

International School Leadership Development Network Study Summary

We would like to collect information about the research studies being conducted as part of the International School Leadership Development Network. For each study you have conducted (or are conducting), please provide the following information:

1. Research team members' names and affiliations.

Nathern Okilwa, University of Texas at San Antonio
Bruce Barnett, University of Texas at San Antonio

2. Which project area does your research study address?

Leadership for social justice

Leadership in high-need schools

3. Briefly describe the study setting, participants, data collection instruments, and dates of the investigation.

A PreK-5 elementary school in an older neighborhood about five miles from the center of a major urban city in South Texas, serving a predominately Hispanic student population and community. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the four principals who served the school from the early 1990s, the time when school turnaround started, until the present. In addition, we interviewed three veteran teachers who have been at the school for over 20 years and two parent leaders. Interviews with participants were tape recorded lasted between 60 to 90 minutes per session.

Data were collected from September 2014 - September 2016

4. List key findings of the study.

Our first investigation revealed the school's ongoing success has been influenced by the principals' focus on: high expectations for student learning and teacher performance, distributed leadership among the staff, collective responsibility for students' performance, and data-based decision making.

A secondary analysis of the respondents' responses to the internal and external context indicated the principals strived to: (1) improve parental engagement and business involvement and support, (2) target programs for improving literacy, gifted and talented students, and higher-order thinking, (3) institute systems to improve student attendance, and (4) engage district leaders and support staff, constantly communicating the school's needs and seeking resources for school improvement.

5. Presentations and publications reporting the study.

Presentations:

- Okilwa, N. S. A., & Barnett, B. G. (2017). Leaders' perspectives on sustaining academic success in a high-need school. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration Convention, Denver, CO.
- Okilwa, N. S. A., & Barnett, B. G. (2016). Leaders' perspectives in sustaining academic achievement success in a high-needs school. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration Convention, Detroit, MI.
- Okilwa, N. S. A., & Barnett, B. G. (2016). Sustaining school improvement in a high-need school: Longitudinal analysis of Robbins Elementary School (USA) from 1993 to 2015. Paper presented at the New Zealand Educational Leadership and Administration Society Conference, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Okilwa, N. S. A., & Barnett, B. G. (2015). Sustaining school improvement in a high-need school: Comparative analysis of Robbins Elementary School (USA) from 1997 to 2015. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration Convention, San Diego, CA.
- Okilwa, N. S. A., & Barnett, B. G. (2014). A pilot study of a high-need school in San Antonio, TX. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration Convention, Washington, DC.

Publications:

- Okilwa, N. S., & Barnett, B. (forthcoming). Sustaining success at a high-needs elementary school. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Okilwa, N. S., & Barnett, B. G. (2018). Four successive leaders' response to a high needs urban elementary school context. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 46(1), 45-85.
- Barnett, B. G. (2018). Promoting student success in low-performing schools. *Oxford Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford University Press. doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.410.
- Okilwa, N., & Barnett, B. G. (2017). Sustaining school improvement in a high-need school: Longitudinal analysis of Robbins Elementary School (USA) from 1993 to 2015. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 55(3), 297-315.