	12.325	31	.398		
	Total	13.143	34			
AB-114 Staffing Impact	Between Groups	1.369	3	.456	.482	.697
	Within Groups	29.317	31	.946		
	Total	30.686	34			
Unaware of Staffing Impact	Between Groups	7.424	3	2.475	2.087	.122
	Within Groups	36.748	31	1.185		
	Total	44.171	34			

Staffing Confidence

The average response from survey participants showed that they hold a firm belief that decision-makers are aware of staffing need ($M = 3.77$; $SD = .547$), that staff is hired based on student need ($M = 3.43$; $SD = .917$), and that students receive counseling services with fidelity ($M = 3.71$; $SD = .676$). Respondents also shared that there is currently little need for additional counselors at participants' schools ($M = 1.6$; $SD = .946$). Survey data indicate that participants have confidence in the way they staff to meet student need.

Confidence is found in the interview data, with eight out of eight interviewees being able to speak to their current staffing and none indicating that they were in a state where more staffing is required to meet their students' needs. In response to an inquiry regarding how she fills student need through staffing, Liz talked about addressing student need through both their employees

and contract providers, stating, “We kind of do a combination. If we don’t have someone right away, we’ll outsource, and then eventually we’ll try to fill the position in-house.” This balance of in-house employees and the use of contract providers to meet an immediate need was found universally across interviewee respondents. All decision-makers interviewed expressed confidence in their ability to meet student need through their own or contracted staff, which mirrors responses found in the survey. Dottie elaborated a bit on staffing by sharing that her site was not in need of more providers, be she did feel additional professional development may be necessary for existing providers. The need to develop staff is evident through respondents’ reflection on decision-making for staff.

Decision-Making

Although respondents expressed confidence in their ability to hire and provide staff to meet student need, they had mixed feelings about the development of said staff. Survey respondents were confident in the existence and use of a system of compliance to identify needs (M = 3.71; SD = .622). They were less convinced, however, of the need to rely on the expertise of others to hire and develop staff (M = 2.17; SD = .954), or awareness of the impact of AB-114 on staffing to meet students’ needs. Awareness was assessed through two subcategories, one that asked if participants were aware of an impact on staffing due to AB-114 (M = 2.46; SD = .950) and the other if they were unaware of an impact (M = 2.23; SD = 1.140). The data show that decision-makers feel confidence in the systems they have set up to identify what needs may exist for staff, but that they are less sure of whether or not other expertise is necessary, or if there is a perceived impact of the shift in policy on staffing.

System of compliance. Survey data show that the sample population have and utilize a system of compliance review to identify staffing needs. All interviewees defined these systems to

review and communicate compliance for staffing. Although a few interviewee participants referenced reviews of compliance reports—which indicate what student services are provided and how well the school is meeting those service needs—all elaborated on what they did with the information from those reports. Some examples of systems include the use of collaborative teams and the identification of a central place for review and communication.

Ventura and Marie shared that their school has developed a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Team that meets regularly to review compliance data and identified tiered levels of support to meet student and staff needs. Ventura succinctly explained how this manifests at her organization, stating, "We definitely have MTSS committee structure, where we triage certain kids to, you know, try to bore in and really see what services they need in terms of mental health, and social-emotional learning-type things." Through MTSS teams, decision-makers can identify areas of need and problem-solve, such as hiring more staff or identifying areas that need further development. Sandra's organization has a similar structure, but it is called the Social-emotional Leadership Team. Liz's organization utilizes bi-weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings to get stakeholders together to discuss data and identify needs. There is an Office of Special Services on Dottie's campus, which is the hub for data review and communication. The interviewees' nuanced experiences indicate how decision-makers have utilized systems of compliance to identify staffing and development needs and exemplify the strong confidence exhibited in the survey data.

Despite the interviewees' elaboration on the structures of support utilized at their site that is dependent on the interaction of groups, survey data indicate that participants did not express a strong need to depend on others' expertise when making decisions regarding staffing and

development. Marie's description may explain this disparity around decision-making at her site regarding staff development. She stated,

> I make all of the decisions…. All of our stuff [data] comes from the ground up. Our staff request their [professional development sessions]. They write and sort them… I decide what is most appropriate to learn or what the teachers need.

Marie's reflection indicates that the ultimate decisions around staffing and development are hers, but these decisions rely on the data collected from the staff. Therefore, the nuanced experience of how leaders make decisions may be too complicated to capture in a Likert scale reflection, which may account for the less than confident response on the survey.

Impact of policy change. When asked to reflect on their awareness of the impact of AB-114 on staffing and development, survey respondent averages showed a similarity in respondents' perception of AB-114's impact on staffing. Survey respondents indicated the average fell between *disagree* and *agree* leaning slightly closer to *agree* ($M = 2.46$) as a reflection on the impact of AB-114 subcategory. For the subcategory of unaware of an impact of AB-114, the average also fell between *disagree* and *agree* leaning slightly closer to *disagree* (M=2.23). Although these subcategories have similar means, there is a notable variation in how survey participants responded in reflecting on being *unaware* of the impact of the policy shift. The standard deviation of 1.140, showing that there was a relatively large variation in how survey participants responded to this question; however, although this variation is noted, it is not associated with organizational size. The detailed descriptive statistics of responses by the size of an organization are shown in Table 11. This split shows a divide in how respondents reflected AB-114's impact on staffing. The divide in awareness is evident in interview data as well.

Four out of the eight interviewees (Elisa, Liz, Susan, and Kristin) expressed that they adjusted their staff in response to the shift in policy. They shared that in hiring, they focused not

just on school psychologists and designated instructional service or DIS counselors with a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential, but also on providers with more clinical or mental health expertise, which ensured that providers were appropriately developed to meet the needs of students with ED. In response to the change in policy, Kristin expressed this idea by sharing how her organization staffed post-AB-114. Although the other interviewees differed in details, all expressed a similar focus on hiring highly qualified individuals to meet the needs of students with mental health or social-emotional challenges. When asked to share how her organization hires and develops staff post-AB-114 Kristin said,

> I built the … special ed [sic] and mental health [department]. I purposefully made sure that as I hired our counselors for our special ed [sic] students, I actually hired social workers, because they have a different type of training than an academic counselor or a guidance counselor… they're kind of more clinically trained to do the social-emotional kind of therapy that I thought that our kids needed if they have DIS counseling. So all of my counselors within [charter organization], even though technically we don't have to, I actually staff them with MSWs [Masters in Social Work].

Kristin's reflection exemplifies how these four interviewees understood the impact of the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114 and adjusted their staffing accordingly.

The other four interviewee participants (Dottie, Marie, Sandra, and Ventura) spoke knowledgeably about how they hire and develop their staff, which mostly aligned with Kristin's reflection presented previously, but they did not indicate a connection to the impact of the shift in policy. Interestingly, these are the same four interviewees who expressed lower confidence in their personal knowledge of AB-114 in the Expertise area of this study. This consistency among interviewee responses indicates a correlation between decision-makers' understanding of the policy and their ability to make connections to how they hire and develop staff to meet student needs.

Since no subcategories within this area of the survey showed a statistical significance when compared on the basis of organization size, the data for staffing and development display common responses across the respondents in this sample concerning the use of this viewpoint in response to the shift in policy to AB-114. Option 3 decision-making participants expressed confidence in their ability to hire appropriate staff and provide support to students with consistency. Be that as it may, they showed more mixed confidence in their decision-making regarding staff development. Although respondents expressed confidence in the use of a system of compliance to identify needs, they were less confident in relying on others' expertise of others and actual impact of AB-114 on staffing and development. These data are also evident in interview responses, showing that participants as a whole feel confident in their organizations' reflection of the staffing and development adaptive leadership organizational viewpoint in response to the shift in policy.

Interaction of Systems

Survey respondents reflected a strong sense of the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoint of interaction of systems. This viewpoint provides insight into the systems utilized within the Option 3 charter network to support their own schools through change. The responses to this section are presented in two parts; the first part indicates respondents' strong confidence in their systems for planning. When considering planning systems, survey respondents expressed confidence in their ability to collaborate and integrate the input of others, but showed mixed confidence when reflecting on the impact of the shift in policy. For this section, survey respondents reflected on their systems using a 1-4 scale of agreement. Overall, the responses again showed very little variety when compared by size in that the standard deviations did not

stray too far away from the mean for each group. Detailed descriptive statistics are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics – Interaction of Systems (1-4 Scale of Agreement)

	Single Site (n = 13)		Small CMO (n = 8)		Med CMO (n = 7)		Large CMO (n = 6)		Combined (n = 34)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Collaboration Partners	3.69	.480	3.50	.535	4.00	.000	4.00	.000	3.76	.431
Valued Input	3.62	.506	3.75	.463	4.00	.000	4.00	.000	3.79	.410
Formal Collaboration	3.31	1.032	3.63	.518	3.86	.378	4.00	.000	3.62	.739
AB-114 Program Impact	2.58	1.084	2.00	.535	2.43	.787	1.83	1.169	2.27	.944
Unaware of Impact	2.23	1.166	2.13	1.126	2.57	.787	2.83	1.169	2.38	1.074

Note. All responses on 1-4 scale of agreement. Table captures only valid survey respondents, where all questions were answered. While 47 people participated, some did not respond to certain questions due to survey error described in chapter 5.

The second section shows respondents had some variation in who they identified as valued collaboration partners when planning for supports. Here survey respondents rated the level of involvement of specific stakeholders as collaboration partners on a 1-3 scale of involvement. Data for this section are found Table 14. In this section, two subcategories showed a statistically significant difference in response when comparing by size: the identification of home office/district supports and parents as valued collaboration partners for decision making. The analyses of the one-way ANOVA for this area are presented in Tables 15 and 16.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics – Interaction of Systems (1-3 Scale of Involvement)

	Single Site (n = 12)		Small CMO (n = 8)		Med CMO (n = 7)		Large CMO (n = 6)		Combined (n = 33)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Self	2.83	.389	2.87	.345	3.00	.000	3.00	.000	2.91	.296
School-based Admin	2.54	.660	3.00	.000	2.57	.535	2.83	.408	2.71	.524
Home Office/ District	1.46	.660	2.50	.756	2.57	.787	2.83	.408	2.18	.869
Special Education Teacher	2.62	.506	2.88	.354	3.00	.000	2.83	.408	2.79	.410
School Psychologist	2.23	.725	2.13	.641	2.86	.378	2.67	.516	2.41	.657
School Counselor	2.15	.555	2.00	.756	2.71	.488	2.33	.516	2.26	.618

General Education Teacher	2.15	.689	1.88	.835	2.00	.000	2.50	.548	2.12	.640
Parent	2.23	.439	1.63	.518	2.00	.000	2.33	.516	2.06	.489

Note. All responses on1 -4 scale of involvement. Table captures only valid survey respondents, where all questions were answered. While 47 people participated, some did not respond to certain questions due to survey error described in chapter 5.

Table 15

Results from the One-Way ANOVA for Interaction of Systems (1-4 Scale of Agreement)

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Collaboration Partners	Between Groups	1.348	3	.449	2.827	.055
	Within Groups	4.769	30	.159		
	Total	6.118	33			
Valued Input	Between Groups	.982	3	.327	2.145	.115
	Within Groups	4.577	30	.153		
	Total	5.559	33			
Formal Collaboration	Between Groups	2.528	3	.843	1.631	.203
	Within Groups	15.501	30	.517		
	Total	18.029	33			
AB-114 Program Impact	Between Groups	3.081	3	1.027	1.170	.338
	Within Groups	25.464	29	.878		
	Total	28.545	32			
Unaware of AB-114	Between Groups	2.229	3	.766	.643	.589
Program Impact	Within Groups	35.730	30	1.191		
	Total	2.719	31			

Table 16

Results from the One-Way ANOVA for Interaction of Systems (1-3 Scale of Involvement)

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Self	Between Groups	.177	3	.059	.650	.589
	Within Groups	2.542	28	.091		
	Total	2.719	31			
School-based Admin	Between Groups	1.280	3	.427	1.646	.200
	Within Groups	7.778	30	.259		
	Total	9.059	33			
Home Office/	Between Groups	11.163	3	3.721	8.102	.000
District/ Contract	Within Groups	13.778	30	.459		
Supports	Total	24.941	33			
Special Education	Between Groups	.774	3	.258	1.617	.206
Teacher	Within Groups	4.785	30	.160		
	Total	5.559	33			
School Psychologist	Between Groups	2.862	3	.954	2.517	.077
	Within Groups	11.373	30	.379		
	Total	14.235	33			
School Counselor	Between Groups	2.163	3	.721	2.069	.125
	Within Groups	10.454	30	.348		
	Total	12.618	33			
General Education	Between Groups	1.462	3	.487	1.212	.322
Teacher	Within Groups	12.067	30	.402		
	Total	13.529	33			

Parent	Between Groups	2.366	3	.789	4.290	.012
	Within Groups	5.516	30	.184		
	Total	7.882	33			

Planning Systems

When considering planning systems utilized by decision-makers, survey respondents expressed confidence in the systems of identifying collaboration partners (M = 3.76; SD = .431), valuing the input of said partners (M = 3.79: SD = .410), and utilizing a formal system of collaboration to integrate the input of others (M = 3.62; SD = .739). Interview data also reflects confidence in systems. However, as in other sections of this chapter, survey respondents were split when considering the impact of AB-114 on their systems of planning to meet student need in both survey and interview data. Since this section did not reflect any statistically significant difference when compared by organizational size, the results of the one-way ANOVA for this subsection are presented in Table 15.

Although all but one interviewee elaborated on systems of planning based on collaboration and the integration of multiple stakeholders, only three were able to connect their current systems to the impact of AB-114. Erin, Kristin, and Susan all discussed their systems now in contrast to the systems during AB-3632. Erin shared that she used to utilize the DMH as valued collaboration partners and systematically integrated their knowledge into planning; she now collaborates with in-house staff and SELPA partners. She discussed the detailed structure of systems at her site for planning, and stated that a strength of her organization is, “We’re… to a fault, the cooperative model of running a school.” Erin articulated how many interviewee participants utilize systems of collaboration to plan for student needs.

Although Erin, Kristin, and Susan were able to make the connection from her current system to the impact of AB-114, other interviewee participants were not. Similar to findings in

the Staffing and Development section, Ventura, Sandra, and Marie spoke about their systems of collaboration, but they did not connect those systems to the impact of AB-114. Their reflections mirrored Erin's for the most part, but did not draw the same connection to policy. Interestingly, Dottie focused on professional development and did not mention collaboration-based systems of planning, nor did she mention a link to policy. However, when asked explicitly about collaboration partners, Dottie was able to identify valued stakeholders. Overall, the responses to this section showed very little variety when compared by size, in that the standard deviations did not stray too far away from the mean for each group and indicated that the mean can be considered a decent descriptive representation of this sample population.

Collaboration Partners

When asked to identify the involvement of specific stakeholders as valued collaboration partners, survey respondents uniformly identified school-based administrators, special and general education teachers, school psychologists, and schools counselors as actively involved in their systems of collaboration. All but one interviewee identified these stakeholders as valued collaboration partners. Liz captured the idea shared by six other interviewees when she explained their method of bi-weekly meetings; "It includes [a] special education administrator, principal, school psych [sic], and all the teachers on staff." According to the participants in this study, school-based professionals are valued collaboration partners.

Survey responses reflected two subcategories that showed a statistically significant difference in response when comparing based on organizational size and as shown in Table 16. These differences are home office/district partners and parents as involved collaboration partners. Although parent involvement is mentioned only tangentially in interview data, it interestingly provides a different perspective on home office/district partners.

Home office/District (SELPA). The involvement of home office/district partners showed a statistical difference between single site charters (M = 1.4; SD = .660) and all other sized organizations. Small CMOs had a mean of 2.5 (SD = .756), medium CMOs had a mean of 2.57 (SD = .787), and large CMOs had a mean of 2.83 (SD = .408). These areas are statistically significant because the significance level of is less than .05, and is therefore very unlikely to have occurred given the null hypothesis. Results of these analyses are detailed in Table 16.

These differences were not similarly found in the interviews, as all eight interviewees named the SELPA (a unit of the district) as a source of knowledge and identified members of their own home office staff as collaborators. All interviewee participants identified both home office and district (SELPA) as necessary collaborators and explained their reasoning. Home office collaborators mentioned included other directors, executives, and coaching staff. Two interviewees named specific staff members within the district SELPA as collaborators, including Dottie and Elisa from single-site charters. Dottie stated, "The COP [Option 3 SELPA] has been very helpful." Liz shared,

> We reached out to COP [Option 3 SELPA], our program specialist, because again, we felt like we had exhausted interventions, and we were trying to think outside the box and be like, "What else can we do? Who else can we collaborate with in order to support this child with very intensive socio-emotional needs?"… She came out and observed the student or the class setting. She interviewed us, and asked us what we had done, and gave us some next steps.

This statement indicates that although survey participants did not identify these specific collaborators as necessary, when asked to elaborate on collaboration partners in interviews respondents were able to recognize where district collaboration partners fit into their overall systems of collaboration. The contrast in data indicates that Option 3 decision-makers may not immediately think of their district SELPA members as collaborators when taking the survey, but

when pushed to explain their experience, the need for home office/district (SELPA) members as collaboration partners becomes more evident.

Parents. The other subcategory that showed a statistically significant difference was the involvement of parents as collaboration partners. Here, when compared by size, there was a difference between small CMOs (M = 1.63; SD = .518) when compared to large CMOs (M = 2.3; SD = .516). Again, this difference was not similarly present in interview responses. Both interviewees representing small CMOs, spoke of either their mission—which included family members—or shared a functional way their organization developed to involve parents as collaborators. Ventura stated, "We have a very student-centered, family-centered organization. Sometimes to our detriment, y'know [sic]? But everybody wants to see the best in their kids." Additionally, Sandra shared that she added a section on the school's website for parents to communicate/make reports to the school. These reflections indicate that interviewees from small CMOs made some connection to parent partnership.

Both representatives from large CMOs shared the sentiments of their small CMO counterparts. Susan explained that although staff does what they can at the site on their own, they also incorporate the needs and viewpoints of the parents and families. However, it is important to point out that no interviewee identified parents as collaboration partners as directly as they did when identifying home office/district (SELPA) members. Therefore, considering both the survey and interview data, it can be gathered that Option 3 decision-makers value parent input, but may not immediately think of them as necessary collaborators in systematic decision-making.

When considering the adaptive viewpoint of interaction of systems, survey respondents felt strongly about the systems they have in place, but were mixed when it came to identifying specific collaboration partners. Data from the interviews echoed the survey findings on systems

by providing additional insight into how these systems manifest in different Option 3 charters. In contrast, interview data provided additional context to the discrepancies found in survey data that may account for or give another lens from which to consider the survey data on collaboration partners. Interview data suggest that home office/district (SELPA) collaboration partners are valued more than the survey would imply and provide some context into how the sample population taps into parents for knowledge-building. Overall, data suggest that the sample population views the interaction of systems organizational viewpoint as a stable characteristic when leading their organization through the change in policy.

Tasks for Change

Survey data for the tasks for change area shows that participants felt most strongly about this organizational viewpoint, which describes how staff at Option 3 charter schools support staff to complete tasks when facing change (see Table 17). When considering tasks for change, two themes were most evident: the use of supports to build capacity and confidence that staff is well-supported. The method of supports, both traditional (professional development and conferences) and personal (systems of coaching and PLCs), are evident in this population. Data also show confidence in staff due to being well-supported. Survey responses again displayed common responses to this area even when compared by organizational size; the findings are consistent in the interview data. There were no statistically significant differences when compared by organizational size; however, the results from the one-way ANOVA analyses are in Table 18. The reflection of survey and interview participants provides a foundation for describing this viewpoint for the sample population, demonstrating that they felt strength in their organization's ability to partake in the necessary tasks for change because of the systems established to meet their staff's needs.

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics – Tasks for Change (1-4 Scale of Agreement)

	Single Site (n = 12)		Small CMO (n = 8)		Med CMO (n = 7)		Large CMO (n = 6)		Combined (n = 33)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Proactive PD	3.08	.996	3.00	1.069	3.29	.488	3.33	.516	3.15	.834
System of Coaching	3.00	.953	3.63	.744	3.57	.535	4.00	.000	3.45	.794
Conferences/Outside PD	3.27	.905	3.50	.535	3.71	.488	3.33	1.033	3.44	.759
PLCs	2.67	1.231	3.38	.744	3.00	.816	3.50	.548	3.06	.966
Confidence in Supports	3.08	.793	3.25	.707	3.14	.619	3.50	.548	3.21	.696

Note. All responses on 1-4 scale of agreement. Table captures only valid survey respondents, where all questions were answered. While 47 people participated, some did not respond to certain questions due to survey error described in chapter 5.

Table 18

Results from the One-Way ANOVA for Tasks for Change

		Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Proactive PD	Between Groups	.564	3	.188	.251	.860
	Within Groups	21.679	29	.748		
	Total	22.242	32			
System of Coaching	Between Groups	4.593	3	1.531	2.848	.055
	Within Groups	15.589	29	.538		
	Total	20.182	32			
Conferences/Outside PD	Between Groups	.931	3	.310	.513	.677
	Within Groups	16.944	28	.605		
	Total	17.875	31			
PLCs	Between Groups	3.837	3	1.279	1.424	.256
	Within Groups	26.042	29	.898		
	Total	29.879	32			
Confidence in Supports	Between Groups	.741	3	.247	.485	.695
	Within Groups	14.774	29	.509		
	Total	15.515	32			

Supports

Survey respondents reflected on their use of systems of support when facing change. These supports are separated into two categories: *traditional*, which includes professional development sessions and conferences, and *personal*, which includes more person-to-person capacity building such as coaching/mentoring and PLCs. These systems of support are also mentioned in interview data, presenting examples of how this sample population builds capacity so that staff are able to take on the tasks required by change.

Traditional. Survey participants indicated confidence of $M = 3.15$ ($SD = .834$) that their organization provides proactive professional development around policy change and impact. Similarly, six out of eight interview participants (Elisa, Kristin, Liz, Susan, Marie, and Ventura) identified a system of professional development aimed at supporting staff through shifts in policy. When asked how her organization supports staff in meeting the needs of students with social-emotional needs post-AB-114, Ventura said, "We have PDs [professional developments] every Monday. So typically we do a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure-type PD, and PBIS [Positive Behavior Intervention Systems], special education, culture, and you know, those types of things that really focus on at-risk kids. They're presented weekly typically." She also shared that her organization provides once-a-month professional development for all schools, and they also gain professional development opportunities through the Option 3 SELPA. The integration of site-specific, organization-, and SELPA-based professional development was mentioned by all six interviewees who discussed professional development. The consistent mention of these systems indicates a robust system of professional development across respondents.

Meanwhile, Dottie identified that her school is currently working on strengthening their system of professional development. She said that she currently sends staff out for professional development opportunities. When asked how her staff is developed, Dottie shared, "That's something we're definitely working on," and earlier in the interview she said, "We send our teachers on professional development activities, or if they ask to go to conferences." Interestingly, she was the only interviewee who identified outside opportunities, whereas survey participants indicated strong confidence ($M = 3.44$; $SD = .759$) that their staff participated in conferences and other opportunities for development outside of their organization.

Personal. When taking into consideration other systems that staff can tap into to work through change, survey participants indicated the substantial use of more personal systems to build capacity. Survey respondents reported a mean of 3.45 (*SD* = .794) that their staff had access to coaches or mentors to support them in completing tasks through change. Five out of eight interview participants (Elisa, Kristin, Liz, Susan, and Marie) discussed using a system of coaching or mentoring at their organization. A comprehensive system of coaching is captured well in the way Kristin explained that her organization has:

> a coaching model within [the charter organization], in the sense of every teacher, actually every employee - teacher, manager, even myself - we all have weekly meetings with our direct supervisor. And that supervisor within SPED is your coach. They are giving you the instructional strategies and things like that, as well as some of the management pieces.

Kristin's reflection shows a structured, organization-wide system for coaching staff members. Moreover, although systems of coaching or mentoring were present in a majority of interviewee responses, they all manifested slightly differently in practice according to the interviewees. Liz described the coaching at her organization as more holistic and natural, stating, "I've just always found myself loving to mentor others, coach them, build capacity within the org [sic], and just help maximize and make sure we're getting potential out of our teachers." Despite the variety in how each interviewee described this support, the mention of coaching or mentoring as a more personal support provided to staff to build capacity was consistent across the majority of responses.

PLCs, which were mentioned as another personal support provided to staff, were slightly less evident (*M* = 3.06; *SD* = .966) than coaching in the survey. Less mention of PLCs in interviews reflected this marginally lower confidence. Only half of the interviewees (Elisa, Liz, Marie, and Ventura) mentioned PLCs as a support that is provided to staff to work through

change. Much like the coaching or mentoring model, the use of PLCs varied from one organization to another. Liz clearly outlined their PLCs best by stating,

> We do have PLC meetings. We have bi-weekly PLC meetings at all of our school sites. It includes Special Ed Administrator, Principal, School Psych, and then all the resource teachers [Special Education teachers] on staff. PLC meetings, depending on the school site, they also invite their ELD [English Language Development] coordinator. They meet on a bi-weekly basis, and they discuss ongoing issues due to cases. They'll update each other and make sure everyone's on the same page.

Liz described how a structured PLC system is used at her organization to keep stakeholders aligned and collaborating to work through change. PLCs were described less frequently than coaching, but are still present as a personal approach to building capacity.

Systems of coaching and PLCs were present in both survey and interview responses, indicating that Option 3 charter organizations provide additional support to their staff that goes beyond traditional training to more person-to-person collaborative capacity-building. This is evidenced by individual coaching or mentoring utilized by the sample population as well as the less frequently present group-based intra-professional problem-solving supports, such as PLCs.

Confidence in Staff

Survey data showed that participating decision-makers felt relatively confident in their staff being well-prepared and supported to carry out change ($M = 3.21$; $SD = .696$). Interestingly, when asked to reflect on their current organization and their ability to meet the needs of their students post AB-114, six out of eight interviewees (Sandra, Dottie, Elisa, Kristin, Liz, and Susan) reflected positively on their staff's ability to meet the tasks for a change. When discussing her staff, Sandra described a comprehensive system of developing staff, and shared "That's a difference in why our supports can be stronger, because we don't have people that are kind of coming in and doing a halfway job." Investment in staff development that leads to stronger ability is a theme that was evident in the responses of all six of these interviewees.

Four out of eight (Liz, Susan, Marie, and Ventura) interviewees shared some negative reflection on their confidence in systems to build capacity. For example, Dottie stated,

> The school went through some turmoil the past couple of years. A lot of the staff—I don't want to say in-fighting, but did not—were not focused on the same thing. And instead of focusing on students we were focusing on more political, adult agendas.

Dottie's concern shows that despite having systems to support staff, barriers still exist that get in the way of working together through change. It is also important to note that of the two interviewees that did not have a positive reflection, one did not share any reflection at all—neither positive or negative—despite being asked to reflect on their staff and systems.

Also, all eight interview participants were able to identify specific areas of growth within their organization, with seven out of eight also identifying particular areas of strength. Elisa shared a strength for tasks for change that nicely summarizes this organizational viewpoint,

> One of our strengths… is that we are not only integrated among our students, we're really integrated among our staff. What I mean by that is we're, to a fault, the cooperative model of running a school. Nobody's in silos. We don't make isolated decisions. Everyone's collaborating. In that way, everybody takes a portion of responsibility for helping kids have their needs met, meet their goals, have high educational outcomes.

Elisa provides an example of how staff at her organization work together to meet student needs and are therefore equipped to handle the tasks of change.

The tasks for change adaptive viewpoint showed the most substantial confidence by participating decision-makers in the survey. The utilization of supports, both traditional and personal, create confidence in decision-makers that staff members are well-supported to address the challenges presented by a shift in policy are evident. These findings are made more nuanced through the experiences shared by interviewee participants. This viewpoint offers a reliable indicator of the Option 3 population's use of knowledge and collaboration as being a necessary component of working through a change in policy.

Loss

The feeling of loss emerged as a theme within both the survey and interview data. Specifically, participants felt that the shift from AB-3632 to AB-114 led to a loss in funding and mental health resources for students and families. These themes were found in the optional open-ended questions in the survey and in the responses of interviewees who were asked to discuss the impact of AB-114.

Within the survey, five participants shared in open-ended format the loss or change they felt post AB-114. One participant shared that during AB-3632 there was increased support for students and their families and shared responsibility for treatment (between schools and the DMH), including shared responsibility for psychiatric support and placement options. After AB-114, this participant indicated that schools were left to figure out how to support students on their own. Another participant explained that post AB-114 schools felt a decrease in the availability of quality counselors. Two participants indicated that the loss included offerings for wrap-around services and supports that can be extended to families outside of school hours. All indicated that in order to maintain the appropriate level of support for students the school had to shoulder increased cost alone.

These sentiments were echoed in the interviews. Five interviewees specifically mentioned loss; Elisa, Kristin, Liz, Sandra, and Susan. Elisa, Liz, Susan, and Sandra shared concerns that schools no longer had access to mental health supports. Sandra said specifically that she felt AB-114 “took mental health out of the equation” for schools. Susan similarly mentioned feeling the loss of mental health-specific supports, with Elisa discussing the loss of parent and family counseling previously offered by the DMH. Kristin discussed the loss of placement options, and Elisa spoke of the loss of clarity around process for gaining mental health

specific supports. Of the five interview participants that elaborated a sentiment of loss, all indicated that changes in funding were a major challenge. For example, the cost of providing the same level of care fell to the schools, without any additional funding going directly to the schools to supplement this cost. Also, schools were now responsible for the full cost of placement if a student required a more restrictive environment. Collectively, the survey and interview participants noted previously indicated that the loss of resources once provided by the DMH led to increased costs for schools if they wanted to maintain the same level of support once mandated by AB-3632.

Conclusion

This study investigated how Option 3 charter school decision-makers displayed common responses to a shift in policy regarding the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints. The data showed that leaders felt most confident about their organizations' ability to engage in tasks for change, or how staff members accomplish tasks to enact change. Participants showed a strong sense of confidence in the interaction of systems to respond to the shift in policy by using integrated systems of support for staff development. In contrast, leaders had mixed confidence in the area of expertise, claiming confidence in the ability to receiving gain information on policy, but expressing less confidence in their understanding of the specific shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114. Finally, leaders shared strong confidence in the way they are staffed to meet student need in the area of staffing and development, with some variation in who they identified as valued collaboration partners.

The results indicate that organizational size did not make much of a difference (RQ1), only exhibiting some differences in six subcategories. These identified differences provided some explanation or were viewed through another lens when reviewed in interview data. There is

also no apparent correlation between adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints and the relative success of the students with disabilities within the organization. Interviewees' responses did not indicate a more pronounced presence or lack of adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints based on the relative success of the organization; instead, all interviewees' responses elaborated data collected in the survey (RQ2). Finally, this study shows that decision-makers rely on a mix of supports to build knowledge. Participants identified their own understanding, the communication and support of the Option 3 SELPA (and other organizations such as the California Charter School Association), and multiple collaboration partners when planning for implementing change due to a shift in policy. To varying degrees, these collaboration partners, such as school-based staff and parents, are identified as necessary when preparing for implementing change due to a change in policy (see Expertise and Interaction of Systems sections; RQ3). Finally, a theme of loss arose among respondents, specifically in the area of resources and funding to support students and families with social-emotional and mental health needs. As a response to the posed research questions, these findings provide a description of how charter school decision-makers in Los Angeles responded to the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114 to meet the social-emotional or mental health needs of students with ED.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This study arose out of my own personal and professional experiences working with students who have mental health or social-emotional needs. These needs created barriers to success for these students in the schooling environment. Typically, these students end up in special education identified as students with ED. In my career, I have had the opportunity to work in non-public/private schools, traditional urban school districts, and the Option 3 charter school community. In my current role as a special education decision-maker, I have had increased exposure to the impact of policy on schools, high-level decision-making, and leading an organization through change—all with the focus of ensuring marginalized students with disabilities are supported in their educational endeavors. Over the course my career, I have witnessed the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114, and I am interested in how the loss of mandatory interagency collaboration impacts a school's ability to meet the needs of students with ED. I am also fascinated by the unique experiences of Option 3 charter school decision-makers regarding this policy. Lastly, I have interest in leadership styles and the role of adaptive leadership in responding to this policy specifically, and educational policy more broadly. For this study, I engaged with Option 3 charter school decision-makers to explore and describe how they responded to AB-114 and how adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints manifested. After the analysis of data, a few key findings surfaced.

- *Decision-Makers have Sufficient Access to Policy Information* – Participants identified multiple avenues for receiving information regarding policy.

- *Decision-Makers Struggle to Make Sense of Policy Information* – Participants expressed mixed levels of confidence in their understanding of AB-114 and in their desire to learn or gain more training of the policy.
- *Uniformity Hinders Innovation in Special Education* – Participants expressed common responses concerning adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints despite organization size and perceived success for students with disabilities. Similarities coalesce around the way decision-makers hire staff to meet student need and the structures used to support staff to work through change.
- *There is a Strong Disconnect Between Policy Intent and Policy Implementation* – Decision-makers showed mixed confidence in their understanding of policy and the ability to connect policy to practice. Those who were able to make a connection expressed confusion due to lack of guidance.

In this chapter, I will elaborate on my key findings and present the implications for education policy, practice and future research. I will then present the significance and discuss the limitations of this study. Lastly, I will share my final thoughts.

Key Findings

Decision-Makers have Sufficient Access to Policy Information

Decision-makers used SELPA and other support organizations as avenues for gaining policy information. Per state mandate, the SELPA is required to provide schools with the necessary understanding to build programs that support students with special needs (California Charter Schools Association, 2017). Data show that participants view the SELPA as a primary source of information regarding policy and policy implementation. Specific methods for gaining information were shared, such as email, updated bulletins, training sessions, and even particular

individuals within the SELPA (indicated by name). Interestingly, participants noted other avenues for receiving information regarding policy that went beyond their SELPA. These other avenues include special education lawyers or law groups, peer collaboration with other decision-makers from outside of their organizations, the California Charter Schools Association, and even participation in additional SELPAs in California. Participants in this study indicate sufficient access to information, both from their involvement in the COP Option 3 SELPA and from additionally identified avenues of support. This indicates that perhaps the lack of progress for students with ED is not only poorly designed policy but also that educators lack the *expertise* with which to make sense of policy directives.

Decision-Makers Struggle to Make Sense of Policy Information

Participants have access to policy information but may lack the ability to make sense of that information. Despite sharing multiple means of gaining information, participants reflected mixed confidence levels in their personal knowledge of AB-114. Although some participants were able to the express the intent and impact the policy had on their organization, most indicated that they did not know of the policy or were unsure of the impact. Mixed confidence in knowledge aligns with current research on educational leaders' training systems having inconsistent expectations regarding special education (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Steinbrecher et al., 2015; Wakeman et al., 2006). With leaders receiving inconsistent training expectations before taking on leadership positions—such as participation in university preparation and credentialing programs—it makes sense that there is an inconsistent knowledge base across decision-makers. Even though this inconsistency exists, participants are still responsible for making decisions for their organizations. Research indicates that educational leaders are responsible for their schools whether they truly understand policy or not (Cameron,

2016; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Pennington et al., 2016; Steinbrecher et al., 2015). Inconsistent knowledge regarding policy intent and implementation did not stop decision-makers from finding solutions to problems raised by a policy change.

Decision-makers utilized adaptive leadership to problem-solve. Despite their level of policy knowledge, participants all came up with solutions to address changes post AB-114. The common trend in participant responses regarding the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints indicates the use of this leadership theory to create structures for decision-making. The method of adaptive viewpoints to guide decisions reflects the definition of adaptive leadership presented by Northouse (2015); when faced with change, it is the responsibility of a leader to construct the solutions to problems that arise.

Uniformity Hinders Innovation in Special Education

Instead of highlighting differences, this study instead showed responses to policy that indicated uniformity in regard to special education practice, which was not anticipated based on the autonomy provided to Option 3 decision-makers. Common responses were evident even when compared by organizational size. One area that displayed this uniformity was how Option 3 charter schools responded to the repeal of AB-3632 in providing counseling. None of the participating charters continued their own collaboration with the DMH; all participants chose to either hire their own counselors or psychologists to provide counseling or contract with an agency to provide counselors or psychologists. Only two survey participants indicated “other” for this question, and neither elaborated in the optional open-ended question. However, one interview participant, Kristin, shared that her organization hired social workers to provide counseling, being the one outlier in all of the data that indicated a practice that was an outlier when compared the other data from Option 3 schools. The variety in size was assumed to have

an impact on decision-maker response due to existing literature indicating a correlation between size and leadership capacity (Guthrie, 1979; McPherson, 1988; Waters & Marzano, 2007). Cumulative data indicate that size did not account for disparity in understanding within participants of this study, and instead of highlighting differences or innovation, it revealed uniformity.

Option 3 schools are described as *fully autonomous* and maintaining *LEA-like* decision-making rights (California Charter Schools Association, 2017; Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.c). However, this study indicates that participants rely on the SELPA for guidance and feel constrained by district-mandated oversight. When asked to elaborate on where decision-makers obtain information regarding AB-114 as well as other policies, interviewees identified the SELPA as their primary source of information. This common response shows that despite the autonomous nature of charter schools, participants rely on the educational organization provided by the SELPA to build knowledge. This study introduces the possibility that autonomy is not fully realized for Option 3 schools in LAUSD due to continued ties with the district, including participation in the district-created SELPA and mandated district oversight.

For example, Option 3 charters receive the most autonomy to innovate in LAUSD, yet decision-makers engaged in similar practices regarding hiring and supporting staff. The majority of interview participants described their staffing as intentional, hiring professionals with social work and clinical counseling backgrounds instead of academic counselors to meet social-emotional needs. This similarity in hiring does not align with research indicating a shift of responsibility from the DMH to school-based staff as a consequence of AB-114 (Lawson & Cmar, 2016). Instead, Option 3 decision-makers decided to hire or contract staff with expertise more closely aligned to the DMH. Interestingly, only three interviewees were able to connect

their hiring practices back to AB-114. Although this innovation differs from the traditional district, it is consistent within the Option 3 community. Participants also shared similar systems of support for staff. Data highlight the use of conventional modes of professional development, and systems of personal support such as coaching, PLCs, and systems of collaboration. Again, the data indicate more uniformity in practice than unique innovation within the Option 3 charter community.

The impact of oversight may case the similarities found within the Option 3 community. Much like the Harr et al. (2008) study that showed that oversight could be both beneficial and ineffective, the results of this study indicate this type of monitoring may impact charter school innovation. Although oversight does keep charter schools compliant with the law through participation in the SELPA and mandatory annual reviews, an unintended consequence may be the limiting of innovation. Despite the expectation of innovation, the multi-level oversight of charter schools in Los Angeles may hinder exploration of more creative and diverse programming for special education.

There is a Strong Disconnect Between Policy Intent and Policy Implementation

Students with ED continue to present unique challenges to accessing the schooling environment. Even so, policy change such as AB-114 continues to limit the supports provided to students with mental health and social-emotional needs. Recent studies indicate that students with this eligibility show little, and sometimes no, academic growth (Anderson et al., 2001; Mattison, 2015; Mattison & Blader, 2013; Siperstein et al., 2011). Additionally, the newest reports indicate that students with ED continue to represent a low percentage of students with disabilities (10%), but the highest percent of dropout and incarceration as of the 2013-2014 school year: 35%, and 1.5% respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014, 2016).

These data show very little change for this subgroup of students since the report from 2013 cited in chapter 2. The increase in hiring staff with clinical and social work backgrounds indicates that students with ED are present in the Option 3 community and continue to require supports that extend beyond the knowledge of educators.

Although AB-3632 was explicitly created to address the barriers in education created by mental health, AB-114 was signed into law to address budgetary concerns. The limited literature on this shift indicates that the repeal of AB-3632 was one line in a larger budget bill that repealed 25 years of mandated interagency collaboration (Lawson, 2013). Decision-makers received no clear guidance on what to do next, and the changes affiliated with AB-114 occurred in a piecemeal fashion over several years (Lawson & Cmar, 2016), which led to confusion. This confusion is evident in data indicating a mix of confidence in understanding AB-114 among study participants. Interviewees that could articulate a summary of AB-114 reported not knowing what to do once the shift occurred. Participants shared feeling like different adjustments were being made year to year, and that they did not receive clear communication about what that meant for charter schools. The experiences of Option 3 decision-makers illuminates the disconnect between those who create policy and the schools themselves. The lack of connection between student need and policy intent leads to policy that is poorly designed and fails to meet students' needs.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

The key findings of this study imply that there is a shared responsibility for creating, communicating, and understanding policy. Multiple levels of educational authority are responsible for students' well-being, including individual decision-makers, educational organizations, and policymakers. At the individual level, decision-makers are accountable for

meeting the needs of the students in their organizations. At the organizational level, educational institutions such as the SELPA are responsible for keeping decision-makers informed of policy change and equipping them to address the needs of their students. Finally, policymakers are responsible for making decisions that have an impact on students, decisions that have impact at the societal level.

Individual/Decision-Maker Level

For individual decision-makers, especially those within the Option 3 charter community, this study posits that intentionally incorporating the adaptive leadership organization viewpoints in the planning of implementing change (such as shifts in policy) may increase the ability to identify personal gaps in knowledge. As leaders become aware of adaptive traits, they can use them as tools to strengthen policy understanding. As both the literature and this study show, the adaptive viewpoints provide a groundwork from which leaders can create a structure where one may not currently exist. Taking this theory and utilizing it as a tool may allow leaders to take control of building their capacity around policy intent and implementation.

However, additional research into the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints is worthy of exploration, specifically related to adapting to the shift in policy of AB-114. It would be beneficial to gain more insight into whether or not leaders in LAUSD, other charters, or in different types of schools (such as private or non-public school settings) in Los Angeles also manifest similar trends of response concerning adaptive viewpoints. It would also be beneficial to compare the confidence levels of policy expertise in other decision-makers. Comparison of leaders across educational organization type in Los Angeles—or California more broadly—would give more depth for individual consideration. More research could confirm that participants in this study are representative of educational leaders in California, or indicate that

their practices and struggles are unique to this population. With confirmation, a stronger statement could be made connecting the adaptive leadership organizational viewpoints to change management associated with the specific policy change of AB-114.

Organizational/Educational Institution Level

Educational organizations, such as the SELPA, are responsible for connecting policymakers and individual decision-makers. The literature indicates that the SELPA holds responsibility for ensuring that schools know how to support students with special needs. The disparity in decision-maker confidence regarding policy knowledge in this study suggests that Option 3 charter decision-makers may not be getting what they need from the SELPA to understand the intention and impact of AB-114. Connecting effective communication strategies with opportunities for decision-makers to develop professionally could create a systemic network of support for educational decision-makers to increase their understanding of the intent and impact of policy. Educational organizations could use the adaptive viewpoint of interaction of systems as a foundation for reflection to collect data on decision-maker understanding and identify gaps in knowledge to increase the effectiveness of communication and identify specific areas for further development.

Further research into the Option 3 community could allow educational organizations the opportunity to determine if the increased flexibility provided through Option 3 leads to successful innovation that supports students in ways that more traditional public schools do not. In light of this study, further research could determine if this flexibility provided new approaches to increasing success for students with ED post AB-114.

Societal/Policy-Making Level

Currently, policymakers are both the beginning and end levels of policy knowledge, meaning policy is both created and terminated through their expertise. They must be able to connect policy to a current need and guide decision-makers in policy implementation. Specifically, policymakers should consider the impact of budgetary decisions on vulnerable populations, keep in mind the capacity of schools to meet needs that extend beyond what they have been trained to do, and explore alternative methods to rolling out policy change such as AB-114 to limit the impact. Policymakers can provide more guidance in the intention and actions required to address change posed by policy shifts to ensure that educational organizations and individual decision-makers have the necessary knowledge to support their most vulnerable students. More guidance from policymakers is important because they exist at the local, state, and federal level; therefore, their reach has societal implications.

More research needs to be conducted on AB-114's impact on students, such as comparisons pre and post AB-114. Approaching the issue of policy change using only a sample population of Option 3 decision-makers alone is not enough to truly understand the impact of the shift in policy from AB-3632 to AB-114.

Study Significance

Charter schools were created to be innovative and offer alternatives to traditional public education programs. Option 3 charter schools are given the most autonomy for innovation in the city of Los Angeles, making this community one-of-a-kind. Since these schools maintain a significant amount of decision-making authority, they can create programs that look different from those of traditional district schools, while still being considered schools of the district. Option 3 schools are unique among both charter and traditional public-school communities, as no

other group of schools has similar status in either the state of California or in the United States. As such, the description of how this community responded to a local shift in policy can provide insight that can be considered by a variety of individuals and educational organizations. Implications from this descriptive study are exploratory and preliminary in nature, with an emphasis on discovery.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study that may limit the extent to which the findings can be generalized. First, the overall population from which data collection is small in number, making the sample population even smaller. Second, since the sample population is small, some groups were represented by a relatively low number of individuals. The small number of participants combined with narrow questions on the survey create an issue of depth as the main limitation for consideration. Finally, the online survey service presented a unique challenge in capturing valid data by not always displaying all questions to all respondents.

The first limitation of this study is that the actual population of Option 3 charter schools' decision-makers is small, leading to a small sample population. The survey had a 38% response rate, which meant only 47 decision-makers participated. In the case of inferential statistics, a small sample size can result in lesser power to detect group differentials. Therefore, the findings of this study are potentially not applicable to all educational decision-makers throughout the country. Since the size of the population was a known limitation going into this study, the researcher chose to utilize mixed methods and include both a document review and interviews with decision-makers to further nuance the experiences of this population and add depth to the discussion to address this limitation.

Second, medium and large CMOs were represented by a small number of participants. Whereas these groups are represented appropriately percentage-wise in the survey, data were pulled from fewer than 10 people for each group. Again, the addition of qualitative data was used in the study to support and expand on the quantitative results. However, the narrow questions on the survey protocol and the small number of interviewees do represent the main limitation of this study as one of depth. As the Option 3 charter community continues to grow in size, further research into this population with more nuanced protocols could add more generalizability to the findings from this study.

Finally, using Qualtrics as the online survey service presented its limitation. Some respondents' responses included a message to the researcher that "This question was not displayed to the respondent," and those responses were unable to be captured. Since the survey did not link to identifiable data to protect anonymity, it was not possible for the researcher to follow up with specific survey participants for more information. This issue did not start to occur until the last few days of data collection, so a last-ditch effort that included additional incentives was conducted to collect more responses. Without these issues, there was potential for more data collection that could have increased the quality of findings. Despite efforts to address these limitations by the researcher, it is left to the reader to identify themes that may or may not be generalizable based on the information provided; hence, implications are presented as preliminary.

Final Thoughts

This study enabled me to engage with three areas about which I am passionate: special education, educational leadership, and policy. Early in my career, I became aware of the distinct struggles of students with ED, and this study offered insight into how policy, educational

leadership, and special education intersect. It highlights the need for a shared construct of knowledge building across all levels of educational authority: from the individual decision-maker up to the policymakers (and back down again). They share responsibility for continually building knowledge and making connections to ensure that students get what they need.

This research has ignited an interest for me in how educational institutions can be both managed through and provided flexibility by local legislation. The mix of accountability and flexibility in Option 3 charter decision-makers offered an appropriate population from which to collect data on Adaptive Leadership and policy change. I have agreed to share my findings with the Option 3 community as my target audience, but also reach out to those who can influence policy. I plan to promote my conclusions through the California Charter School Association (CCSA) and the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (NCSECS). This research should not stop here, since locally Option 3 charter schools grow in number each year, and research on the impact of the shift in policy from AB-114 is still developing, and nationally students with ED continue to struggle. The work of dedicated educators is inspiring, and I am prepared to promote both research and policy to increase positive outcomes for vulnerable students.

Appendix A:

Survey Protocol

Survey was shared with participants via Qualtrics, an online database.

AREA I - PARTICIPANT + ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Please select the most accurate response to the following questions:

Q1. Participant - Job Title (please check all that apply to your current position):

- ☐ Executive (1)
- ☐ Director (2)
- ☐ Principal/Assistant or Vice Principal (3)
- ☐ Coordinator/Facilitator/Coach (4)
- ☐ Other... (5)

Q2. Participant - Years in current position (please check an applicable range):

- ○ 0-4 (1)
- ○ 5-10 (2)
- ○ 11-15 (3)
- ○ 15+ (4)

Q3. Participant - Number of school sites in operation under your guidance (please check):

- ○ 1 (1)
- ○ 2-4 (2)
- ○ 5-10 (3)
- ○ 11-19 (4)
- ○ 20+ (5)

Q 4. Organization - Years in operation (please check an applicable range):

- ○ 0-4 (1)
- ○ 5-10 (2)
- ○ 11-15 (3)
- ○ 15+ (4)

Q5. Organization - Number of school sites in your organization (please check):

- ○ 1 (1)
- ○ 2-4 (2)
- ○ 5-10 (3)
- ○ 11-19 (4)
- ○ 20+ (5)

Q6. Organization - At your school site(s), DIS Counseling and ERICS are provided by (check all that apply):

- ○ School/Organization hired counselor(s) and/or psychologist(s) (1)
- ○ Agency contracted counselor(s) and/or psychologist(s) (2)
- ○ Collaboration with local county department of mental health (3)
- ○ Other... (4)

Q7. In your position, do you oversee special education and make decisions about staffing and staff development?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (*If no, please indicate the job title(s) of the responsible staff below) (2)

If you answered "No," please indicate the job title(s) of the responsible staff here:

_____

Please continue to next section...

AREA II - DEMOGRAPHIC + STUDENT POPULATION

The following responses will reflect information about your student population.
Please select the most accurate response to the following questions:

Q8. For the 2016-2017 school year, what was your school(s) total enrollment (please check applicable range):

- ○ 1-100 (1)
- ○ 101-500 (2)
- ○ 501-1,000 (3)
- ○ 1,000+ (4)

Q9. For the 2016-2017 school year, about how many students had IEPs at your school(s)(please check applicable range):

- ○ 0 (1)
- ○ 1-10 (2)
- ○ 11-25 (3)
- ○ 26-50 (4)
- ○ 50+ (5)

Q10a. For the 2016-2017 school year, how many students qualified under the eligibility of Emotional Disturbance (ED) at your school(s). (please check applicable range)

- ○ 0 (1)
- ○ 1-5 (2)
- ○ 6-10 (3)
- ○ 11+ (4)

Q10b. If your school/organization does not currently serve students with ED, who would be in charge of creating the proactive plan?

- ○ Me (1)
- ○ Other (2)

Q11a. What is the current number of staff utilized to provide DIS Counseling and ERICS - hired and/or contracted (please check number range):

- ○ 0 (1)
- ○ 1-4 (2)
- ○ 5-10 (3)
- ○ 11+ (4)

Q11b. If the answer to 11a represents shared staff, how many school sites do they each support?

- ○ 2 (1)
- ○ 3 (2)
- ○ 4 (3)
- ○ 5 (4)
- ○ Not Applicable (5)

*If you responded "0" to question 10a, you may stop here. Thank you.

All others, please continue to next section...

AREA III - EXPERTISE

Q. 12-18. Please reflect on your own knowledge of special education policy and select the rating that most accurately reflects your degree of agreement/disagreement with the statements below using this scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly agree

	1 - Strongly Disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 - Strongly Agree (4)
12. I feel confident that my organization/SELPA provides me with necessary information regarding special education policy change. (1)	○	○	○	○
13. I would like more training around understanding special education policy. (2)	○	○	○	○
14. I know where to find information regarding special education policy. (3)	○	○	○	○
15. I have a good understanding of California AB-114. (4)	○	○	○	○
16. I consider policies, such as AB-114, when planning for the school year. (5)	○	○	○	○
17. I would like to learn more about AB-114 specifically. (6)	○	○	○	○
18. I feel confident in my ability to lead my school/organization through change. (7)	○	○	○	○

Q19 19. Please select a rating that accurately reflects your opinion on the impact of AB-114 below, using this scale:

1 = Extremely Negative Impact
2 = Somewhat Negative Impact
3 = Not Much Impact (neither positive nor negative)
4 = Somewhat Positive Impact
5 = Extremely Positive Impact

	1 - Extremely Negative Impact (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 - Extremely Positive Impact (5)
19. How would you characterize the impact the shift from AB-3632 to AB-114 has had on the provision of services for students with emotional disturbance at your school site(s)? (1)	○	○	○	○	○

OPTIONAL: Please use this space to elaborate on the details of your characterization of the impact from question number 19.

_____

Please continue to next section...

AREA IV - STAFF + DEVELOPMENT

20-27. Please reflect on how you make decisions regarding staffing and select the rating that most accurately reflects your degree of agreement/disagreement with the statements below using this scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly agree

	1 - Strongly Disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 - Strongly Agree (4)
20. My organization hires counseling providers based on student need. (1)	○	○	○	○
21. I am personally aware of the staffing needs at my site (in regards to special education supports and services) and adjust staffing accordingly. (2)	○	○	○	○
22. I rely on the expertise of others to identify special education staffing needs (i.e. Human Resources, Special Education Staff, etc.) (3)	○	○	○	○
23. Students at my school site who have the eligibility of Emotional Disturbance receive DIS Counseling and ERICS with consistency (4)	○	○	○	○
24. There is a current need at my school site for more providers to meet the needs of students for DIS Counseling and ERICS, so compensatory services will be offered. (5)	○	○	○	○
25. My school has a system that reviews compliance data at least 1x per month to ensure that the site has enough DIS Counselors and ERICS staff to meet the needs outlined in my students' IEPs. (6)	○	○	○	○
26. California AB-114 had an impact on staffing to meet the needs of students with Emotional Disturbance at my school site(s). (7)	○	○	○	○
27. I am unaware of any impact AB-114 had on	○	○	○	○

staffing at my school(s). (8)

Q28. During the 16-17 school year how many sessions of professional development were provided to staff that specifically focused on supporting students with social-emotional needs?

- 0 (1)
- 1 (2)
- 2 (3)
- 3 (4)
- 4+ (5)

OPTIONAL: Please use this space to elaborate on details on the type of professional development sessions provided to your school(s) around student social-emotional needs.

Please continue to next section...

AREA V - INTERACTION OF SYSTEMS

Q29-33. Please reflect on how you make decisions regarding planning for program development and the provision of student services and select the rating that most accurately reflects your degree of agreement/disagreement with the statements below using this scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly agree

	1 - Strongly Disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 - Strongly Agree (4)
29. I collaborate with Special Education teachers, School Psychologists, and/or counselors to plan for program development and/or service provision at my school site(s).	○	○	○	○
30. The input of my special education staff (teachers, psychologists, and/or counselors) are valued during the planning the process.	○	○	○	○
31. Formal collaboration between many stakeholders (such as those mentioned in questions 29 + 30) is required to plan and develop special education supports and services at my school/organization.	○	○	○	○
32. California AB-114 caused a change in program and/or service provision at my school site(s).	○	○	○	○
33. I am unaware of any impact AB-114 had on program development and/or service provision at my school site(s).	○	○	○	○

Q34-41. Please rate the degree of involvement the following groups/individuals have in developing the special education programs at your school site(s) using this scale:

1 = Not involved at all; 2 = Somewhat involved; 3 = Deeply involved

	1 - Not involved at all (1)	2 (2)	3 - Deeply involved (3)
34. Me	○	○	○
35. Other school-based administrator(s)	○	○	○
36. Home Office, District, or contract support providers	○	○	○
37. Special Education teachers	○	○	○
38. School Psychologists	○	○	○
39. School Counselors	○	○	○
40. General Education Teachers	○	○	○
41. Parents	○	○	○

OPTIONAL: Please use this space to elaborate on the details of questions number 29-42 by explaining what systems (if any) of collaboration, planning, and/or decision-making are at your site.

Please continue to next section...

AREA VI - TASKS FOR CHANGE

42-46. Please reflect on the ways in which the staff(s) at your site(s) accomplish the tasks of supporting students, especially when there is change and select the rating that most accurately reflects your degree of agreement/disagreement with the statements below using this scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly agree

	1 - Strongly disagree (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 - Strongly agree (4)
42. My staff participate in proactive professional development that informs them of changes in policy that may impact the supports for students.	○	○	○	○
43. There is a system of ongoing coaching support for my staff to ensure that they are supported in their work.	○	○	○	○
44. My staff participate in conferences or other opportunities outside of our organization to support meeting the needs of challenging students.	○	○	○	○
45. Our school(s) use a Professional Learning Community (PLC) (or a similar peer-based support) model to enable their work in supporting students with great need.	○	○	○	○
46. I feel my staff are well prepared and supported and are able to carry out the tasks of supporting students, even when there is a change in policy.	○	○	○	○

OPTIONAL: Please use this space to elaborate on something you feel your school(s) does well to support staff in meeting the needs of students.

Stop here. Thank you for participating!

Appendix B:

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Option 3 Charter School Decision-Maker Interview Protocol

Greeting (i.e., good afternoon, good morning, hello, etc.).

Thank you for participating in this study. Information collected will be used to investigate how charter school leaders have used increased flexibility with maintained oversight to respond to a shift in policy that may or may not have had an impact on supports for students with Emotional Disturbance. I am a UCLA doctoral candidate and am collecting data on how leaders make decisions and support students within the Option 3 charter community. By signing up, you have agreed to participate in this interview, if you would like to review the consent language, I will read it to you again today.

This interview will last about 45-60 minutes. This is considered a "semi-structured" interview. I will ask some questions to guide the process, but this is a chance for you to share your experience. Feel free to expand and provide examples. Your identity will be kept confidential, so you may speak openly. With your permission, I would like to digitally record this interview in order to transcribe the information later. This recording will be used for transcription only, and will not be shared. If there are points during the process where you would feel more comfortable with the recorder off, please tell me to press the "off" button or ask to end the interview. And again, participation is voluntary, and greatly appreciated. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Okay, let's begin!

I. AREA I + II - GENERAL BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

1. Tell me about your "leadership story." How did you get to where you are?

2. Tell me about your school/organization? (RQ 2)
    i. *Such as years in operation, general demographics, general % of students with disabilities, general location of school(s).*
    ii. *About what % of students have the eligibility of ED?*

3. How do you receive information regarding special education policy? (RQs 1 + 3)

II. AREA III - EXPERTISE

1. Tell me about your experience with AB-114? (For example, what do you know about this policy, how do you view it in terms of providing support for students at your school site, and what is your opinion on how, if it all, it impacts students at your school site(s)) (RQs 1 +3)
    i. *How did you become aware of AB-114?*

ii. *How did you use this awareness when planning for the next school year?*
iii. *What, if anything, does your school site(s) do differently now than when before AB-114?*

III. AREA IV – STAFFING + DEVELOPMENT

1. Tell me about what staffing for students with Emotional Disturbance (ED) looks like at your school/organization. (RQ 1 + 3)
    i. Who (title and/or credential) provides counseling to students with disabilities at your school site? Are these full-time employees or contract providers?
    ii. What do other support services look like for students with ED?
    iii. How successful do you think your current services are meeting the needs of students with ED?

IV. AREA V – INTERACTION OF SYSTEM

1. Tell me about what resources you tap into and who, if anyone, you collaborate with when planning to provide services to students, specifically students with ED? (RQ 1 + 3)
    i. *Have these resources changed throughout the years?*
    ii. *What staff are most valuable to you when planning for supporting students with special needs?*

V. AREA VI – TASKS FOR CHANGE

1. Tell me about how staff is developed throughout the year to meet the needs of diverse students, especially students with Emotional Disturbance. (RQ 1 + 3)
    i. *Where do supports for students with ED fall into your PD scope + sequence?*
    ii. *Who is responsible for support students with ED? What does their development look like?*

2. Tell me about the systems at your school/organization that support teachers and/or school staff when dealing with challenging students. (RQ 1 + 3)
    i. Is this part of professional development, or do you use more personalized supports such as PLCs or a coaching model?
    ii. *Are you, or is someone else, responsible for developing and maintaining supports for teachers and school staff? If it's you, please describe your process. If it is someone else, please describe your collaboration*.

VI. CONCLUSION

1. Is there anything else that you feel is important for me to know about how your school or organization learns about policy, plans for special education, or supports students with ED? (RQs 1, 2, + 3)
    i. Strengths of your school(s)/organization?
    ii. Barriers or areas of growth for your school(s)/organization?

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