

Running head: THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF EMERGENT BILINGUALS

AN ANALYSIS OF EMERGENT BILINGUALS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCY,
MENTAL HEALTH AND PERCEIVED SCHOOL CLIMATE

A DISSERTATION PROPOSAL
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF
RUTGERS,
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
BY
TAMARA L. QUEZADA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF
DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

AUGUST 2020

APPROVED:

Anne Gregory, Ph.D.

Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D.

Mary E. Curran, Ph. D.

DEAN:

Francine Conway, Ph. D.

THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF EMERGENT BILINGUALS

Copyright © 2020 by Tamara L. Quezada

Abstract

Throughout the past several decades the Emergent Bilingual (EB) population has steadily increased in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). This population encounters many difficulties upon entering the US educational system. For example, many EBs experience poverty and other stresses related to migration, which can substantially increase their risk for mental illnesses and poor academic performance (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). In addition, EBs are likely to attend highly impoverished and under resourced schools, further contributing to the risk of low academic achievement (Aud et al., 2010). Therefore, this research aimed to better understand the school experience of EBs in an attempt to identify how this population can be better supported in our educational system. Study 1 addressed gaps in knowledge in its examination of student and teacher survey data from three low income, urban schools ($N = 1180$). Study 2 drew on qualitative data from five focus groups to understand the differences in the school experience of current vs. exited-EBs, those students who have exited their EB programing due to their deemed proficiency in English. Specifically, Study 1 analyzed EBs vs. non-EBs, and current vs. exited-EBs' social-emotional competencies, overall social-emotional competency, self-reported negative mental health, student perceptions of the school climate, and academic achievement. Results from the multiple regression analyses showed no significant differences between EBs and non-EBs. However, there were differences between current and exited-EBs with regard to teacher-reported socio-emotional competency and self-reported negative mental health. Teachers perceived exited-EBs as having greater social-emotional competencies than their current-EB peers. However, a post-hoc multiple regression analysis indicated that EB status and academic achievement are intertwined, suggesting that academic achievement may better explain teacher-reported social-emotional competency. Study 1 also found that exited-EBs' self-reported lower rates of negative mental health than current-EBs.

Lastly, this study found a trend hinting that exited-EBs have worse perceptions of school climate, compared to their current-EB peers. In Study 2, the qualitative analysis of focus groups showed that the EB population may be likely to encounter negative experiences due to their EB status, specifically in terms of negative peer interactions.

Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible without many important people who served as pillars of support. First and foremost, I would like to thank my family. I would not have been able to get this far without your words of encouragement and support. To my parents, Clelia and Milton Quezada, thank you for your selfless love, prayers and countless acts of benevolence for our family. You both have worked hard to cultivate dedication, honesty, and kindness in me. To my siblings, Lizbeth and Milton, I could not have asked for better siblings. Thank you for your humor, your strength, and unconditional support in a myriad of ways. Lizbeth, you are an excellent older sister, the perfect blend of compassion and strength, always ready to stand up for us. Milton, my beloved brother, you are such a smart, loving, and empowered individual. Thank you for giving selflessly, and for your sense of humor that never fails to brighten my days. I feel so proud to be able to call you my family, and I love you all beyond words can explain.

I am indebted with gratitude to my Committee members, Dr. Anne Gregory, Dr. Maurice Elias, and Dr. Mary Curran, who supported me in this project with much time, effort, and hard work. I am especially thankful for all of your support, kindness, and thoughtful feedback. Dr. Elias, this dissertation would have been impossible to complete without your arduous work and dedication to SEL. Dr. Curran, thank you for imparting your passion and wisdom when working with the EB community. I would like to especially thank Dr. Gregory. Words cannot adequately express my tremendous appreciation and admiration. Thank you for your dedication to this project, consistently detailed feedback, pushing me to go beyond my limits, and showing me my potential through this journey. Our conversations throughout this project helped me grow professionally and personally. Despite your notable professional achievements and extensive academic career as a researcher and professor, you are humble, caring, and generous. Your sense of humor and cheerful personality has made even the most crammed meetings enjoyable. You personify an exemplary researcher and mentor, imparting your wisdom and expertise in a manner

that inspires growth and innovation. I have been privileged to work with an incredibly talented team of professionals and feel honored to have had the opportunity to learn from each one of you.

To my GSAPP colleagues, I feel fortunate to have shared this chapter of my life with you. I owe special recognition to Stephanie Anismatta, Russi Soffer, Sheva Cohen, Dina Siegel, Madison Perry, and Jaxcy Odom for their support in proofreading drafts, aiding in data collection, reliability analysis, and preparing and sharing Dr. Elias's data (Dina). Having you all as close friends throughout GSAPP has made this process even more exciting and meaningful. Thank you for sharing the challenging moments, unstoppable laughter and timeless memories these past four years. I look forward to continuing to deepen our friendships in the years to come.

To my friends outside GSAPP, I like to thank you for all your words of encouragement to keep pushing and move forward. I'd like to specially recognize Edgar Renteria and Karla Arevalo. Thank you for your loyalty, unwavering support, and for believing in me no matter what happened. Edgar, ever since high school, we have strived and found a way to succeed professionally despite the difficulties that accompany immigrant children. Karla, thank you for a faithful friendship, for your words of encouragement and for being my personal cheerleader! To both of you, thank you for taking the time to proofread this document on several occasions as I honed my writing skills.

Above all, I thank God for this achievement. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). His grace has opened doors for me that otherwise would not have been possible, and he has provided for me where I did not see a way. Thank you for blessing my path.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	II
Acknowledgments	IV
Introduction.....	1
Defining Emergent Bilinguals (EBs).....	2
EBs and Academics	3
School Climate.....	6
Labeling of EBs	7
Academic Interventions with EB Students.....	9
Acculturation and Difficulties EBs Encounter Upon Entering Schools	11
Exited-EBs and Academic Performance	13
Negative Mental Health.....	14
Negative Mental Health: Strengths and Needs	15
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL).....	18
Social-emotional Competencies (SEC)	20
Social-Emotional Learning/Competency (SEL/C) and EBs	21
Current Research.....	23
Study 1	24
Aim 1: A comparison of EB and non-EB students	25
Hypotheses.....	26
Aim 2: An exploratory comparison of current-EBs and exited-EBs	26
Hypotheses.....	26
Study 1 Methods.....	27
School District Characteristics.....	27
Sample Characteristics.....	28
School Characteristics	29
Study 1 Procedures.....	30
Measures	31
Data Analytic Plan.....	35
Study 1 using Quantitative Data.....	35
Missing Data.....	36
Descriptive Statistics.....	37
Correlations	40
Describing EBs and non-EBs	42

Multiple Regression Analyses for EBs and non-EBs.....	43
Examining Differences Between Current and Exited-EBs	47
Multiple Regression Analyses for current vs. exited-EBs	49
Study 2	54
Aim 3: An exploratory analysis of current-EBs and exited-EBs	55
Study 2 Procedures.....	55
Sample Characteristics	56
Data Analytic Plan.....	57
Stage 1 of Qualitative Analysis.....	57
Stage 2 of Qualitative Analysis.....	58
Findings.....	61
Reliability	61
Positive Themes	62
Discussion.....	68
Social-Emotional Competency	69
Negative Mental Health.....	73
School Climate.....	74
Study 2: A Qualitative Analysis of Current and Exited-EBs.....	76
Summary	77
Limitations and Future Directions.....	79
Conclusions and Implications for Practice.....	81
References	84
Appendices.....	93

An Analysis of Emergent Bilinguals' Social-Emotional Competency, Mental Health and
Perceived School Climate

Introduction

As the number of immigrants steadily rises in the United States of America (US), our society has become more culturally diverse. Batalova and Alperin (2018) report that approximately 44 million immigrants are living in the US., representing 13.5 percent of the overall population. This percentage, however, is expected to increase, becoming the main driver behind the US population growth between 2027 and 2038 (Batalova & Alperin, 2018). Correspondingly, as the number of immigrant parents surge, so does the number of *Emergent Bilinguals* (EBs) in US schools. In fact, The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) reports an increase in the presence of EB students in public schools between 2000 and 2015, from an estimated 3.8 million (8.1%) to 4.8 million (9.5%), respectively. In addition, the US Census Bureau (2017) reports that an increasingly diverse 77.3 million people were enrolled in US schools in 2016. Enrollment in kindergarten through 8th grade was about 36.6 million, consisting of 51% non-Hispanic White, 25.1% Hispanic or Latino, 15.1% Black, and 5.4% Asian. This suggests that 49% of students in US schools are culturally, racially/ethnically, and/or linguistically diverse students (Census, 2017). Similarly, the 2010 National Center for Education Statistics projected that from 2007-2019 public schools' enrollment will increase to 52 million, including a growing number of diverse students (Aud et al., 2010).

Despite the increasing number of EBs in US schools, research with this population continues to be limited. In fact, current research calls for a more integrative, holistic and interdisciplinary approach to better represent the strengths and needs in populations; thus, leading to practical applications of research (Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006; Jones, Farrington, Jagers, Brackett, & Kahn, nd). Yet, much of the literature discussing EBs has taken a *deficit-*

oriented approach, neglecting to recognize the complexity of their experience and in-group differences (Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006; Orellana, 2001). A *deficit-oriented approach* is a needs driven or “problem” focused research approach; whereas, an *action-oriented* research is a strengths’ based approach (Small, 1995). Gutiérrez and Orellana (2006) explain that it is important to take a holistic approach to conceptualize EBs, both acknowledging the strengths and the needs that EBs may have; thus, presenting a rigorous and ecologically valid approach addressing the limits of a deficit-oriented approach.

Defining Emergent Bilinguals (EBs)

Although different terminology has been used to describe EBs, such as Limited English Proficient students or English Language Learners, this population is more appropriately characterized as EBs. EBs are individuals whom through schooling acquire English and are also able to communicate using their native language (Garcia, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). Rejecting the deficit-oriented terms, English Language Learners and Limited English Proficient, Garcia and colleagues (2008) assert that the term “Emergent Bilinguals” brings attention to the inequity in educating these students and acknowledges the failure to understand the emergent bilingualism in educating this population. Moreover, they assert that without considering emerging bilingualism, educational programs are inconsistent in their goals. Even though the school district that participated in this study uses the term, Limited English Proficient (LEP), to identify EBs, the current study will use the EB terminology. Using the LEP terminology, the school district categorizes emergent bilingual students as LEPs or exited-LEPs. Aligning with this categorization, the current study described EBs, as *current-EBs* or *exited-EBs* for those students who were referred out of the EB programming due to their deemed proficiency in the English language.

EBs and Academics

As measured by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch in a national data sample, a greater percentage of EBs attend high poverty schools (Aud et al., 2010). Students enrolled in 4th - 8th grade in high poverty schools perform at lower levels in reading, mathematics, music, and visual arts, and are less likely to graduate in comparison to students enrolled in low poverty schools (Aud et al., 2010). Thus, EBs in high poverty schools are at risk for low academic achievement.

EBs' enrollment in under-resourced schools is concerning. National data reports that high poverty school districts receive about \$1,000 less per student than low poverty districts (Morgan & Amerikaner, 2018). Allocations per student in high poverty schools, in districts serving the fewest students of color were almost twice as large (\$1,800) than districts serving the most students of color (Morgan & Amerikaner, 2018). This lack of economic support consequently extends to an inability to properly staff schools with qualified personnel. National data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and from the Teacher Follow-up Survey indicates that high poverty school districts have large numbers of underqualified teachers and a high frequency of teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2004). According to Ingersoll (2004), the departure of teachers is due to several factors such as low teacher compensation, inadequate support from the school administration, student disciplinary problems, and limited faculty input on school decision-making. Furthermore, in a review of six studies, Simon and Johnson (2013) conclude that teacher turnover has been substantially increasing in US schools. Due to teacher turn-over frequently occurring in high-poverty schools, the high number of EBs attending these schools are likely to face academic-related stressors, in addition to entering a new country and learning a new language.

The achievement gap between ethnic minority and White students in the US has remained large for the past several decades. EBs are a minority group themselves, who perform

at lower levels than their fellow US peers and other minority groups. Specifically, McFarland et al. (2018) report that in the 2017 nationwide reading assessment, White students outperformed their fellow Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native and mixed-race peers. Furthermore, national reports on reading achievement show that EBs performed significantly lower when compared to non-EBs, and below the nationwide average reading score (McFarland et al., 2018). Adding to these achievement gaps, EBs performed the lowest relative to all other groups (McFarland et al., 2018). This discrepancy is even greater when comparing EBs' reading performance at higher levels of education; the higher their grade, the lower their reading performance (McFarland et al., 2018).

In addition to English literacy issues, the achievement gap for EBs extends to mathematics and science. The nationwide assessment of student performance in mathematics and science at 4th, 8th, and 12th grades showed that EBs are consistently outperformed by their White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian and mixed-race peers (McFarland et al., 2018). Furthermore, the discrepancy is greater at 12th grade, when compared to the discrepancies at grades 4th and 8th. Following this pattern of lower performance for EBs, in 2016, students who were born outside the US had a higher school dropout rate than students who were born in the US (McFarland et al., 2018). This pervasive academic underperformance is concerning.

While there is research on potential interventions to address the lack of achievement in schools, there remains a gap in the literature regarding interventions specific to EBs. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is one of the recent reforms that surfaced to address lack of achievement in historically ethnic marginalized groups (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). In fact, Elias and Haynes (2008) analyzed data from six elementary schools comprised of predominantly African American students in a Northeastern urban community to better understand the relationship between social-emotional competence, perceived support at school and school

outcomes for minority children. The researchers found that social-emotional competence and perceived teacher support affects the academic performance of children in at-risk, highly disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 213 school-based SEL programs, which included a total of 270,034 K-12 students, suggested that individuals involved in SEL programs show positive progress in their social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2011). Moreover, these same students had enhanced academic performance by 11 percentile points (Durlak et al., 2011). Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that a follow up study by Rowe and Trickett (2017) reported that only one of the studies in Durlak et al. (2011) meta-analysis included a Latinx population. Furthermore, even in schools that have a SEL curriculum, disparities for culturally and linguistically diverse students continue to be of concern. Specifically, the lack of interventions to address EBs' low academic performance is worrisome, especially considering that the EB population is projected to increase in the next decades and noting that the majority of EBs are enrolled in schools located in urban areas (Aud et al., 2010; The Condition of Education, 2017). Schools in urban areas are likely to encounter difficulties in meeting their students' academic needs (Aud et al., 2010). Hence, this study aims to better understand the school experience of EB students, in an attempt to identify how this population can be better supported in our educational system.

Offering a holistic approach, this study examines the school experience of EBs and considers the ecology of their experience by analyzing their social-emotional competency (SEC), self-reported mental health and school climate perceptions. Specifically, this study describes teachers' perceptions of SEC and individual social-emotional competencies of EBs, and uses EBs' self-reported negative mental health and school climate perceptions; thus, considering their performance beyond achievement gaps. Further discerning heterogeneity in this population, this correlational study examines current and exited-EBs' overall SEC, individual social-emotional

competencies, negative mental health, their perceptions of the school climate, and their academic achievement using student records, student surveys, and teacher surveys from three low income, urban schools. In addition, this study offers an analysis of qualitative data to better understand differences in the school experience of current and exited-EBs.

School Climate

School climate is a complex and multidimensional term that impacts the schooling experience of students. School climate is the quality and character of school life, reflecting norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, as well as organization structures (The National School Climate Center, 2018). In a review of school climate literature ($N = 40$ studies), Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) identified four dimensions of school climate: physical and social-emotional safety, quality of teaching and learning, relationships and collaboration, and the structural environment. The authors synthesized research and showed that school climate is predictive of academic achievement, graduation, effective violence prevention, students' healthy development and teacher retention.

The literature shows that EB students who are part of schools that have poor school climate might be at high risk for experiencing negative encounters with peers. Vera et al. (2017) conducted a mixed methods retrospective study to examine the socioemotional experiences of EBs. Based on a sample of 57 participants, findings showed that 31 participants (55%) reported negative experiences related to being an EB, such as being excluded by others, being picked on and being called names or harassed (Vera et al., 2007). Being victims of bullying or social exclusion can generate emotional distress in EBs. Vera et al. (2017) found that students tend to keep that distress to themselves and avoid seeking help from instructors due to the fear of not feeling accepted or suffering more negative consequences. The authors of this study found that EBs alumni retrospectively reported negative experiences, such as social exclusion, and did not recall mainstream education children befriending them. Another small qualitative study drawing

on interviews with refugee students ($N = 23$), teachers ($N = 3$), and guidance counselors ($N = 2$), examined the experience of refugee students who attended international schools in New York City (Bartlett, Mendenhall, & Ghaffar-Kucher, 2017). The authors found that those students who were enrolled in culturally diverse schools and demonstrated the social valuing of diversity were likely to report positive school experiences. In contrast, students reported negative experiences when enrolled in less culturally accepting schools. The authors cited verbal reports of students' negative experiences, such as the experience of a Guinean youth, (who) explained, "Yeah, middle school was like the worst experience that I've had like my entire life." They shared that another Guinean student stated, "When I went the students only speak English....those students bullying me, sometimes they eat and throw the lunch in my face, and I can't do nothing, I just cry and cry. And I didn't want to go to school anymore." This study illustrates how culturally intolerant schools make a significant difference in the academic and socioemotional experience of EB students.

As discussed above, school climate is a broader term encompassing aspects that impact the personal and academic success of students. Therefore, a more culturally accepting school climate can positively influence the experience of diverse students, perhaps accounting for differences in their social-emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Labeling of EBs

Labeling is another factor discussed in the literature of the academic experience of EBs. The existing literature explaining the relationship between labeling and its effect on academic performance present inconsistent findings. In a longitudinal study, Umansky (2016) examined the effects of the EB label (identified as "English Learner" and "initially fluent English Learner proficient," in their study) in a large urban school district in California ($N = 18,208$) that offered one traditional English immersion program and three bilingual programs. Specifically, Umansky (2016) analyzed the academic achievement of 2nd through 7th graders who had been labeled as

EBs or Initially Fluent EB Proficient at kindergarten. More specifically, his study targeted kindergarteners with relatively advanced English proficiency who were labeled as EBs through English testing by the school district. Umansky (2016) found that the EB classification can result in negative effects for their academic performance through the end of middle school in both Math and English Language Arts. However, he explained that the lack of academic performance in EBs was found in the English immersion program and not in the bilingual programs. He proposes that the negative effects of the EB classification may be impacted by the services students receive associated with the label. The author further notes that classification triggers services to meet EBs' needs, but it also changes their social status relative to their non-EB peers. He poses that while the EB labeling may be beneficial due to academic services that accompany the classification, it may also be harmful due to stigmatization that come with the label and the services themselves. Overall, Umansky (2016) calls attention to academic tracking as related to the EB label and how it may be link to the academic underperformance of EB students.

Adding to the literature about labeling of EBs, Shin (2018) conducted a longitudinal study which examined whether classifying students as EB students or as Initially Fluent EB Proficient later influenced their academic performance. Shin (2018) identified EBs' as "English Learner" and "initially fluent English Learner proficient" in their study. Shin (2018) used data from a large urban school district in California and identified a total of 10,100 EBs and 3,405 Initially Fluent EBs. Using the district's natural setting classification, Shin details that EBs were identified by using a home language survey and a test of English proficiency. He further explains that students who performed as early advanced in their English proficiency test were classified as Initially Fluent EBs and those who performed below the early advanced proficiency were classified as EBs; thus, allowing Shin (2018) to control for English performance. Students who reported only speaking English at home were excluded from the English proficiency test, which

allowed for their study to exclude English only speakers. The students were followed from kindergarten to 10th grade. The author clarifies that the use of a complex analytic model (Rubin's Causal Model and RD Designs) allowed his findings to be attributable only to the initial classification of students, rather than to any supports that the students may have received. The author explicates that Rubin's Causal Model allowed him to identify the causal effects between the two conditions and that a Regression Discontinuity (RD) design allowed him to identify students who were just above and just below the English proficiency for his analysis. Thus, he attributed his findings merely to initial labeling. Shin (2018) found that EBs academically outperformed their Initially Fluent English proficient peers in English Language Arts and Math standardized test, but this discrepancy in performance disappeared as they reached middle and high school. Shin (2018) argues that his findings suggest that Initially Fluent EBs near the cutoff for English language proficiency would have benefited from the EB label. Contrary to Umansky's (2016) findings suggesting that labeling negatively impacted English Learners academic performance, Shin (2018) concludes that labeling can be beneficial for some students. He adds that initial classification determines students' language status and states that the most fundamental issue is the initial classification as it dictates language status and beginning of education. He highlights the need to better understand how the initial classification affects academic achievement in EBs. It is important to note that Shin (2018) did not analyze reclassification of EB students; hence, the study does not explain the possible effects of exiting EBs' programs.

Academic Interventions with EB Students

Even though Congress recognized the need for bilingual education for those students with limited English proficiency in 1967, schools were not mandated to establish bilingual programs and there were no accountability measures to assess the progress of EBs (Bunch, 2011). Nonetheless, the No Child Left Behind Act brought an increased awareness of the academic

achievement of EBs, and mandated that EBs be assessed on their academic progress (Bunch, 2011). More specific to the current study, the New Jersey's Bilingual Education administrative code (N.J.A.C.6A:15) indicates that public schools are required to provide ESL programs (Hespe, Martz, & Campbell, 2016). However, the types of services vary depending on the EB population size. The N.J. Department of Education (2016) notes that schools with more than 20 identified EB students of a single language group must provide full-time bilingual programs. Schools with 10 to 20 EBs need to provide at least one period of instruction by a certified ESL instructor, and schools with less than 10 EBs must receive English Language Services to improve English reading, writing, speaking and listening for EBs. Similarly, in a research review, Garcia, Kleifgen, and Falchi (2008) listed the different programs that EBs have been provided in the past and present— submersion, pull-out, structured immersion, transitional bilingual education, developmental bilingual, and two-way bilingual education. Even though there has been progress in improving the education that EBs receive, there is still much more progress that needs to take place.

Supports for EBs has continuously changed in an effort to help these students meet their academic needs. In a review of 17 studies, Slavin and Cheung (2005) found that English immersion programs were less favorable for EBs than bilingual instruction in meeting the academic needs of EBs. In addition, Gandara and Aldana (2014) suggest that dual immersion schools would provide EBs with the opportunity to attend integrated schools. The authors further argued that attending integrated schools would not only be beneficial to EBs, but also to non-EBs, as it would offer them the opportunity to learn another language and to become more culturally competent in an increasingly diverse country (Gandara & Aldana, 2014).

A more comprehensive review of the varying approaches to teaching EBs is beyond the scope of the current literature review. That said, it is important to note that the current study

draws on data from a school using a common approach to EB education (Garcia et al., 2008).

The participating schools in this study cluster EB students in English as a Second Language (ESL) programming within a diverse school and upon satisfactory testing on proficiency exams, they exit individual students into the mainstream course sequences.

Acculturation and Difficulties EBs Encounter Upon Entering Schools

In addition to facing the challenges of high poverty schools, negative school climate, and varied academic instruction, EBs also encounter other hardships when entering the mainstream western European cultural norms. As initially defined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), acculturation is the continuous interaction between two cultures, which ultimately results in changes in the original behavioral patterns of the individual. Following this definition, Berry's (1980) model of acculturation helps explain the process through which immigrants relate and adapt to the mainstream culture. Berry's model suggests that in the process of acculturation, individuals internally negotiate their own cultural maintenance and contact participation with the new culture, resulting in variations of acculturation known as integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization (Berry, 1980; Sam & Berry, 2010). The complexity of acculturation can further impact EBs. While the variations of acculturation may not be static, Sam and Berry (2010) explained that individuals balance the issues of culture maintenance and contact during their process of acculturation. While individuals negotiate their acculturation into the mainstream, those who acculturate by assimilation, separation, or marginalization may have worse psychological wellbeing and sociocultural competence (Sam & Berry, 2010). Those individuals who perhaps chose one culture over the other or neither culture appear to be at higher risk for added difficulties. In contrast, integration, engaging in one's native culture and in the new larger society, is the healthiest way to acculturate. This suggests that the process of acculturation can add to the difficulty that EBs experience in schools, perhaps making it harder for them to succeed academically.

Haynes (2007) more specifically discusses the academic experience of EBs. She elaborates on the process that EBs experience when adapting to the new culture, starting with a *honeymoon stage* in which the newcomers feel enthusiastic about their new lives and perceive everything as wonderful; followed by a *rejection stage*, in which they become overwhelmed by the differences in the new culture, appearing irritable, uninterested, or depressed; walking into a *regression stage* in which EBs are frustrated due to their inability to communicate, the experience of unfamiliar surroundings, and unreadable social signals; followed by an *integration stage* coping with the differences in the new culture, learning to integrate their own beliefs and finding a way to exist with both cultures; to entering an *acceptance stage*, in which they are ready to thrive in the mainstream culture. Although going through these stages may lead to success for EBs, it is likely that not all EBs successfully get to the acceptance stage. In addition, the emotional and social difficulties that EBs encounter while navigating acculturation may negatively impact their ability to successfully acculturate, and to perform well academically.

Economic limitations are also a barrier for academic achievement among EBs. Hernandez et al. (2008) indicated in a Social Policy Report that children in immigrant families are more likely to live in poverty than children in native-born families. Similarly, Tienda and Haskins (2011) discussed several socioeconomic disadvantages that EBs face in society, which have a relatively negative impact on their academic performance when compared to native English-speaking students. The authors explain that households of EBs have a higher probability of encountering conditions such as low family income, limited parental education, behavioral problems in children, and language barriers. Interestingly, Rawlings, Capps, Gentsch and Fortuny (2007) examined data from ten low-income urban neighborhoods from 2002-2004 and reported that the economic gap between native-born Whites and immigrant individuals is nonsignificant when controlling for English language acquisition, education, access to

transportation, and citizenship status. Therefore, addressing the educational achievement concerns for EBs might be especially important in order to help close income gaps. In a review of literature, Cook, Perusse, and Rojas (2015) reported that the underwhelming academic experience of immigrant families is further compounded by a lack of assistance in preparing for college. Obtaining college admittance for EBs is difficult due to their lack of knowledge of financial aid opportunities and poor performance on standardized tests. Receiving a college education is important because it can increase EBs earning potential and help them meet societal expectations of academic success; perhaps, achieving greater acceptance by the dominant culture.

Exited-EBs and Academic Performance

Despite the negative factors that affect EBs' emotional health and academic performance, some research has shown that once they exit their EB status, their academic performance improves. Specifically, for the first time in 2008, the National Center for Education Statistics measured the academic performance in math and reading of former EBs (Wilde, 2010). In this report, Wilde (2010) found that former EBs outperformed their EB peers, and that former EBs performed equal to their non-EB peers. Similarly, based on national data, Murphy (2014) reports that former EBs have increased academic performance in reading, leveling off the discrepancy gap with their native English speakers. In contrast to these two study findings, other research has not corroborated this leveling off. For example, a longitudinal study based on a nationally representative sample showed that English proficient minorities were still less likely to attain higher education than their fellow English monolingual peers, despite their increased academic proficiency (Kanno & Gromley, 2013). In fact, other studies show that the increased improvement in academic performance might not be across all subject areas. Whereas EB performance improved in math after exiting their EB status, the improvement did not put them on par with non-EBs (Ardasheva, Tretter, & Kinny, 2011; Murphy, 2014). De Jong (2004)

further examined the academic achievement of former EBs in a medium sized school district within the Northeastern US and reported an association between the grade level in which EBs exited their status and academic performance. Specifically, De Jong (2004) showed that EBs who exited in 4th grade performed better academically when compared to students who exited at later grades. This study raises concern for EBs who exit at higher grades than their younger peers. De Jong (2004) found that those who exit in higher grades experience a greater gap in academic achievement that does not seem to level off after achieving proficiency in the English language.

Another important aspect to consider regarding EBs is how their exiting status relates to their emotional well-being. Previous studies have reported negative associations with having EB status, such as social exclusion (Vera et al., 2017). In an aforementioned mixed-methods study, Vera et al. (2017) sought to understand the socioemotional well-being of *former* EBs and found that those students reported negative experiences associated with their EB status, such as being called names or harassed. To our knowledge, however, no studies have reported on the mental health of exited relative to current-EBs.

Negative Mental Health

Although EBs have protective factors such as strong kinship networks and family support, acculturative stress negatively impacts their mental health (Albeg & Castro-Olivo, 2014; Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). In a synthesis of research, Perreira and Ornelas (2011) examined the physical and psychological well-being of immigrant children. The authors report that immigrant children experience poverty and stresses related to migration, which can substantially increase their risk for mental health illnesses and in turn affect their academic performance. Furthermore, their review of literature suggests that exposure to culture-related stressors and acculturation to the US mainstream culture increases the risk of anxiety and depression among children of immigrants and stated that immigrant children struggle with behavioral problems leading to

dropping out of school or failing to pursue a college career (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). In addition, Albeg and Castro-Olivo (2014) found in their study of 94 Latino middle school students that acculturative stress predicts internalizing disorders (i.e., anxiety and depression) and academic performance.

The hardship that non-English speakers encounter when acculturating to the US seem to result in a decline in their mental health. Based on the Hispanic Stress Inventory-Adolescent Version data, Cervantes, Padilla, Napper, and Goldbach (2013) reported on the stress associated with acculturation and minority status from a sample of 1,263 Hispanic adolescents. Results from this study revealed that first generation Hispanic immigrants experience a greater number of stressors in their daily life than those of the third generation, including discrimination stress. In addition, the study by Potochnick and Perreira (2011) surveyed 281 first-generation Latino immigrant youth to evaluate how migration stressors and supports were associated with anxiety and depression. This study found that migration stressors increased the risk of depressive symptoms and anxiety, while support from family and teachers reduced their risk for these mental health disorders. Therefore, it is likely that early integration into the US may be the most taxing phase. Despite the protective factors, this population of students continues to be at higher risk for mental health disorders relative to peers.

Negative Mental Health: Strengths and Needs

In a review of literature, Adams and Richei (2017) concur there is limited research devoted to SEL and EBs. However, they discuss three studies that more broadly measure mental health challenges and self-concept with elementary aged EBs (Niehaus & Adelson, 2013; Niehaus, Adelson, Sejuitt, & Zheng, 2017; Whiteside, Gooch, & Norbury, 2007). The studies are discussed below.

Niehaus and Adelson (2013) examined longitudinal data that measured self-concept using the Self-Description Questionnaire-I (SDQ-I) in 11,020 native English-speaking, 1,277 Spanish-

speaking and 546 EBs from Asian language backgrounds, elementary aged children. Based on their literature review, Niehaus and Adelson (2013) described self-concept as a multifaced and multidimensional construct that encompasses self-perceptions in academic performance and student's perception of internalizing (i.e., anxiety), externalizing (i.e., trouble paying attention) problems and peer-relationships. Niehaus and Adelson (2013) found that Spanish-speaking EBs' reported more negative mental health (i.e., externalizing problems), such as having trouble following directions, whereas Asian language EBs reported fewer externalizing problems, as compared to native English speakers. In addition, this study reported that Spanish-speaking EBs had higher academic self-concept than their English-speaking peers and higher number of peer relationships than their Asian language-speaking peers. Although this study adds to the literature of EBs and their strengths and needs, it only reports on elementary-aged children and is limited to self-concept and not the range of social emotional competencies. The authors explain that based on their literature search, there is no peer-reviewed research that assesses EBs self-report of social skills or behavioral competencies.

Further adding to the literature, Niehaus, Adelson, Sejuitt, and Zheng (2017) reported on EBs, social-emotional challenges and achievement. The authors examined data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, reporting on self and teacher perceptions of Spanish and Asian language EBs' negative mental health (i.e., social-emotional problems) and its association with academic achievement. Similarly, to the study by Niehaus and Adelson (2013), the authors of this study conceptualized their negative mental health construct as poor peer relations, externalizing problems and internalizing problems. The authors found that 3rd grade Spanish-speaking EBs, who reported more mental health problems relative to their Asian and English language speaking peers and displayed lower achievement levels by 5th grade. Of note, in this

study, EBs also self-reported more negative mental health as compared to teacher-reported negative mental health.

Furthermore, some studies suggest inconsistent findings about EB's academic performance and its relation to their mental health. Whiteside, Gooch, and Norbury (2007) examined teachers' reports of EBs' mental health in relation to academic attainment. Whiteside, Gooch, and Norbury (2007) measure emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, and prosocial behavior, using the self-reported Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Bringing attention to the academic difficulties that EBs encounter due to their limited English proficiency, the authors compared the EB population to a monolingual population with an equivalent English proficiency. Controlling for English proficiency, the authors found no difference in academic attainment between EBs and monolingual students. Further, confirming their hypothesis, the authors found that low language proficiency was associated with worse negative mental health and behavioral difficulties. Thus, they demonstrated that English proficiency is a risk factor for low academic attainment and negative mental health. The authors clarified that before considering English proficiency, EBs showed worse negative mental health (i.e., greater social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties) and were less likely to meet adequate academic performance than monolingual children. However, a more recent study did not corroborate their findings (Winsler, Kim, & Richard, 2014).

Winsler, Kim, and Richard (2014) suggested that there is a bidirectional relationship between bilingualism and social and cognitive development. Their study used the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) to measure strengths and needs. The DECA measures initiative, self-control, attachment/closeness with adults, and behavioral challenges. Aligning with the DECA, the authors defined strengths as having higher initiative, self-control and attachment. In addition, they used DECA's Behavior Concerns scale to describe problematic

behaviors (e.g., tantrums) in children. Using the DECA, the authors examined how children's strengths and needs were related to English acquisition in EB preschoolers. This study found that higher strengths (e.g., higher initiative, self-control and attachment) and fewer behavioral problems, as reported by parents and teachers, were positively associated with English acquisition. The mixed findings across the aforementioned studies suggest a need for further research.

Although the above mentioned studies aimed to examine EBs and socioemotional health, their definition does not closely align with the SEL definitions from CASEL, and it better describes EB's mental health. In addition, these studies have focused on very specific groups of EBs. Niehaus and Adelson (2013) and the study by Niehaus, Adelson, Sejuit, and Zheng (2017) studied Latinx and Asian elementary aged children. Winsler, Kim, and Richard (2014) studied predominantly Spanish-speaking students at age four. Similarly, Whiteside, Gooch, and Norbury (2007) studied elementary aged children between the ages of four to seven. The scarcity of research regarding SEL/C and EBs underscores the need to further advance knowledge about this population.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Addressing concerns about ineffective school programming and lack of coordination among programs at the school level, the term SEL emerged in 1994, with the goal of promoting positive child development (CASEL, 2018). Specifically, SEL centers on the socioemotional intrapersonal and interpersonal strengths of the individual (LeBuffe & Likins, nd). Elias, Parker, and Dunkeblau (2007) explained that students are more open to learning in safe, caring, orderly, and academically challenging environments. Elias et al. (2007) present a detailed background of the evolution of SEL, elaborating on the importance of SEL initiatives which, broadly speaking, focus on problem-solving. Accordingly, Zins and Elias (2006) defined SEL as the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively and establish positive relationships

with others—competencies considered essential in helping students succeed academically and emotionally. In 1997, Elias et al. highlighted the importance of the school-based implementation of SEL, for students to engage, learn, and maintain healthy relationships. Goleman (1995) initially identified SEL, or “emotional intelligence,” as a way to help students perform better academically by recognizing intelligence in a more holistic manner. Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as having self-awareness and impulse control, persistence, passion and self-motivation, empathy and social deftness. Goleman (1995) recognized emotional intelligence as necessary to function effectively in our society.

Further, Cohen (2006) links SEL and school climate. He argues that education should prioritize social, emotional, and ethical competencies. Cohen (2006) states that social-emotional competencies, knowledge, and dispositions provide the foundations for an improved quality of life and education. More specifically, he calls attention to the importance of teaching students how to achieve social-emotional competence. He suggests that teachers can foster social-emotional skills in students by aiming to improve peer relations. Lastly, Cohen (2006) illustrates the necessity of cultural awareness especially in service of creating effective home and school partnerships. He explains that when working in a middle school district that had historically been upper-middle class, he witnessed how the school generally excluded recent immigrant children and families, making them feel unwelcomed. The unwelcoming sentiment in this school, he argued, then resulted in increased bullying and harassment around cultural differences (Cohen, 2006).

SEL emphasizes the need for teaching social-emotional skills to help students succeed in schools (Cohen, 2006). Over time, SEL has gained recognition as effectively addressing students’ social and emotional needs. As mentioned earlier, the meta-analysis by Durlak et al. (2011), suggested that individuals involved in SEL programs show positive progress in their

social and emotional skills and had enhanced academic performance by 11 percentile points. Providing social-emotional skills to students might help them manage their stress and increase responsible academic decisions, making it more attainable to perform well academically (Zins & Elias, 2006). Although Durlak et al. (2011) concluded that SEL programs had a positive effect in urban, suburban, and rural schools at all educational levels, it is important to note that the impact of SEL programs on certain diverse subgroups was uncertain because almost one third of the analyzed studies did not contain any information about student ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Nevertheless, a more recent meta-analysis study by Taylor et al. (2017) reviewed 82 school-based SEL interventions involving 97,406 students, and found that, on average, post-intervention outcomes were positive, including positive social behavior, improved academic performance, lowered conduct problems and less emotional distress. These results were similar regardless of race, socioeconomic background, or school location; however, it is important to note that EB status of the participants was not reported.

Social-emotional Competencies (SEC)

SEL programs in schools tend to focus on teaching five SEL's competencies (CASEL, 2018). Stated on the CASEL (2018) website are the following verbatim definitions (p. 2-6):

- Self-Awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."
- Self-management: The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- Social awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
- Relationship skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.
- Responsible decision-making: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and other.

Zins and Elias (2006) elaborated on the implementation of SEL in schools and explain that most SEL programs focus on universal prevention by promoting social and emotional competence, which is key to success in school and life. Payton et al. (2008) summarized the results from three reviews of research on the impact of SEL. The report collectively includes 317 studies and involved 324,303 children. The results substantiate previous findings reporting that SEL universal program significantly enhances social-emotional skills and positive social behavior, reduces conduct problems and emotional distress, and improves academic performance. This investigation will address the dearth of research examining social-emotional skills and emotional wellbeing in EBs.

Social-Emotional Learning/Competency (SEL/C) and EBs

Based on the current review of the literature, Castro-Olivo (2014) conducted the only study on SEL/C specifically among EBs. Castro-Olivo used the adapted Strong Teens (translated as

‘Jovenes Fuertes’ in Spanish) SEL Program. Jovenes Fuertes was adapted in 2012 by Castro-Olivo and Merrell to be a culturally sensitive intervention for Latino EBs. The intervention was adapted by translating it to Spanish, adding usage of common Latino metaphors and folktales, and altering the content to reflect cultural values, costumes, and traditions. In addition, new concepts were added to link the skills to the daily lives of EBs (Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012). Specifically, the cultural adaptation included discussions about ethnic pride, increasing awareness of acculturation and acculturative stress, and learning how to deal with discrimination and other anger triggering situations related to culture, amongst other cultural related topics (Castro-Olivo, 2014; Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012). Using a quasi-experimental design with random assignment by classrooms, Castro-Olivo (2014) implemented the Jovenes Fuertes SEL program with 102 Latino EBs to evaluate if the participants had an increased SEL knowledge and resiliency. Five middle schools and two high schools from three school districts in Southern California participated in the study, resulting in a total of eight classrooms. Four of the classrooms were waitlisted and served as a control group. Social-emotional resiliency was measured using a translated version of the Behavior Emotional Rating Scale-2 scale to analyze the participants’ self-report behaviors and feelings regarding interpersonal, intrapersonal, and affective strengths. In this intervention, the participants were taught SEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, empathy, problem solving, anger management, responsible decision making, goal setting, and reframing of destructive thoughts. Using pre and post assessments, the authors found a significant increased knowledge of SEL/C and resiliency (Castro-Olivo, 2014). In addition, the students who participated in the intervention reportedly perceived the intervention as culturally responsive. These are important initial steps towards acknowledging the need for a better understanding of SEL/C with EBs and more culturally competent SEL

interventions. However, the study did not report on possible impacts of the intervention on academic achievement and on an increase or decrease of internalizing or externalizing behaviors.

Current Research

This dissertation is comprised of two studies aiming to offer a comprehensive understanding of EBs. Study 1 is a quantitative analysis of student surveys, teacher surveys, and student records. Study 2 is a qualitative analysis of student focus group data. There is a substantial body of literature reporting on the positive effects of SEL, which includes helping students increase their academic engagement and performance and reducing their risks of maladjustment (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017; Zins & Elias, 2006). Nonetheless, the literature about SEL/C among EBs is limited with only two studies squarely focused on this group (i.e., Castro-Olivo, 2014; Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012). The few studies examining the mental health of EBs have not examined SEL/C as defined by CASEL and showed mixed findings (Niehaus & Adelson, 2013; Niehaus, Adelson, Sejuit, & Zheng, 2017; Whiteside, Gooch, & Norbury, 2007; Winsler, Kim & Richard, 2014). Some studies indicate that English acquisition is associated with EBs' emotional and behavioral problems (Winsler, Kim, Richard, 2014). However, other findings indicate that poor self-concept relates to lower academic achievement in EBs and that EBs experience more negative mental health, which may be related to lower academic achievement (Niehaus & Adelson, 2013; Niehaus, Adelson, Sejuit, & Zheng, 2017). Studies have examined the mental health of EBs and report that EBs are more likely to experience emotional distress, such as symptoms of anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). In addition, school climate further impacts the academic experience of EBs. Previous studies have noted that EBs can encounter unwelcoming climates that affect their socioemotional wellbeing (Cohen, 2006; Vera et al., 2017).

The literature has increasingly noted that EBs face emotional, economical, and health difficulties when entering the US, which affects their likelihood in succeeding academically and developing to the best of their potential (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). In fact, EBs are academically outperformed by their fellow non-EB peers, are more likely to drop out of school, and less likely to pursue higher education (Murphy, 2014; Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). Therefore, this research seeks to offer a comprehensive analysis of the school experience of EBs by examining their SEC, mental health, perceived school climate, and achievement.

Study 1

Study 1 is a quantitative analysis of EB students, including current and exited-EBs. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature with its focus on the relationship between EB status and SEC. The current study is amongst the first to directly measure SEC in EB students (Castro-Olivo, 2014; Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012). Specifically, this is the first study to measure SEC using the *Devereux Student Strengths Assessment* (DESSA)-Mini and with a diverse group of EB students. Study 1 further aimed to bring a comprehensive understanding of the teacher-reported social-emotional competencies of EBs. This was accomplished by individually analyzing each DESSA-Mini scale-question and the global DESSA-Mini scale score, as well as how these scores might relate to their academic performance. Further, this study examined self-reported mental health of EBs and their perceptions of school climate. Study 1 also accounted for sociodemographic factors such as race, gender and free/reduced lunch status because these can be confounds with achievement (Aud et al., 2010; McFarland et al., 2018).

In addition, in an exploratory manner, Study 1 aimed to gain an understanding about the social-emotional skills, academic performance, and perceived school climate of exited-EBs relative to their peers who are considered current-EBs. Prior research has shown that exited-EBs perform higher on standardized tests (Ardasheva, Tretter, & Kinny, 2011; Murphy, 2014; Wilde,

2010); this may be due to the tests being administered in English. Yet, because EBs can be stigmatized and marginalized, exited-EB may have better SEC and mental health than current-EBs. Few studies have compared current-EBs with their exited-EB peers. In addition, given the stigma and marginalization associated with being segregated in ESL classes (Vera et al., 2017), exited-EBs may experience a more positive school climate given their greater integration into regular education. To our knowledge, there are no studies that have examined exited-EBs relative to current-EBs in their SEC or their perceived school climate.

Research aims, questions, and hypotheses for Study 1, *Quantitative Analysis of SEC, Negative Mental Health and School Climate*, are as follows:

Aim 1: A comparison of EB and non-EB students

- 1a.** Compared to non-EB students, do teachers report poorer individual social-emotional competencies among EB students?
- 1b.** Accounting for achievement and sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and free/reduced lunch) are EB students rated by their teachers as having poorer social-emotional competency relative to their non-EB peers?
- 1c.** Do EB students self-report more negative mental health than non-EB peers, when accounting for academic achievement and their sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and free/reduced lunch)?
- 1d.** Do EB students perceive worse school climate than non-EB peers, when accounting for academic achievement and their sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and free/reduced lunch) relative to their non-EB peers?
- 1e.** If EB students do perceive worse school climate than non-EB peers, then does this mediate the relationship between EB status and teacher-reported social-emotional competence and self-reported negative mental health? In other words, does perceived

school climate explain the link between EB status and social emotional competency and self-reported negative mental health?

Hypotheses

It was anticipated that EB students would have lower academic achievement than non-EB peers, as measured by state standardized achievement testing. We hypothesized that teachers would perceive EB students as having poorer social-emotional competency, and EB students would self-report more negative mental health relative to non-EBs. Lastly, it was anticipated that the relationship between EB status and teacher-reported social-emotional competency, and self-reported negative mental health would be mediated by student self-reported negative school climate.

Aim 2: An exploratory comparison of current-EBs and exited-EBs

2a. Compared to exited-EB students, do teachers report poorer individual social-emotional competencies among current-EB students?

2b. Accounting for achievement and sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and free/reduced lunch) do exited-EB students have better teacher-reported social-emotional competency, and self-report less negative mental health and more positive perceptions of school climate than current-EB students?

2c. If current-EB students do perceive worse school climate than exited-EB students, then does this mediate the relationship between EB status and teacher-reported social-emotional competence and self-reported negative mental health? In other words, does perceived school climate explain the link between EB status and social emotional competence and self-reported negative mental health?

Hypotheses

It was anticipated that exited-EB students would have higher academic achievement than current-EB students, as measured by state testing. Although exploratory, it was anticipated that

exited-EB students would have higher teacher-reported social-emotional competency and lower self-reported negative mental health relative to their current-EB peers. It was also expected that exited-EB students would have more positive perceptions of school climate than current-EBs, as measured by self-report. Finally, it was anticipated that the relationship between EB status (current vs. exited) and teacher-reported social-emotional competency, and self-reported negative mental health would be mediated by student self-reported negative school climate.

Study 1 Methods

Data used for Study 1 and 2 were obtained from the *Mastering Our Skills and Inspiring Character* (MOSAIC) project with middle school students. Funded by the Templeton Foundation, The MOSAIC project is a collaboration between Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab and a medium-sized northeastern urban school district. Dr. Maurice Elias and his research team led a three-year intervention project to build students' social-emotional skills and virtues, create opportunities for youth's voices to be heard in schools, and to promote a respectful and caring school climate. The data for Study 1 were collected at baseline and the data for Study 2 focused on students' discussion of their EB status; therefore the findings for these studies were not affected by the intervention.

School District Characteristics

The SEL project took place in a medium sized Urban school district. Data was collected from six middle schools. However, the current study focuses on three of these six schools due to the substantive number of EBs enrolled in these schools as compared to the other three schools.

English as a second language program. The school district in the current study offers a well-structured ESL program for EBs. This program identifies EB students by having all new students fill out a "Home Language Survey," reporting if the student's first language is not English, and/or if the student's parents speak a language other than English. In addition, the

school's website encourages all parents of non-English speaking students to reach out to the Multilingual Intake Center (MIC), for the students to have an initial assessment and to evaluate their school's transcripts. This information is offered in several languages (e.g., English, Spanish, Arabic, Creole). Teachers who speak different languages are also part of the MIC program, to facilitate communication with non-English speaking parents. Students referred to the MIC program are assessed with the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) model, a measure of developing English Language. If the results of the WIDA reflect that the student is not proficient in English, he/she is identified as an EB and receives an EB label at the receiving school. The EB label indicates that the student is assigned to pull-out ESL instruction. ESL classes are provided by master's level teachers who have specialized as ESL teachers.

In this same structured way, at the end of the academic year, students are recommended to exit through the Exiting Profile Form (EPF). Teachers complete the EPF to recommend students to "exit" the program based on the following criteria: (1) number of years in the program, (2) Lexile Level (reading level), (3) final grades in English Language Arts and Math, (4) ACCESS Score (paper-based speaking test that measures four language domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing), (5) EP/504 status, (6) reading level, and (7) promotion to the next grade. Once teachers complete the Exiting Profile Form, the MIC program supervisor reviews each form and approves or denies the request. If approved, the students are tagged as "exited-EB" students.

Sample Characteristics

The three schools selected for this study (School A, School B, and School C) had the largest number of EBs. Data collected included grades 6th – 8th in each school. School A had 325 students including 100 students identified as EBs (30.8%). School B had 396 students including 77 EBs (19.5%), and School C had 865 students with 44 EBs (5%). The total sample ($N = 1586$) was predominantly comprised of Latinx (34.6%) and Black students (33.7%) with fewer Asian

(15.6%), White (15.3%) and Other race—comprised of Multiracial, Pacific Islander and American Indian students (9%). From the original sample, 406 students were excluded from analyses resulting in a total of 1180 students, including 168 EBs (See Missing Data section below).

School Characteristics

School A. Data for Study 1 and Study 2 were collected from School A. I conducted five focus groups with EB's in this school. According to the 2016-2017 NJ School Performance Report, this school had a total student body of 1300 students and the percentage of students by gender was 50% female and 50% male. The percentages of students by racial and ethnic group were 35.6% Hispanic, 32.5% White, 19.5% Black or African American, 10.3% Asian and 2% Two or More Races. About 83% of students are classified as "Economically Disadvantaged," and 8% of students had some type of disability. The 2016 – 2017 NJ School Performance Report also discussed a Primary Home Language survey indicating that 37.3% of students spoke English, 29.8% Arabic, 18.3% Spanish, and 15% "Other" language. This report further presented the enrollment percentages for EB's as 27% in 2014-2015, 16% in 2015-2016 and 15% in 2016-2017. In addition, the 2016-2017 NJ School Performance Report also showed that the percentage of EB students by racial and ethnic group was 72.6% White, 10.6% Hispanic, 9.1% Asian, 4.8% Black or African American and 3% Other. Although it may be surprising to have a 72% of EBs considered as White, this may be due to the large population of Middle Eastern students. As stated above, Arabic is the second most spoken primary home language for students in this school. Therefore, as defined by the US Census website, individuals from the Middle East tend to identify as White.

School B. Data for Study 1 were collected from this school. According to the 2016 - 2017 NJ School Performance Report, this school had a student body of 808 and the percentage of students by gender was 52% female and 48% male. The percentages of students by racial and

ethnic group were 38.2% Hispanic, 30.6% Black or African American, 19.7% Asian and 10.2% White. About 68% of students were classified as “Economically Disadvantaged,” and 12% of students were classified with a disability. In addition, the 2014-2015 NJ school performance report indicated that about 37% of the students spoke a foreign language at home. More specifically, the percentage of students speaking different primary home languages was as follows 63.7% English, 23.5% Spanish, 2.8% Valencian, 2.1% Urdu, 1.5% spoke Arabic and 3.8% spoke “Other” language.

School C. Data for Study 1 was collected from School C. According to the 2018 – 2019 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in the 2016 – 2017 school year there were 831 students, with the majority of students identified as Black (39.23%), followed by Hispanic (28.40%), White (11.19%), Asian (10.95%), and Other (2.77%). NCES further reported that 54% of the students were male and 46% were female. In addition, the 2016-2017 NJ School Performance report indicated that students’ home language were as following: English was the most common language (72.7%), followed by Spanish (9.4%), Tagalog (5.9%), Arabic (3.9%), Creoles and Pidgins, French-based (1.3%), and “other” (6.5%). This report also stated that in 2014 to 2015, 11% of students were identified as EBs. Lastly, the school website reported that in 2015, 91.2% of students qualified for free/reduced lunch and that this lowered to 79.1% in 2018.

Study 1 Procedures

Data for Study 1 are from the baseline year of the MOSAIC project, assessing social-emotional competencies, negative mental health, and school climate perceptions of middle school students based on teacher and self-report surveys. Student performance on state achievement exams were also obtained. Students consented to participate in the study through an opt out process approved by the school board and research institution’s IRB.

Measures

Demographics. Student demographics, including gender, race, and free/reduced lunch status, were collected from the district's student database.

Teacher-reported SEC. *Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)* is a standardized norm-referenced behavior rating scale that assesses social-emotional competencies for children in K-8th grade (LeBuffe, Shapiro, & Naglieri, 2009). This measure was standardized and validated using a sample representative of the US population with respect to gender and race (LeBuffe et al., 2009). The authors further explained that this measure was created to align with the CASEL standards (CASEL, 2018). The DESSA expanded CASEL's definition of social-emotional competencies to eight competencies (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, goal-directed behavior, relationship skills, personal responsibility, decision-making and optimistic thinking) that still fall within CASEL's original five competencies (See table 1; LeBuffe et al., 2009; LeBuffe, Shapiro & Robitaille, 2016; Naglieri, LeBuffe & Shapiro, 2011). The DESSA-Mini was used for the current study. The DESSA-Mini is an 8-item measure, derived from the 72-item DESSA (LeBuffe, Shapiro & Robitaille, 2018). In this study, the DESSA-Mini scale will be called teacher-reported SEC (TR SEC). Similar to the 72-item DESSA, this survey asks the raters to report frequency (e.g., Never, Rarely, Occasionally, Frequently, Very Frequently) of behavior based on the past four weeks, ("During the past 4 weeks, how often did the child..."). In this study, teachers rated how often students demonstrated a range of behaviors (e.g., "Show care when doing a project or school work?" and "Accept responsibility for what she/he did?"), thus producing a Social-Emotional Total score to indicate social-emotional competency (LeBuffe et al., 2018). See Appendix A for the measure. The DESSA-mini has shown good reliability in past research and takes approximately one minute to complete per student (LeBuffe et al., 2018). There was good internal consistency in the current research (i.e., Cronbach's alpha = .98). Furthermore, LeBuffe et al. (2016) reported that

because the DESSA is a behavior rating scale with more specific and concrete items, biased questions were less than expected; thus, minimizing culturally biased reports from raters. In addition, LeBuffe et al. (2018) report that no interpretable differences for racial and ethnic differences have been found for the DESSA. This is important to note, as the current study uses the scale with a culturally diverse population, EBs.

Table 1

Relationship between DESSA's and CASEL's SECs

CASEL's SEC	DESSA's SECs
Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Awareness • Optimistic Thinking
Self-Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Management • Goal-Directed Behavior
Social-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social-Awareness
Relationship-Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship Skills
Responsible Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Responsibility • Decision Making

Note: Illustration of the relationship between each CASEL's SECs to DESSA's SECs.

Self-reported negative mental health. The *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ) is a short behavioral screening questionnaire used for ages 3 to 16 (see Appendix A). Students were asked to use a Likert Scale ("Not True," "Somewhat True," or "Certainly True") to rate statements "*Based on how things have been for you over the last six months.*" Statements included, "I get very angry and often lose my temper" and, "I have one good friend." Goodman (2001) reports on the psychometric properties of the SDQ using a nationwide epidemiological sample ($N = 10,438$). He describes satisfactory reliability for the total difficulties score (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$), and retest stability (0.62). Other studies have shown that the SDQ

predicts adjustment of children, specifically showing ability to discriminate indicators of negative mental health (Goodman, Meltzer, & Bailey, 1998; Goodman, Renfrew, & Mullick, 2000). Specifically, Goodman (2001) reported the SDQ, total difficulties score predicts various psychiatric disorders. Consistently, the current study used the total difficulties score to report negative mental health. In the current research, the students were asked a 13-item modified version of the SDQ, which showed good reliability (Cronbach's alpha at baseline: total: $\alpha = .79$). For consistency, three items were reversed scored (e.g., a higher score denoting greater difficulty). This adapted scale focuses on SDQ's subscale items that indicate emotional problems, conduct problems and peer problems. The MOSAIC lab adapted this scale in order to decrease assessment length, create a more parsimonious assessment based on factor analysis, and to address the school's concerns about certain items (e.g., I take things that are not mine). In this study the SDQ scaled will be called self-reported (SR) negative mental health.

Self-reported school climate. The *School as a Caring Community Profile—II* (SCCP – II) is a 42-item measure that assesses students' perceptions of school climate, by using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Disagree A LOT! to 5 = Agree A LOT!). Lickona and Davidson (2004) report that across several studies, the total score alphas for the SCCP – II range from .73-.86, depending on the sample. The current study used an adapted 20-item version of this scale being mindful of time constraints. Items included were such as “Students work well together” and “students like being in this school.” Twenty-two items with an original factor loading below .40 or cross factor loadings over .40 were deleted. Reyes et al. (2009) used this adapted version of the SCPP-II and found an alpha of $\alpha = .83$ for the total score and had strong expected correlations with perceptions of bullying. No additional studies were found using this adapted scale. In the current study, this scale will be called self-reported (SR) school climate. The Cronbach's alpha for the current study was $\alpha = .90$, showing good reliability. See Appendix A for measure.

Achievement testing. Student's academic performance was reported based on state-wide testing scores, *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)*. The PARCC is a state-led assessment that measures student progress toward college and career readiness and provides data to inform classroom instruction, student intervention and professional development (Person, 2018). The PARCC includes assessment of English language arts/literacy (ELA/L) and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and high school (Person, 2018). In this study, PARCC ELA/L will be called academic achievement ELA/L and PARCC math will be called academic achievement Math.

The current study used the overall ELA/L and Math scores. The PARCC 2017 manual states that the students' total score is an inference drawn about how much knowledge and skill the student has acquired in the specific content area. Further, it classifies students in terms of level of knowledge as they progress through their education. Scores range from 650 to 850, with higher scores indicating higher academic proficiency. The PARCC manual reports that the average reliability estimates for computer based tests for grades 3 through 11 ELA/L range from low of .91 to a high of .94. and for paper based tests as .86 to .94. For mathematics, the PARCC manual reports an average reliability range of .90 to .94 for grades 3 through 8 on computer based tests and .86 to .93 for paper based tests. The PARCC manual also reports reliability based on racial/ethnic groups for the academic achievement ELA/L and indicates that the reliabilities for the racial/ethnic groups are .01 to .02 lower than for the total group. For academic achievement Math, the manual reports that "the reliabilities for ethnicity groups are marginally lower than for the total group of students" (Person, 2018, p. 101). In terms of validity, the PARCC manual explicates that construct validity evidence was gathered and embedded in the process by which the assessment was developed, further stating that at each step in the assessment consultation with hundreds of educators and experts took place to review text, items,

and tasks to increase accuracy and prevent bias. In addition, predictive validity was also reported, indicating that a longitudinal study examined the associations between PARCC performance levels and college-readiness benchmarks and found that meeting the PARCC benchmark was an indicator of academic readiness for college (Person, 2018).

Data Analytic Plan

Study 1 using Quantitative Data

Several variables were recoded in order to analyze the research questions. The student race variable was dummy coded into four variables. Latinx was the largest group in the sample, therefore, Latinx was identified as the reference group. In addition, two variables were created related to EB status: EB status was coded as 0 for non-EBs, 1 for current-EBs and 2 for exited-EBs. The first dichotomous variable combined EB students (0 for non-EB and 1 for EBs—including *current* and *exited*-EBs). The second dichotomous variable differentiated between current and exited-EB students (0 for *current* and 1 for *exited*). Descriptive statistics were used to examine general patterns in the data, and correlations among the variables were conducted to identify interrelationships among constructs of interest (See Table 2).

In order to analyze the relationships between the dependent variables and independent variable (current and exited-EBs (1)/non-EB (0); current (0)/exited-EBs (1)), three multiple regression analysis were conducted for RQ1 and RQ2 using the following three dependent variables: (1) negative mental health, (2) social-emotional competency, and (3) perceptions of school climate. Covariates, (1) race, (2) gender, (3) free/reduced lunch status, and (4) academic achievement were also included to help account for the effects of these possible confounds on the three dependent variables. The sociodemographic covariates were entered in block 1, achievement test scores were entered in block 2, and EB status was entered in block 3. This enabled me to examine whether the EB status explained a significant amount of unique variance

(R^2) in each dependent variable. Furthermore, we planned to examine if school climate mediated the relationship between EB status and TR SEC, and EB status and SR negative mental health. However, this mediation analysis would only have been tested if my analysis supported RQ1 and RQ2.

Results

Missing Data

Data from schools A, B, and C were comprised of students from 6th through 8th grade, totaling 1,586 students in this sample. Students were included in the current study if they completed at least one of the assessments of interest—TR SEC, the SR negative mental health, or the SR school climate ($n = 1,180$). Chi-square analyses were run to compare the selected and missing sample ($n = 406$). Students in the analysis sample were not significantly different than missing-data students regarding EB status ($\chi^2 = .478, p > .05$), indicating that EBs' were not systematically excluded. In addition, the students in the selected sample did not differ in eligibility for free/reduced lunch, as compared to the excluded group ($\chi^2 = .589, p > .05$). In regard to race, the selected sample was composed of slightly more Asian students, fewer Black students and more Latinx and White students than expected ($\chi^2 = 26.26, p < .001$). The selected sample also included more females than expected ($\chi^2 = .592, p < .05$).

With the 1,180 sample, I conducted an analysis of missing data to evaluate the amount, distribution, and pattern of missing data among those participants who had completed at least one of the assessments of interest—TR SEC, SR negative mental health, or SR school climate but may still have had missing data. SPSS Missing Values Analysis (MVA) was used to highlight patterns of missing values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Data were present for more than 81.34% of the dataset (64,307 values were present). Little's test of Missing Completely at Random was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5958.11, p < .05$), thereby suggesting that missing data

were not missing *completely* at random (Little, 1988). Yet, it was determined that missingness was likely to be missing at random (MAR). Therefore, Singer and Willett (2003) explain that MAR is the probability of missingness that is unrelated to unobserved concurrent outcomes. Henceforth, MAR was established as the rationale for dealing with missingness.

Missingness at item level. Missingness of individual items on the TR SEC, SR negative mental health, or SR school climate were examined. Item missingness in the TR SEC and SR negative mental health was rare. The TR SEC only had 0.76% of cases that had item missingness, and there was only one item missing per case for all cases except one case that had two items missing. The SR negative mental health had 4.6% of cases with item missingness with a predominant pattern of missingness of one item per case. The SR school climate had a slightly higher percentage of cases with missingness at the item level, 7.8%; however, the general pattern of missingness was to miss one to two items per case. For these few cases, I conducted person mean substitution. Although it is commonly understood that mean substitution is adequate when missingness is at 5% or less in large datasets, other studies sustain that missingness at 10% or less in large datasets produce adequate results, not impacting findings (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013; Parent, 2012). Therefore, mean substitution for these scales is unlikely to impact the study findings.

Multiple imputation. Multiple imputation was used to address the remaining missing data. In SPSS, five datasets were imputed and used for analyses. Although there are different views on how to address missing data, multiple imputation has been cited as a method for decreasing bias and maintaining power (Rubin, 1987).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were run for the TR SEC, SR negative mental health, SR school climate, and academic achievement. As seen in Table 2 below, the full scale range was used by teachers and students when reporting social-emotional competence, negative mental health, and

school climate. Student ratings indicate an overall positive perception of school climate ($M = 3.18$) and high ratings of student SR negative mental health, suggesting that students reported having higher rates of negative (i.e., worse) mental health ($M = 1.74$). The mean score of TR SEC was 1.9, approaching the “Occasionally” range on the “Never” to “Very Frequently” range. This indicates that students were perceived as having a slightly poor social emotional competency. In regard to academic achievement, students performed within the full range of scores (650 - 850) for ELA/L and Math. Specifically, students performed on the slightly higher end on both measures ($M = 745.35$; $M = 732.27$); thus, indicating that students approached the proficiency expectation for Math and met proficiency expectation for ELA/L.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Measures

	Mean	Min	Max
TR SEC	1.90	0	4
SR negative mental health	1.74	1	3
SR school climate	3.18	1	5
Academic Achievement			
ELA/L	745.35	650	850
Math	732.27	650	850

Furthermore, each DESSA-Mini item was individually compared to each social-emotional competency. As previously stated, (see measures section) the DESSA assessment was created to closely align with CASEL’s SEL competencies. DESSA further expanded CASEL’s five social-emotional competencies to eight competencies. Using the SEL definitions from CASEL and DESSA, we categorized the eight DESSA-Mini questions into each social-emotional competency (See Table 3). Henceforth, item 1 and 7 were categorized as *responsible decision making (RDM)*, item 2 and 5 as *relationship-skills (RS)*, item 3 as *self-awareness (SA)*, item 4 and 6 as *self-management (SM)* and item 8 as *social-awareness (SocA)*. Using this

information, we later compare EBs and non-EBS on each DESSA-Mini item using an independent T-test to analyze mean differences between these groups (see Describing EBs' sections).

Table 3

DESSA-Mini items mapped onto CASEL SECs

DESSA's COMPETENCIES	Self- awareness & Optimistic Thinking	Self- Management & Goal-Directed Behavior	Social Awareness	Relationship Skills	Personal Responsibility & Decision Making
CASEL SEL COMPETENCIES					
DESSA -Mini QUESTIONS	Self- awareness (SA)	Self- management (SM)	Social- Awareness (SocA)	Relationship Skills (RS)	Responsible Decision Making (RDM)
1. Accepts responsibility for what she/he did?					X
2. Do something nice for somebody?				X	
3. Speak about positive things?	X				
4. Pay attention?		X			
5. Contribute to group efforts?				X	
6. Perform the steps of a task in order?		X			
7. Show care when doing a project or school work?					X
8. Follow the advice of a trusted adult?			X		

Note. Table depicts DESSA's SEL competencies as reported by DESSA, in relation to CASEL's SEL competencies. X marks indicate how the current study categorized each DESSA-Mini question using SEC's categorization from CASEL and DESSA.

Correlations

Pearson's correlations were computed to ascertain the nature of the association between the independent, dependent, and control variables. Table 3 shows the intercorrelations among variables. Significant correlations between various variables were observed and the relationships were in the expected direction. For example, results indicate an inverse relationship between the EB status and academic performance. This suggests that the EB status was associated with low performance in ELA/L and Math ($r = -.08, p < .05$; $r = -.07, p < .05$), respectively. In addition, exited-EB status was associated with higher academic performance in ELA/L and Math, compared to students identified as current-EBs ($r = .54, p < .01$; $r = .48, p < .01$), respectively. Following this pattern of better performance by exited-EBs, there was an inverse correlation between exited-EBs and negative mental health, suggesting that the exited-EB status was associated with lower rates of self-reported negative mental health, compared to current-EBs ($r = -.33, p < .01$). Similarly, there was a positive correlation between the exited-EB status and teacher-reported social-emotional competency; thus, suggesting that exited-EBs are perceived by teachers as having greater social-emotional competency ($r = .25, p < .01$). Lastly, eligibility for free and reduced lunch was also significantly and positively correlated with the EB status; this suggests that the EB status was associated with higher eligibility for free/reduced lunch as compared to non-EBs ($r = .07, p < .05$).

Table 4

Correlations between dependent and independent variables

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Female (1) Male (0)	.05	.001	-.03	-.01	-.02	-.02	.00	.18*	-.01	-.10**	.22**	.11**
2. Asian		1	-.30**	-.20**	-.04	-.23**	.21**	.03	.22**	-.08*	.02	.35**
3. Black			1	-.29**	-.06*	-.02	-.02	.04	-.20**	.15**	-.04	-.24**
4. White				1	-.04	.03	-.44**	.34**	.06	-.01	.00	-.01
5. "Other"					1	-.05	.03	.10**	.00	-.07*	.01	-.00
6. Paid (0) Free/reduced lunch (1)						1	.04	.07*	-.06	-.00	.06	-.14**
7. EB 'current (0) vs. exited' (1)							1	F	.25**	-.33**	-.10	.54**
8. Non-EB (0), EB (1)									.02	.02	.05	-.08*
9. TR SEC												-.07*
10. SR Negative Mental Health												
11. SR School Climate												
12. Academic Achievement ELA/L												
13. Academic Achievement Math												

Note. F. = Missing value(s) due to overlapping EB group categorization—combining EBs

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Describing EBs and non-EBs

Accounting for academic performance. An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess differences between EBs and non-EBs' academic performance. There was a significant difference in the scores for academic achievement ELA/L for EBs ($M = 738.46$) relative to non-EBs ($M = 746.49$), $t(49.67) = 2.45$, $p < .05$, and for academic achievement Math for EBs ($M = 726.35$) relative to non-EBs ($M = 733.26$), $t(1644.86) = 2.47$, $p < .05$. This, indicates that there is a significant performance difference for EBs in ELA/L and Math, performing lower academically than their non-EB counterparts.

Teacher-reported social-emotional competencies. In order to identify which SEL competencies each DESSA-Mini item was targeting, we used CASEL's SEL definitions and DESSA's expanded definition of SEL competencies (See Table 3). As shown in Table 3, item 1 and 7 were categorized as *RDM*, item 2 and 5 as *RS*, item 3 as *SA*, item 4 and 6 as *SM* and item 8 as *SocA*. The analysis of each DESSA-Mini question aimed to recognize concerns about cultural biases in SEL concepts and measurements (Jagers et. al. 2018), by descriptively examining whether there were differences on each DESSA-Mini item for RQ1a (EBs and non-EBs) and RQ2a (current vs. exited-EBs). Specifically, this analysis aimed to examine if there were particular items on the DESSA-Mini which were seen by teachers as strengths or weaknesses for EBs. The independent samples t-test for each individual DESSA-Mini item and EB 'combined' status found no statistically significant differences (See Table 5). Further analysis was conducted to examine the difference between current vs. exited-EBs (See below for findings).

Table 5

Comparing EBs 'combined' and non-EBs' individual social-emotional competencies

DESSA Items	EBs 'combined'			Non-EBs			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	<i>N</i>	M	SD	<i>N</i>		
RDM item 1	1.90	.80	168	1.86	.87	1012	-.59	.55
RDM item 7	1.98	.81	168	1.92	.86	1012	-.64	.53
RS item 2	1.95	.78	168	1.85	.86	1012	-1.33	.19
RS item 5	1.91	.83	168	1.92	.85	1012	.11	.91
SA item 3	1.94	.78	168	1.87	.86	1012	-.98	.33
SM item 4	1.95	.79	168	1.91	.85	1012	-.50	.62
SM item 6	1.95	.79	168	1.91	.85	1012	-.515	.61
SocA item 8	1.98	.79	168	1.91	.83	1012	-.825	.42

Note. SEC measured by teacher's DESSA scale item rating, and EB 'combined' ($n = 168$) vs. non-EB ($n = 1012$) status.

SR school climate. An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess differences in perceptions of school climate between EBs and non-EBs. The independent t-test was conducted using the SR school climate scale and EB status. There were no significant differences in the self-reported ratings of perceptions of school climate between EBs ($M = 3.26$) and non-EBs ($M = 3.17$), $t(219) = -1.60$, $p = .11$. Despite no statistically significant differences, this finding approached significance at the $p < .10$ and, contrary to our hypothesis it showed that the EBs 'combined' group perceived better school climate as compared to the non-EB group.

Multiple Regression Analyses for EBs and non-EBs

EB status and TR SEC. Sociodemographic variables in Step 1 accounted for 7.52% of the variability of teacher-reported social-emotional competence in students. Gender (dummy coded as 0 = male, 1 = female) and race (Asian and Black) significantly predicted social-emotional competence. In other words, teachers rated female students ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$) and Asian students ($\beta = .28$, $p < .01$) as having higher social-emotional competence. In contrast, they rated Black students ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$) as having lower social-emotional competence. Academic

achievement was entered in Step 2 of this model. Step 2 accounted for 7.44% of the unique variability of teacher-reported social-emotional competence in students. Academic achievement in ELA/L and Math significantly predicted social-emotional competence ($\beta = .004, p < .01$; $\beta = .003, p < .05$). Again, teacher report indicated that female students had higher social-emotional competence even when accounting for achievement. However, when accounting for academic performance, being Asian (relative to being Latinx) or Black (relative to being Latinx) did not predict teacher-reported social-emotional competence of student.

EB status was entered in Step 3. Step 3 accounted for .04% of the variability of teacher-reported social-emotional competence in students. Contrary to our hypotheses, EB status was not a significant predictor of teacher-reported social-emotional competence in students with the covariates. In addition, Free/Reduced lunch and race (Asian, Black, White, and Other) were not significant predictors. See Table 6.

EB status and SR Negative Mental Health. Sociodemographic variables in Step 1 accounted for 2.02% of the variability of student self-report negative mental health. Latinx students reported higher rates of negative mental health than Asian students ($\beta = -.08, p < .05$). In contrast, Latinx students reported lower rates of negative mental health relative to Black and Other race students. Said differently, based on self-report, Latinx students had higher rates of mental health difficulties (e.g., I worry a lot) compared to Asian students, but lower rates of mental health difficulties compared to Black ($\beta = .06, p < .05$) and Other race ($\beta = -.29, p < .05$) students. However, the variables, (1) eligibility for free or reduced lunch, (2) gender, and (3) White, relative to Latinx, were not significantly associated with negative mental health. Achievement was entered in Step 2 and explained 5.9% of unique variance in student self-report negative mental health. Academic achievement in ELA/L & Math significantly predicted student self-report negative mental health ($\beta = -.002, p < .001$; $\beta = -.001, p < .05$, respectively). With

achievement in the model, being Asian or Black (relative to being Latinx) no longer predicted student self-report negative mental health. At Step 3, I entered EB status. The model accounted for 0% of the unique variability in student self-report negative mental health. Thus, when entering EB status in step 3, students with higher achievement and students identified as “Other,” relative to Latinx students, reported lower rates of negative mental health. EB status was not a significant predictor of student self-report negative mental health, with the covariates in the model (See Table 6).

EB status and SR School Climate. Sociodemographic variables in Step 1 accounted for 2.58% of the variability of student self-reported perceptions of school climate. Eligibility for free or reduced lunch and gender significantly predicted perceptions of school climate ($\beta = .09, p < .05$; $\beta = -.14, p < .001$, respectively). Said differently, students who receive free/reduced lunch (indicating lower economic status) reported more positive perceptions of school climate relative to those having higher income status. Female students reported more negative perceptions of school climate relative to male students. Achievement was entered in Step 2. This step explained .24% of unique variance of student self-reported perceptions of school climate. Academic achievement in ELA/L and Math were not significant predictors of school climate.

EB status was added in Step 3. Step 3 explained .16% of unique variance. EB status was not a significant predictor of student self-reported perceptions of school climate, and eligibility for free or reduced lunch approached significance ($\beta = .09, p = .05$). Race (Asian, Black, White, Other) was non-significant throughout this model. See Table 6.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analyses of EB Status Predicting TR SEC, SR Negative Mental Health, and SR School Climate

	Model 1 TR SEC		Model 2 SR Negative Mental Health		Model 3 SR School Climate	
	β	R^2	β	R^2	β	R^2
		Change		Change		Change
Step 1		7.52%**		2.02%**		1.7%**
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	-.05		-.02		.09*	
Asian (1/0)	.28*		-.08*		.07	
Black (1/0)	-.17**		.06*		-.03	
White (1/0)	.13		-.01		.00	
Other (1/0)	.06		-.29*		.11	
Female (1/0)	.27**		-.00		-.14**	
Step 2		7.44%**		5.9%**		.24%
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	8.5		-.04		.09*	
Asian (1/0)	.13		-.01		.10	
Black (1/0)	-.09		.02		-.03	
White (1/0)	.12		-.01		.01	
Other (1/0)	.06		-.29*		.12	
Female (1/0)	.19**		.03		-.14**	
Academic Achievement ELA/L	.004**		-.002**		.00	
Academic Achievement Math	.003*		-.001*		-.00	
Step 3		.04%		0%		.16%
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	-.00		-.04		.09	
Asian (1/0)	.12		-.02		.09	
Black (1/0)	-.08		.03		-.03	
White (1/0)	.11		-.01		-.02	
Other (1/0)	.04		-.30*		.08	
Female (1/0)	.19**		.03		-.14**	
Academic Achievement ELA/L	.004**		-.002**		.00	
Academic Achievement Math	.003*		-.001*		-.00	
EB 'combined'	.04		.02		.08	

Note. Pooled, unstandardized estimates at each step of the regression

Hispanic/Latinx reference group (0)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Examining Differences Between Current and Exited-EBs

Accounting for academic performance. An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess differences between current and exited-EBs' academic performance. The independent samples t-test was conducted using academic achievement scores in ELA/L and Math. There was a significant difference in the scores for ELA/L for current-EBs ($M = 710.66$) relative to exited-EBs ($M = 749.59$), $t(19) = -6.04$, $p < .001$, and for Math for current-EBs ($M = 701.80$) relative to exited-EBs ($M = 736.17$), $t(436) = -6.73$, $p < .001$. Thus, confirming our hypotheses that exited-EBs perform higher academically than current-EBs.

Teacher-reported Social-emotional Competencies. As discussed above (see Social-emotional Competencies Analysis for non-EBs and EBs), social-emotional competencies were individually examined by analyzing the individual DESSA-Mini items and EB status (current vs. exited; Table 7). Specifically, independent samples t-tests were conducted to assess differences between EBs (current vs. exited) on all eight items of the DESSA-Mini scale (See Table 3 for individual items).

First, we examined the two items comprising *responsible decision making* (DESSA-Mini items 1 & 7). There was a significant difference in the scores for DESSA-Mini item 1 for current-EBs ($M = 1.56$) relative to exited-EBs ($M = 2.04$), $t(259.25) = -3.08$, $p < .01$, and for DESSA-Mini item 7 for current-EBs ($M = 1.69$) relative to exited-EBs ($M = 2.09$), $t(260.54) = -2.78$, $p < .01$. This indicated that exited-EBs were perceived as having better responsible decision making. Second, we conducted an independent samples t-test, assessing differences between EBs and *relationship skills* (DESSA-Mini items 2 & 5). The score for current-EBs in the DESSA-Mini item 2 ($M = 1.74$), and for DESSA-Mini item 5 ($M = 1.54$) were lower relative to exited-EBs ($M = 2.04$), $t(130) = -2.03$, $p < .05$ and ($M = 2.06$), $t(1916) = -3.68$, $p < .01$, respectively. This suggests that exited-EBs were perceived as having better relationship skills. Third, we conducted an independent samples t-test, assessing differences on the *self-awareness item* (DESSA-Mini

item 3). The scores for DESSA-Mini item 3 for current-EBs ($M = 1.64$) was lower, relative to exited-EBs ($M = 2.06$), $t(353) = -3.03$, $p < .01$. Exited-EBs were perceived as having better self-awareness than current-EBs. Fourth, we ran an independent samples t-test, assessing differences between EBs and *self-management* (DESSA-Mini items 4 & 6). There was a significant difference in the scores for DESSA-Mini item 4 for current-EBs ($M = 1.67$) relative to exited-EBs ($M = 2.06$), $t(162) = -2.68$, $p < .01$, and for DESSA-Mini item 6 for current-EBs ($M = 1.73$) relative to exited-EBs ($M = 2.04$), $t(54824) = -2.35$, $p < .05$. These scores indicate that exited-EBs were perceived as having better self-management. Fifth, we ran an independent samples t-test, assessing differences between EBs and the *social awareness* item (DESSA-Mini item 8). There was a significant difference in the scores for DESSA-Mini item 8 for current-EBs ($M = 1.72$) relative to exited-EBs ($M = 2.09$), $t(140.58) = -2.40$, $p < .05$, indicating that exited-EBs were perceived as having better social awareness. Overall, the t-test analyses demonstrate that teachers perceived exited-EBs as having better social-emotional competencies than current-EBs.

Table 7

Comparing current and exited-EBs' individual social-emotional competencies

DESSA Items

	Current-EBs			Exited-EBs			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	<i>n</i>	M	SD	<i>n</i>		
RDM item 1	1.56	.88	48	2.04	.73	120	-3.08	.002
RDM item 7	1.69	.90	48	2.09	.75	120	-2.77	.006
RS item 2	1.74	.78	48	2.04	.77	120	-2.03	.045
RS item 5	1.54	.92	48	2.06	.75	120	-3.39	.001
SA item 3	1.64	.79	48	2.06	.75	120	-3.03	.003
SM item 4	1.67	.82	48	2.06	.76	120	-2.68	.008
SM item 6	1.73	.88	48	2.04	.74	120	-2.35	.019
SocA item 8	1.72	.87	48	2.09	.74	120	-2.40	.018

Note. SEC measured by teacher's DESSA scale item rating, and current ($n = 48$) vs. exited-EB ($n = 120$) status.

School Climate. An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess differences in perceptions of school climate between current and exited-EBs. The independent t-test was conducted using the SR school climate scale and EB status (current vs. exited). There were no significant differences in the self-reported ratings of perceptions of school climate between current ($M = 3.37$) and exited-EBs ($M = 3.22$), $t(378) = 1.17, p > .05$.

Multiple Regression Analyses for current vs. exited-EBs

EB (current vs. exited) status and TR SEC. Sociodemographic variables in Step 1 did not significantly account for the unique variability of teacher-reported social-emotional competence in students. Academic achievement was entered in Step 2 and it was a significant predictor. Step 2 significantly accounted for 11.88% of unique variability indicating that academic performance in ELA/L predicted TR SEC; thus, showing that higher performance in ELA/L predicted better teacher-reported social-emotional competence ($\beta = .01, p < .05$). Contrary to our findings regarding EBs ‘combined’ and non-EBs, performance in Math was not a significant predictor of teacher-reported social-emotional competence between current and exited-EBs.

I entered EB status in Step 3. EB status was not a significant predictor of social-emotional competence. In addition, demographic variables (1) free/reduced lunch and (2) race remained non-significant predicts across this model. Step 3 accounted for .36% of unique variability, which was not a statistically significant amount of variance explained.

Post-hoc analyses. Because the EB status is a predetermined factor, we proposed an alternative model to analyze the relationship between EBs (current vs. exited) and social-emotional competence. In the new model (Model 2), I reversed the order, adding EB status in Step 1. Step 1 significantly accounted for 6.04% of unique variance of teacher-reported social-

emotional competence of students. Exited-EBs were rated by teachers as having greater social-emotional competence than their current-EB peers ($\beta = .40, p < .01$).

Academic performance and sociodemographic variables were entered in Step 2 significantly accounting for 10.14% of the unique variance in teacher-reported social-emotional competence of students. EB status was no longer a significant predictor in Step 2. However, academic achievement in ELA/L was a significant predictor, indicating that students with higher achievement in ELA/L were perceived as having greater social-emotional competence ($\beta = .01, p < .05$). Other sociodemographic variables did not significantly predict TR SEC.

Table 8

<i>Post-Hoc Multiple Regression Analyses of current vs. exited-EB Status Predicting TR SEC</i>		
	Model 2 SEC	
	β	R^2 Change
Step 1		6.04%**
Exited-EB (1/0)	.40**	
Step 2		10.14%*
Exited-EB (1/0)	.11	
Academic Achievement ELA/L	.01*	
Academic Achievement Math	.00	
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	.11	
Asian (1/0)	-.03	
Black (1/0)	.11	
White (1/0)	.03	
Other (1/0)	.00	
Female (1/0)	.05	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. Pooled, unstandardized estimates at each step of the regression

EB (current vs. exited) status and SR Negative Mental Health. Sociodemographic variables in Step 1 accounted for 7.56% of unique variance. Yet, specific sociodemographic variables were not significant predictors at the $p < .05$ level. Achievement was entered in Step 2 accounting for 6.16% of unique variance. Neither academic achievement nor sociodemographic variables were significant predictors.

At Step 3, EB status was entered. Step 3 significantly accounted for 5.6% of the unique variability in student self-reported negative mental health. EB status was a significant predictor in Step 3, indicating that exited-EBs reported less negative mental health, as compared to current-EBs ($\beta = -.24, p < .01$). Said different, current-EBs reported more negative mental health than exited EBs. None of the covariates were a significant predictor of student self-reported negative mental health at the $p < .05$ level.

EB (current vs. exited) status and School Climate. Sociodemographic variables in Step 1 and achievement in Step 2 did not significantly account for the unique variability of student self-reported perceptions of school climate. EB status was added in Step 3 and it did not significantly account for the unique variability of self-reported perceptions of school climate.

Post-hoc analyses. An alternative model was considered, entering EB status in Step 1, academic performance in Step 2 and sociodemographic factors in step 3. EB status in Step 1 was not a significant predictor of the dependent variable. However, after entering academic performance in Step 2, EB status approached significance ($\beta = -.258, p = .094$). Academic performance was not a significant predictor. Social demographic factors were entered in Step 3. None of the variables were significant predictors at this step.

Table 9

Multiple Regression Analyses of current vs. exited-EB Status Predicting TR SEC and SR Negative Mental Health

	Model 1 TR SEC		Model 3 SR Negative Mental Health	
	β	R^2 Change	β	R^2 Change
Step 1		3.90%		7.56%*
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	.18		-.10	
Asian (1/0)	.02		-.15	
Black (1/0)	.01		.21	
White (1/0)	-.21		.01	
Other (1/0)	-.13		-.13	
Female (1/0)	.08		.01	
Step 2		11.88%**		6.16%**
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	.12		-.08	
Asian (1/0)	-.04		-.12	
Black (1/0)	.10		.19	
White (1/0)	-.01		-.05	
Other (1/0)	-.01		-.16	
Female (1/0)	.04		.02	
Academic Achievement ELA/L	.01**		-.002	
Academic Achievement Math	.00		-.00	
Step 3		.36%		5.6%**
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	.11		-.05	
Asian (1/0)	-.03		-.14	
Black (1/0)	.11		.16	
White (1/0)	.03		-.13	
Other (1/0)	.00		-.19	
Female (1/0)	.05		-.01	
Academic Achievement ELA/L	.01*		-.00	
Academic Achievement Math	.00		.00	
Exited-EB (1/0)	.12		-.24**	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. Pooled, unstandardized estimates at each step of the regression

Post-hoc Analysis. The current study did not account for the nesting of children in schools; therefore, the standard errors were underestimated. All regression models were re-run separately with the three schools. Only School C ($n = 396$) differed on two of the three dependent variables. Namely, the findings from current vs. exited-EBs analysis differed as compared to the combined school analysis. In school C, EB status as current vs. exited was a non-significant predictor of negative mental health ($\beta = -.17, p > .05$; Model 1; Table 10), yet in the combined school analysis (Table 9) it was significant. Despite having contrary findings in School C, the unique explained variance was non-significant across the three steps (Table 10), while the unique explained variance in the combined sample was significant across the three steps (Table 9). In School C, EB status as current vs. exited was a significant predictor of school climate ($\beta = -.65, p < .01$; Table 10), yet in the combined school analysis it was not significant (Table 9). In School C, EB status (Table 10) significantly accounted for unique variability in student self-reported school climate, indicating that exited EBs reported worse perceptions of school climate.

Table 10

School C. Multiple Regression Analyses of Current vs. Exited-EBs Predicting SR Negative Mental Health, and SR School Climate

	Model 1 SR Negative Mental Health		Model 2 SR School Climate	
	β	R^2 Change	β	R^2 Change
Step 1		12.88%		16.28%
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	-.09		-.09	
Asian (1/0)	-.15		.48	
Black (1/0)	.15		.41	
White (1/0)	-.13		.52	
Other (1/0)	-.32		.71	
Female (1/0)	-.04		.46	
Step 2		6.8%		5.9%
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	-.02		.06	
Asian (1/0)	-.08		.74	
Black (1/0)	.23		.67	
White (1/0)	-.13		.70	
Other (1/0)	-.24		.93	
Female (1/0)	-.05		.43	
Academic Achievement	-.00		.01	
ELA/L				
Academic Achievement Math	-.00		-.01	
Step 3		3.16%		12.34%**
Free/Reduced Lunch (1/0)	-.04		-.00	
Asian (1/0)	-.12		.59	
Black (1/0)	.19		.51	
White (1/0)	-.20		.44	
Other (1/0)	-.25		.92*	
Female (1/0)	-.09		.30	
Academic Achievement	-.00		.01	
ELA/L				
Academic Achievement Math	-.00		-.01	
Exited-EBs	-.17		-.65**	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. Pooled, unstandardized estimates at each step of the regression;

Study 2

The primary aim of Study 2 was to describe the experience of EBs in one northeastern US urban school. Study 2 drew on qualitative data from five focus groups to understand how current vs. exited-EB report their experience of the school climate, classrooms, teachers, and peer interactions. More specifically, Study 2 aimed to differentiate the positive and negative

school experiences of current vs. exited-EB students. The research question and speculation for findings in Study 2, *Qualitative Study of Current and Exited-EB Students in School A*, are as follows:

Aim 3: An exploratory analysis of current-EBs and exited-EBs

3a. Based on focus groups, to what degree do current and exited-EB students perceive positive and negative experiences associated with their EB status?

Focus group data was examined to identify the experiences of current and exited-EBs in a northeastern US urban school. It was anticipated that current and exited-EBs will report experiences of bullying. Further, it was anticipated that exited-EBs would report fewer occurrences of bullying upon exiting the EB program.

Study 2 Procedures

I collected qualitative data through focus groups with current and exited-EBs in School A, during year 3 of the MOSAIC project. No student identifying information was collected or recorded. Parents of current and exited-EBs were informed that students were going to have the opportunity to participate in focus groups, and both parents and students were given the option to “opt out.” Letters for parents were provided in English, Spanish, and Arabic by the lead researcher, and mailed by the school.

I conducted a total of five focus groups, three with current-EBs and two with exited-EBs. Each focus group was conducted by the lead investigator for this study. Two advanced doctoral level psychology students assisted by serving as narrative note-takers, whereby they took detailed notes to ensure the accurate collection of data. Prior to the focus groups, the narrative note-takers were given a brief overview of the study and were provided with the focus group questions (see Appendix C for outline). This allowed the narrative note-takers to familiarize

themselves with the questions that were going to be asked. The narrative note-takers were instructed to record all data verbatim and were allowed to use a computer to transcribe the data.

Focus Groups' Structure. The lead researcher explained to the students the purpose of the focus groups and defined her role in leading the groups. The students were informed that I would be posing questions and listening to their discussion. The role of the note-taker was also explained to the students. In addition, the students were reassured that there were no right or wrong answers and that I just wanted to learn more about them. Lastly, the students were informed that their school principal would receive a brief letter listing common themes that emerged from their discussion, without using their names.

Focus groups. Using focus group methodology, our participants were provided with an opportunity to respond to questions and participate in discussion. This method allowed for participants to share their perceptions in a nonthreatening environment (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The questions for current and exited groups had slight variations. For example, "*How are your interactions with exited-EB students?*" versus, "*How are your interactions with current-EB students?*" The qualitative data collection sought to understand exited-EBs perceptions of school climate, and positive and negative experiences associated with their EB status. An example question is as follows, "*Do you feel that other students are kind?*" Familiarity with relevant literature in this study allowed for sensitivity in collection of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Sample Characteristics

Students who participated in the focus groups were in grades 6th through 8th. There were 3 focus groups conducted with current-EBs totaling 22 students, and 2 focus groups with exited-EBs totaling 7 students. Students in the current-EB groups reported to have been in the US from 1 month to 5 years, with missing information for 5 students. This information was not collected from exited-EBs. To preserve anonymity, students were identified with a research-issued number (e.g., Student #). The current-EB groups ranged from 5 to 9 students and the exited-EB groups

ranged from 3 to 4 students, per group. Overall most students ($n = 20$) reported to speak Arabic as their first language, followed by Vietnamese ($n = 2$), Libyan ($n = 1$), Sinhalese ($n = 1$), and Spanish ($n = 1$). The first language of 4 students was unknown ($n = 4$).

Data Analytic Plan

Due to the exploratory nature of this research question, grounded theory was used to investigate the differences between exited-EBs and current-EBs. Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a qualitative data analytic procedure. Using five focus groups with current and exited-EBs, this study aimed to identify patterns in self-report school experiences of EBs.

Stage 1 of Qualitative Analysis

Open coding. To analyze qualitative data, I separated data from each focus group, analyzed each student response, reflected, and conceptualized what the data might be indicating (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In this stage, I participated in coding as the lead analyst and recruited two advanced doctoral-level school psychology students (Analyst A & Analyst B) to participate in the initial independent open coding stage. Specifically, the three analysts read through each focus group notes individually and identified similarities and differences, within and between groups. The analysts identified specific and broad level concepts, and independently opted to labeled participants' responses as positive or negative. Furthermore, the analysts gathered to discuss each of their initial codes, agreed on general themes, and came to an agreement for core and sub-domains. The domains were further identified as positive or negative themes describing the student's experiences in school. Using the emergent themes, the coders came to a consensus on similarities and differences between each focus group.

Axial coding I. During open coding, the analysts discussed how codes may relate to each other, for example having a strong sense of community and identifying oneself as a current-EB,

or feeling unsupported or excluded and not feeling comfortable participating in class or being in school (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Stage 2 of Qualitative Analysis

Axial coding II. Following the open-coding and axial coding I, with Analysts A and B, I defined and expanded the domains that emerged during stage 1 of this process. Further revisiting every statement in each focus group, I organized the data by numbering each statement, identifying the statement as positive or negative, and identifying under which domain the statement fit best. This was followed by selecting a subdomain that best described the codeable statement. In this way, I created a code book by identifying minor concepts to broader level concepts; thus, identifying core themes—axial coding (Appendix A; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Specifically, I identified incidents that fell within the same conceptual level and added those incidents into the identified level (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The coding book was later reviewed with analyst A, who had been involved stage I of coding. Domains and subdomains were discussed for general agreement and understanding of each domain.

Inter-rater reliability. The lead analyst and analyst A used the coding book to guide their coding and enable an examination of inter-rater reliability. Analyst A was asked to code each numbered statement into the coding book (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Analyst A was provided with the updated (statement numbered) focus group notes in order to code into the broader level concepts, domains and subdomains. To prevent biases, the five focus group notes were not identified as belonging to current or exited-EBs' groups.

Lastly, I conducted Cohen's κ interrater reliability analysis in order to assess for the reliability of each theme, domain and subdomain (Table 11). Cohen's κ is used to measure interrater reliability, accounting for chance agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). For the current study, I used a commonly cited scale for kappa values (Landis & Koch, 1977). The scale

suggests the following interpretation: $\kappa < 0$ poor or less than chance agreement, .01 - .20 slight agreement, .21 - .40 fair agreement, .41 - .60 moderate agreement, .61 - .80 substantial agreement, and .81 – 1.00 almost perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977; Viera & Garret, 2005).

Table 11

Kappa Interrater Reliability Results for Positive Themes from the Qualitative Data

THEME	Kappa Values
POSITIVE	.890
Relationship Skills: cooperation, help seeking and providing, and communication.	.772
Helping others.	.760
Can speak to more people.	.536
Resilience: striving to be successful or cope despite adverse situations.	.619
E.g., "I had to learn so that I can stand up for myself and for others."	.642
Perceiving benefits from being an EB. E.g., "can help you learn other languages."	.665
Disregarding difficulties, e.g., "things were not difficult."	.567
Future Aspirations: Desire or hope to get higher education or a professional job. Goes along with desire for financial success.	.983
Hope for: higher Education/Better work opportunities.	.997
Self-report does well academically.	1.000
Self-report ELA as favorite class.	1.000
Self-report Math as favorite class.	1.000
Teachers/others believe you can do well academically.	1.000
Positive School Climate: Views school as a caring and supportive environment.	.872
Feeling supported by teachers.	.887
Feeling supported by peers.	.709
Being treated with respect.	.566
Feeling comfortable participating in class or being in school.	.794
Reporting that people in school are kind.	.746
Reporting to feel welcomed in school.	.798
Reports that bullying has gotten better/decreased.	.855
EB Group Belonging: Sense of relationship between EB students, e.g., "we [reference the ELL group] do everything together now."	.688
Identify as an ESL student.	.746
Connected or still connected with EBs.	.661
Appreciation for ESL class.	.665
Integration: Feeling confidence on their acquired English language skills and further engaging in sharing about their own culture with other peers.	.586
Integration—Gaining friendships/feeling included.	.554
Confidence on acquired English language skills.	.493
Reports that learning English is important.	0
Pride in having learned English.	.536
Separation from EBs/ESL: Emotional and physical separation from EBs-reporting that they no longer speak to peers in ESL, and believe that they cannot be identified as exited-EBs	.818
Separation from EBs/ESL	.855
Believes others cannot identify him/her as not speaking English as their first language	.663
Does not know how to identify self	.497
Better Experience Since Exiting ESL	.663
No longer being bullied	.663
Things became easier since exiting ESL	

Note: Kappa values indicating interrater reliability for positive theme, domains and subdomains.

Table 12

Kappa Interrater Reliability Results for Negative Themes from the Qualitative Data

THEME	Kappa Values
NEGATIVE	.890
Bullying: Aggressive behavior between students that has a perceived or real power imbalance, including verbal (teasing, name calling, taunting, etc.), social bullying/relational bullying which involves hurting someone's reputation, or physical bullying such as making mean or rude hand gestures, pushing, etc.	.912
Bullying Others.	1.000
Being Bullied.	.912
Used to be bullied because of accent/Language.	.661
Struggles Learning English (Internal Consistency): Reported difficulty in the process of acquiring the English language. This can be in learning English or acculturating. For example, "I think it's different because we learn it the "proper" way. It was probably harder."	.815
Struggles learning grammar/spoken English.	.592
Forgetting native language (sense of shame or inadequacy).	.931
It is hard without English/hard learning English.	-.013
Acknowledges that it was difficult/lack of friends.	.661
Negative School Climate: Feeling unsupported or excluded.	.901
Not being treated with respect.	.746
Not feeling comfortable participating in class or being in school.	.746
People in school are not kind.	-.012
Feeling excluded/isolated.	.770
Disengagement—report that "students do not care."	0
No Future Aspirations: Lack of aspirations, believe or hope to continue to higher education or to have a professional job in the future.	1.000
Self-report doesn't do well academically.	1.000
Doesn't have hope for higher education or professional job.	1.000

Note. Kappa values indicating interrater reliability for negative theme, domains and subdomains.

Findings

This analysis provides an account of five focus groups conducted with EBs—identified as students who were currently part of this school's ESL program or those who had successfully exited the ESL program.

Reliability

There was almost perfect agreement between the two raters when identifying positive and negative themes $K = .89$ (Viera & Garret, 2005; Table 11 & Table 12). There were twelve domains identified and reliability ranged from moderate to perfect agreement ($K = .59, p < .001$ to $K = 1, p < .001$; Landis & Koch, 1977). Subdomains also ranged from moderate to perfect

agreement ($k = .49, p < .001$ to $1, p < .001$; Landis & Koch, 1977). However, there were four subdomains falling into the poor agreement range: *acknowledges that learning English is important, it is hard without English and it is hard to learn English, people in school are not kind, and other students do not care* ($K = -.13$ to $K = 0$; Landis & Koch, 1977).

Positive Themes

There were eight different categories falling into the positive theme. These categories included: *relationship skills, resilience, future aspirations, positive school climate, EB group belonging, integration, separation from EB-ESL, better experience since exiting ESL*.

Relationship skills. Students reported positive gains, including gaining positive relationships skills. Specifically, they described increased ability to speak to more people and ability to seek and provide help to others. Students identified these gains as positive qualities of speaking more than one language. This code was reported a total of 23 times across the five focus groups. Examples are as follows:

Group 1—Current-EBs.

(S2) I want to help others. Everyone was making fun of me [when I did not speak English]. As I learned more of the language, I started thinking about helping others and what it's like for them. I went to grades younger than me and made sure they knew what they were doing.

(S1) [There is a] new kid in our class right now. Since we speak English we can help him with translating and his homework.

Resilience and future aspirations. These domains were identified by statements indicating that students were thriving to be successful despite adversity encountered at school, and/or had the desire to achieve higher education. These students were likely to report that they were doing well academically, and that teachers and others believed they can do well academically. The resilience domain was identified 25 times and the future aspirations domain was identified 33 times throughout the five groups. Examples are as follows:

Group 1—Current-EBs

(S2) I get bullied sometimes, so I had to learn [English] so I can stand up for myself and for others.

Group 5—Exited-EBs

(S4) ...me and my parents are really proud. I went from not being able to say hi and now I can speak in public and I'm really proud of that. When I came it was hard but now it's really good.

Positive school climate. Students reported positive school climate themes indicating that they felt supported by teachers and peers. In addition, students reported being treated with respect, feeling comfortable participating in class or being in school. Furthermore, some students reported feeling that bullying had decreased in the past year. More specifically, two of the three current-EB groups reported that, although they used to be bullied, as their English skills improved the bullying decreased and they identified feeling supported by their current-EB peers. The positive school climate domain was identified a total of 63 times. Examples are as follows:

Group 1—Current-EBs.

(S1, S2, S3, S4) Bullying has gotten better.

(S4) We [reference the group] do everything together now.

Group 4—Current-EBs.

(S9) I don't feel respected because some students bully me, and now I am better and feel more comfortable and can talk to more people and help other people so that they don't bully me.

EB group belonging. Current and exited-EBs reported a connection to the EB group. However, current-EB students were more likely to identify themselves as having a strong connection with their EB peers and to identify themselves as ESL students. Whereas 2 exited-EB students (one from each group) reported feeling appreciation for what they had learned in their ESL class, and 3 students from group 5 (exited-EB) reported having some connections with current-ELL peers. Examples are as follows:

Group 3—Exited-EBs.

(S1) ESL prepared us for what was expected.

Integration. Feelings of integration were identified by current and exited-EBs. The students reported feeling pride in acquiring the English language, which also resulted in gaining friendships. Specifically, the students felt more integrated with non-EBs and reported the possibility of joining classes of their interest that they were not eligible for as EBs. It was notable that exited-EB were more likely to report feeling integrated as this code emerged a total of 13 times in the 2 exited-EB groups and only a total of 7 times in the 3 current-EB groups. Examples are as follows:

Group 3—Exited-EBs.

It was different at first because you can't have as many friends, but afterwards once you start exiting ESL, you are speaking English now. It was different because I had the language in my house and the language with my education. Now it's easier.

Group 5—Exited-EBs.

(S3) [Interactions with English speaking students]. It should be normal because we speak the same language because now they can help you more. You can teach them about your country's history. You have experiences that they don't have but they have experience with English being their first language.

Separation from EB status and better experience after exiting ESL. These two domains were specific to exited-EB students. In these domain codes, the students believed they could not be identified as EBs; thus, showing a sense of separation from their EB status. In addition, these students reported feeling that their experience at school had become easier after exiting the ESL program. These codes emerged only in the exited-EB groups, and it was identified 14 times. Examples are as follows:

Group 3—Exited-EBs.

(S1) I'm an ESL student, but they can't really notice it because I picked up on the accent. You can't tell I'm not from the US

(S2) People can't really tell I was in ESL.

Negative themes. There were four different domains comprising the negative themes. These categories included, *bullying, struggles learning English, negative climate, and no future aspirations.*

Bullying. This was a robust domain emerging a total of 34 times across the 5 focus groups. Nonetheless, there were specific differences between the current and exited-EBs. Specifically, there were three minor concepts (i.e., subdomains) that fit into the Bullying domain and it was notable that exited-EBs exclusively reported one of these domains, “used to be bullied because of accent/language,” while current-EB’s only reported “being bullied” or “bullying others.” Across the groups it was notable that current-EBs were more likely to report recent experiences of bullying, while exited-EBs reported that they had experienced bullying while being in ESL. Thus, the reports of bullying were associated with their EB status. Particularly, students reported being cussed at and isolated by peers. In addition, the findings hint that there may be a cycle for some current-EB students. Specifically, some current-EBs were bullied, and as their English language skills improved, they bullied their peers. They *then* became helpful towards other EBs and resolved conflicts with the peers who they had bullied. In addition, as indicated earlier (Separation from EB status and better experience since exiting ESL) exited-EBs were likely to experience separation from ESL as a whole, becoming less likely to engage with current-EBs. In fact, only 4 out of the 7 exited-EBs shared about bullying, while 13 out of 22 current-EBs reported being victims of bullying and 3 students out of those 22 reported to also have engaged in bullying their peers. Examples are as follows:

Group 1—Current-EBs

Bullying

(S4) Guys used to make fun of me and cursed at me when I first got here.

(S1) Kids talk about you behind your back because they think you can't understand what they're saying.

Bullying others

(S4) ...I was a bully with S2. I am more comfortable with people who speak my own language and now we're best friends. He came after me, but *I was bullied, so I bullied him*.

(S2) I didn't have any friends and people would laugh at me. Now people don't laugh at me and my English is better.

Group 5—Exited-EBs.

Bullied while in ESL

(S1) When I first came here, some people would talk behind my back. People [EB peers at the time] didn't understand what they were saying. Thankfully we are productive and do a lot of work and we are sometimes better than people who only speak one language.

(S2) Another friend will make fun and call us dummies and he had the large talk accent. Now I say to him, you used to call me a dummy but look who's talking.

Struggles learning English. Across the five focus groups students identified difficulties while learning English. Among the difficulties identified were learning to speak English, learning grammar rules, forgetting their native language, and lack of friendships. This domain emerged a total of 19 times across the 5 focus groups.

Negative climate. Students also reported experiencing a negative school climate. Statements coded into this domain were: not being treated with respect, not feeling comfortable participating in class or being in school, people not being kind, and feeling excluded or isolated. This code was most exclusively found with current-EBs. During one of the exited-EBs groups (Group 5), one student-reported '*sometimes not feeling included in activities*' and one out of the four students in this group reported feeling that '*others are not kind in school.*' Hence, exited-EBs were less likely to report negative school climate, as compared to current-EBs who reported

negative school climate in each focus group and presented comments that fell into this code numerous times (19 reports). Examples are as follows:

Group 2—Current-EBs.

(S7) We had a field trip, and a student who speaks Arabic told me we had a field trip, but another kid asked him why he told me, like they didn't want me to know.

Group 4—Current-EBs

(S3) Sometimes they [non-EBs] say “that’s not your classroom,” but it was...

No future aspirations. Lastly, two current-EB students reported statements identifying a lack of hope for higher education or acquiring a professional job in the future. These students also self-reported not doing well academically. This code was not reported in the exited-EBs' groups.

Summary of focus group findings. The qualitative analysis shows that negative themes emerged mostly from reports of current-EB's as compared to reports of exited-EB. Furthermore, negative themes that emerged in exited groups were regarding their prior current-EB status. For example, all focus groups reported experiences of bullying related to their EB status; however, exited-EBs reported experiences of bullying only while in ESL, and clarified that bullying was related to their accent and difficulty speaking English. Further, it appears that exited-EB's have a desire to disconnect from their EB status upon exiting their ESL program. One exited-EB student stated with pride, “People can't really tell I was in ESL.” Nonetheless, it is also important to note that ESL served as a protective factor, offering comfort to current-EB students (e.g., “My ESL teacher made me comfortable speaking the language. Some kids put you down, but I always go back to a teacher”). In addition, it is also important to note that many positive themes emerged from all groups (e.g., perceptions of positive school climate and reported relationship skills), possibly serving as protective factors for these students and demonstrating a level of perseverance and resilience amongst EBs.

Discussion

The current research was comprised of Study 1 and Study 2. Study 1 examined the association between EB status and teacher-reported social-emotional competency as well as self-reported negative mental health and perceived school climate in three urban schools. The EB status was defined as EB ‘combined,’ and current vs. exited-EBs. In Study 1, it was hypothesized that EBs ‘combined’ in relation to non-EBs would have lower academic achievement, poorer overall TR SEC, higher rates of SR negative mental health, and worse perceptions of school climate. Although in an exploratory manner, it was also speculated that exited-EBs would have better TR SEC, lower rates of SR negative mental health, and more positive perceptions of SR school climate when compared to their current-EBs peers.

Comparing EBs to non-EBs, findings did not support our hypotheses. Regression results indicated no significant differences between EBs’ TR SEC, SR negative mental health and perceptions of school climate, relative to non-EBs. The lack of significant findings may be due to the differences within our EB ‘combined’ sample which included current and exited-EBs. This will be discussed in further detail below.

Study 1’s analysis of current vs. exited-EB did not support our hypothesis related to teacher-reported SEC. When analyzing TR SEC, the test of associations found no difference in teacher report of SEC between current and exited-EBs. Nonetheless, a post-hoc regression analysis showed an intertwined relationship between EB status and academic achievement in ELA. Regression analyses also showed that exited-EBs self-reported significantly lower rates of negative mental health than current-EBs. That said, there were no significant differences found in perceived school climate among current vs. exited-EB. However, a post-hoc analysis showed a possible trend indicating that exited-EBs self-reported worse perceptions of school climate. This was an unexpected finding, as we had hypothesized that exited-EBs would report better perceptions of school climate. This hints that a larger sample might detect a stronger association

between exited-EBs and negative perceptions of school climate. If this were the case, one might speculate whether being in ESL classes serves as a protective factor for EBs, perhaps offering a safe and supported settings within the school. This will be discussed in further detail in the summary section below.

Study 2 was a qualitative analysis of current vs. exited-EBs. Using grounded theory, this study explored the experiences of current and exited-EBs in an urban school. The literature has reported that this population encounters bullying. Hence, this study explored whether exited-EBs would report fewer occurrences of bullying upon exiting the ESL program. Themes from this study showed that EB's experience targeted bullying and that most of the negative themes emerged from the current-EB group or were related to the exited EB's former status in ESL classes. Nonetheless, this analysis also showed several positive themes that suggest protective factors and resilience among this population. It was noteworthy that EBs were able to recognize positive qualities in their experience despite encountering targeted bullying. One student said, "I get bullied sometimes, so I had to learn so I can stand up for myself and for others." These strong qualities and natural supports should be fostered in the EB population to support a better experience in the school system.

Social-Emotional Competency

Despite the non-significant findings in the EB status analysis of TR SEC, a post-hoc analysis suggested that EB status (current vs. exited), academic achievement, and TR SEC may be intertwined. The post-hoc analysis showed that current vs. exited-EB status was a significant predictor of TR SEC; nevertheless, after adding academic performance to the analysis, the EB status became non-significant. This suggests that achievement differences among current and exited-EBs explain teacher perceptions of SEC. Interestingly, when analyzing the current vs. exited-EB sample, only academic performance in ELA/L was a significant predictor of teacher-reported SEC. From these findings one can speculate that English language acquisition may be a

stronger predictor of teacher-reported SEC, rather than the EB status. Alternatively, one might speculate that biases toward lower achieving students may affect how teachers perceive them. This is important to note as the literature indicates that EBs perform lower academically than their White and minority peers (McFarland et al., 2018). In addition, the literature shows that the type of ESL instruction EBs receive may impact their academic experience. In a review of 17 studies, Slavin, and Cheung (2005) found that English immersion programs were less favorable than bilingual instruction programs for meeting the academic needs of EBs. Gandara and Aldana (2014) further suggest that dual immersion schools provide EBs with the opportunity to attend more integrated and positive learning environments. This should be studied further in future research with an EB sample comprised of only current-EBs.

To advance the knowledge of perceived strengths and weaknesses for EB students, Study 1 also explored possible differences between EB status and individual DESSA-Mini items. Each DESSA-Mini question was categorized into CASEL's five social-emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making (See Table 1). There were no significant differences among EBs (combined current & exited) relative to non-EBs.

The individual analyses of the DESSA-Mini items with exited-EBs and current-EBs, however, showed significant differences. Overall, the independent t-tests showed that teachers reported exited-EBs as having better social-emotional competencies than current-EBs. For example, teachers perceived that exited-EBs had better ability to "perform the steps of a task in order" and "pay attention." These findings may be due to various factors impacting current-EBs, such as the language barrier or acculturative stress. Perhaps language barriers interfere with teachers' perceptions and reported social-emotional competencies in EBs. As noted by Haynes

(2007), teachers may lack understanding of EBs, possibly “deficit theorizing,” about this population due to lack of understanding of their culture and experiences as recent immigrants.

Acculturative stress may also be a potential factor impacting these findings. It is possible that current-EBs are impacted more deeply by acculturative stress than exited-EBs, which may result in teachers reporting and perceiving poorer social-emotional competencies in current-EBs. As discussed by Haynes (2007), EBs undergo a complex emotional process when adapting to the dominant culture. Haynes (2007) explains that EBs may initially present as enthusiastic but quickly encounter many difficulties. These challenging experiences can result in feelings of being overwhelmed that present as irritability or disinterest. The inability to communicate with teachers and some peers likely exacerbates the frustration of this process. Eventually, EB students may learn to cope with the differences, develop, and prepare to thrive in their new culture. This is likely a process unfamiliar to many educators and consequently impairs their ability to adequately support the EB population.

Furthermore, the lack of familiarity with this acculturative process may influence teachers’ ability to accurately report on EBs’ SECs. This suggests that teachers need to improve their ability to evaluate current-EBs SEC, which may be masked via cultural or linguistic differences between these students and their teachers. Notably, the literature has called attention to teacher’s own SECs and how that may impact their interactions with students (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Alternatively, the EB population may benefit from additional emotional and academic support as they work toward achieving English proficiency. In addition, future research should consider the importance of corroborating teacher-reported SEC data with self or peer-reported SEC data, especially when discussing EBs. In sum, the current findings show the underscore need to better understand the strengths and challenges of the EB population.

Sociodemographic characteristics of students were related to teacher-reported SEC. Female and Asian students were reported as having better TR SEC, while Black students were reported as having poorer TR SEC. However, after adding student academic achievement in ELA/L and Math in the statistical model, only academic achievement and gender were significant predictors of SEC in the EB and non-EB analysis. Nonetheless, the findings about race and gender are important to discuss further due to racial and gender disparities in academic achievement. Even though our analysis showed that when accounting for academic achievement, race becomes a non-significant predictor, there is extensive literature that show disparities in academic achievement in minorities. As discussed in this literature review, White students outperform their fellow Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native and mixed-race peers (McFarland et al., 2018). This may inherently set minority students to be perceived as possessing lower SECs. Furthermore, a recent body of literature has brought awareness to other factors such as power, privilege, cultural differences and educators' own SECs that negatively impact black male students (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Gregory & Roberts, 2017). Gregory and Fergus (2017) noted that the higher rates of disciplinary punishment with Black males is linked to lower academic achievement, lower rates of graduating and college-going. The authors also stated that gender and racial discrepancies start early in education and this may be partially due to racial biases in teachers. Hence, the current study suggests that student race, academic achievement, and SECs should be analyzed in a complex and interactive manner in order to more accurately understand how these factors may influence each other.

Gender differences in SEL have also been discussed extensively. In the current Study 1, females were distinguished as being perceived as possessing greater SEC than their male counterparts. Rowe and Trickett (2017) analyzed the study by Durlak et al. (2011) focusing on student diversity characteristics including gender, race/ethnicity, social economic status,

disability status, and sexual orientation/gender identity. The authors analyzed 117 articles that met their inclusion criteria—published peer-reviewed articles with US samples and those that included immediate posttest analyses. Rowe and Trickett (2017) explain that it is not uncommon for SEL interventions to lack demographic information, and report that in the metanalysis by Durlak et al. (2011) one third of the studies did not describe student race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Rowe and Trickett (2017) also found that females have higher interpersonal effectiveness as compared to their male peers. Perhaps, the higher perceived interpersonal skills may in turn result in greater perceived SECs. Adding to this trend, Romer, Ravitch, Tom, Merrell, and Wesley (2011) investigated gender differences in SECs. Using the Social-Emotional Assets and Resilience Scale, the authors drew on teacher, student, and parent report to assess SECs in children and adolescents. They used data from schools in Massachusetts, Iowa, Georgia, Colorado, Ohio, Oregon, California, North Carolina and Hawaii, resulting in a total sample of 5,555 participants. The findings from self, parent and teacher report indicated that females are perceived as having greater SEC. This corroborates findings from the current research.

Negative Mental Health

Study 1 also found that student sociodemographic characteristics were related to self-reported negative mental health. Race “Other” (relative to Latinx) was associated with *lower* rates of negative mental health reports. This means that Latinx students self-reported *higher* rates of negative mental health (e.g., I have many fears, I am easily scared) than students identified as “Other” race. In addition, student academic achievement in ELA/L and Math was positively associated with less negative mental health. This corroborates prior research showing that internalizing disorders such as anxiety and depression predict lower academic performance and educational attainment (Albeg & Castro-Olivo, 2014; Perreira & Ornelas, 2011).

In addition, the current study found that exited-EBs reported lower rates of negative mental health as compared to their current-EB peers. This significant finding with regard to EB status aligns with previous studies that have examined the mental health of immigrant children and found that this population experiences poverty and stress related to migration, affecting their mental health and academic performance (Albeg & Castro-Olivo, 2014; Perreira & Ornelas, 2011; Potochnick & Perreira, 2011). Nonetheless, as explained by Haynes (2017), as EBs adapt to the new culture, the acculturative stress decreases. Subsequently, one might speculate that less acculturative stress results in less self-reported negative mental health.

School Climate

Contrary to our hypothesis, findings were not statistically significant for EB status and school climate. This may suggest that there is no relationship between EB status and perceptions of school climate. For example, there were no differences between EBs and non-EBs in their perception of “students work[ing] well together” or “students help[ing] new students feel accepted.” The lack of significant findings corroborate previous research by Rodriguez, Ringler, O’Neal and Bunn (2009). Rodriguez et al. (2009) examined data from 123 students from a rural public elementary school in North Carolina, which included 57 monolingual and 66 EBs. The authors examined perceptions of climate by conducting interviews and administering the “Measuring success in ESL programs” adapted scale. Using this scale, the authors measured students’ perceptions of “school climate,” “curriculum and instructions,” “extracurricular, co-curricular activities,” “self-efficacy,” and “self-esteem.” They found no differences in students’ overall perception of school climate. In addition, Bartlett et al. (2017) found that students enrolled in culturally diverse schools that promote the value of cultural diversity were more likely to report positive experiences. In contrast, students enrolled in less culturally tolerant schools reported negative experiences. Therefore, in the current study, it is speculated that the non-significant findings may be due to the cultural diversity in the schools used for this analysis,

which may have resulted in no differences in the perceptions of the school climate between EBs and non-EBs.

Sociodemographic factors were significantly associated with perceptions of school climate, indicating that female students reported worse perceptions of school climate than male peers. This finding contradicts prior research. Way, Reddy, Rhodes (2007) used the Perceived School Climate Scale to analyze perceptions of school climate using longitudinal data from 1,451 students enrolled in 6th through 8th grade. This scale comprises four subscales: teacher support, peer support, student autonomy and clarity and consistency in school rules. In their study, the authors found that female students perceived more positive school climate at the start of middle school, but they also had sharper declines than males in their perceived peer support. Interestingly, Way et al. (2007) found that female students consistently reported higher teacher support than their male peers. In the current study's SEC findings, females were reported as having better SECs, by their teachers, which may be inconsistent with female students' negative perceptions of school climate. Future research is needed to better understand gender and school climate.

The analysis of current vs. exited-EBs and perceptions of school climate added a new direction for future research given it identified an unexpected trend. The trend-level finding indicated that exited-EBs self-reported worse perceptions of school climate. Furthermore, our individual school analysis found that in school C, exited-EBs significantly reported worse perceptions of school climate compared to their current-EB peers. Perhaps this indicates that this unexpected trend was due to school C, and not present in the other schools. This finding brings attention to the need for further research on the school climate experienced by exited-EBs. Although there is literature discussing the academic performance of current and exited-EBs (De

Jong, 2004; Kanno & Gromley, 2013; McFarland et al., 2018; Murphy, 2014; Wilde, 2009), there is paucity of research regarding the overall school experience of exited-EBs.

Study 2: A Qualitative Analysis of Current and Exited-EBs

Study 2 examined qualitative data from focus groups with exited and current EBs.

Overall, the qualitative analysis aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the school experience of EBs. The findings from Study 2 indicated that EBs reported several positive themes, some of which suggest EBs' have tremendous resilience. For example, an exited-EB said, "When I just came [to the US] it was hard but now it's really good," while another student remarked, "Everyone was making fun of me. As I learned more of the language, I started thinking about helping others and what it's like for them." This is particularly noteworthy since many of these students said they experienced targeted bullying related to their limited English proficiency. In fact, student-reported bullying was extensive across both the current and exited-EB groups. However, exited-EBs retrospectively noted bullying when they were in ESL class, which lessened when they exited their ESL program. This is consistent with their reported sense of separation from the ESL group, "I'm an ESL student, but they can't really notice it because I picked up on the accent. You can't tell I'm not from the US." Alternatively, this may show a desire to be fully integrated or accepted in the general student population. In fact, negative themes emerged primarily from the current-EBs' reports when compared to exited-EBs, and the most common theme was related to experiences of bullying associated with the EB status.

While much of the research regarding EBs is focused on academic performance, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of their experiences. As mentioned earlier, this population is vulnerable to encounter increased negative experiences upon entering our school system (Aud et al., 2010; Haynes, 2007; Perreira & Ornelas, 2011). Specifically, this population is likely to experience negative mental health, as found in Study 1 and in previous literature

regarding the psychological wellbeing of immigrant children (Albeg & Castro-Olivo, 2014; Perreira & Ornelas, 2011; Potochnick & Perreira, 2011).

Although exited-EBs reported bullying associated with their previous EB status and wanting distance from this label, they also reported that their ESL class was a valuable resource when learning English. An exited-EB student stated, “ESL helped me a lot because I feel like I achieved more things.” Furthermore, positive themes across both groups are potential protective factors for this population to mitigate the negative experiences that EBs encounter. For example, students reported feeling supported by teacher and peers. A current-EB student specified, “there are Egyptian students, and he (S1) helped me when I got here because he was here before me.”

Lastly, the findings hint at a possible stage theory related to EB students, bullying, and victimization. Current-EBs reported having experienced bullying due to their low English proficiency. Yet, a few of these students also reported engaging in bullying their current-EB peers. Nonetheless, these students also reported changing their bullying behaviors to become more compassionate with their peers, resolve conflicts, and offer their support. Future research should explore this in a longitudinal study that prospectively follows students to better understand bullying and victimization among EBs. In addition, future studies should assess the benefits of various interventions to foster individual and contextual protective factors in EBs’ schooling.

Summary

Taken together, Study 1 and Study 2 showed strengths and challenges among the EB population. In short, Study 1 showed no differences in outcomes between EBs and non-EBs. The lack of significant findings may relate to the nature of the cultural and racial diversity of the participating schools. Alternatively, the lack of significant findings may be due to the within group differences of the EB ‘combined’ sample, as it included current and exited EBs. One must be mindful of the possible acculturation and academic performance differences between current

and exited-EBs. In fact, the current vs. exited-EBs analysis indicated that current-EBs are at greater risk than exited-EBs for some school-related outcomes. First, Study 1 showed that current-EBs self-reported higher rates of negative mental health as compared to non-EBs. Second, a post-hoc analysis showed that teacher-reported SEC, EB status (current vs. exited), and academic achievement are intertwined. Third, a descriptive analysis of means found that current-EBs are perceived by teachers as having lower SECs than exited-EBs. Fourth, in focus groups (Study 2) current-EB status was more strongly linked to experiences of bullying than exited-EB status. Focus group data further showed that several positive themes emerged from both current and exited-EBs', yet negative themes mostly emerged from the current-EBs.

It is also important to point out one result diverged from the above pattern of findings related to heightened concerns about current-EBs' well-being relative to exited-EB's well-being. Specifically, in Study 1 a single statistical trend suggested that exited-EBs were at greater risk than current EBs in the area of school climate. Regression results showed that exited-EBs had worse perceptions of school climate than their current-EB counterparts.

Despite the overall statistical results indicating greater concern about current-EBs, findings from Study 2 suggest students' experience of ESL programming may be more complex than it appears. In brief, Study 2 identified positive and negative themes that emerged from focus groups with EBs. The findings demonstrated that this population experience targeted bullying, but they also self-reported several protective factors which may mitigate their negative encounters with other peers. Importantly, it seems that exited-EB lose a sense belongingness to the ESL group. This may explain our trend in Study 1, showing that compared to current-EBs, exited-EBs reported worse perceptions of school climate. Perhaps ESL serves as a protective factor and, once these students exit ESL, they lose this support. Nonetheless, exited-EBs also reported fewer experiences of bullying upon exiting their ESL program and a sense of pride in

having successfully acquired the English language. Perhaps the positive report of exiting the ESL program is due to a desire to feel integrated into the general population, not acknowledging the support that the ESL program represents. Understanding this population is a complex task that requires further research to unravel differences among non-EBs, current-EBs and exited-EBs.

Limitations and Future Directions

The current study has several limitations that should be addressed in future studies. First, the EB sample was somewhat small ($N = 168$), including current-EBs ($n = 48$) and exited-EBs ($n = 120$). A larger EB sample may have helped to detect statistically significant differences (Cohen, 1988). Second, it could be argued that combining current and exited-EBs' is problematic as the students are at different stages in their academic and acculturation process. Hence, future research should be conducted using a larger sample of EB students and classifying this group as current-EBs only.

Third, when administering self-reported scales, it is important to consider possible effects of social desirability. Krumpal (2018) defines social desirability as the need of individuals to present favorably to receive social approval. Krumpal (2018) further states that research subjects often present positively, masking their behaviors in research studies. Therefore, the findings in the current study should be interpreted with caution. Specifically, two of the scales used for data collection were self-reported measures (DESSA-Mini and SCPP-II). Additionally, the nature of focus groups is in a group setting and involving peers, which may have impacted student responses. Another potential influence of social desirability interference was the presence of an ESL teacher during the focus groups, perhaps swaying student responses.

Fourth, how EBs experience school climate should be studied further. In Study 1, the findings indicated an unexpected trend showing that exited-EBs reported worst perceptions of school climate; however, in Study 2, exited-EBs in the focus groups reported better experience since exiting their ESL program. Perhaps analyzing how these students are identified as EBs can

help understand how EBs are experiencing school climate. For example, are EBs identified by their non-EB' peers due to their non-English first language accent? If so, then exiting the EB program may not necessary relieve them from targeted bullying and they may be losing the support that they had in their ESL program. In addition, labeling of EBs may help explain how these students are perceived in schools. As discussed in the literature review, there has been contradictory findings on how labeling may impact the experience of EBs (Shin, 2018; Umansky, 2016). Future studies should analyze the impact of EB labeling and how EBs are identified by their non-EB peers. Perhaps an anonymous survey for non-EBs discussing their perceptions of EBs could help identify topics of discussion to promote integration.

Fifth, ethnicity should be considered when analyzing the experience of EBs. As discussed earlier, EBs are a minority group as a whole, however, EBs are comprised of different ethnic groups (Aud et al., 2010). Future studies should seek to understand if there are differences in the experience of being an EB in the majority ethnicity versus being an EB in a minority ethnicity in their schools. Specifically, it would be informative to learn if EBs who encounter peers from the same ethnic background have a different experience than those who do not encounter peers from their same ethnic background.

Lastly, the lead researcher's social positionality should be discussed as a limitation and a strength. The lead researcher is a former EB student, which could have impacted the collection of qualitative data. Due to her prior association with an ESL program, the lead researcher may have had biases impacting her ability to stay impartial while posing questions to the groups. Thus, possibly impacting students' responses. Nonetheless, her experience as a former EB, may also have been a strength. As a former EB, she may have presented as sensitive to the experiences of EBs, which could have helped EBs feel at ease and more open to share their experiences in the groups. In addition, although the researcher is a former EB student, she had no

prior association with the school in which the focus groups were conducted, perhaps minimizing possible biases.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The current research contributed to knowledge about the school experiences of EB students. Specifically, this study added to the literature about EBs' social-emotional competencies, overall SEC, mental health and their perceptions of school climate. Study 1 aimed to gain insight into EBs' experience in schools by examining their self-reported negative mental health and teacher-reported SEC. Additionally, Study 1 examined school climate and the impact of climate perceptions on EBs' SEC and negative mental health. While many studies have examined the benefits of SEL (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017; Zins & Elias, 2006), much less is known about EBs and SEL/C. Specifically, SEL has been associated with increased academic engagement and performance and reduced risk of maladjustment (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017; Zins & Elias, 2006). Given the positive impact that SEL has in classrooms and with students, this study aimed to bring attention to EBs' overall SEC and their individual social-emotional competencies in school settings. Furthermore, the literature has shown that EBs are prone to suffering from negative mental health outcomes (Albeg & Castro-Olivo, 2014; Perreira & Ornelas, 2011); therefore, the current study aimed to examine EBs' self-reported mental health. Lastly, the study focused on student-perceived school climate (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Study 2 analyzed qualitative data from five focus groups of EBs. The qualitative analysis attempted to offer a more in-depth understanding of the school experience of this population.

Findings from Study 1 indicated that EBs perform lower academically when compared to their non-EB peers. No other significant differences were found between the non-EB and EB 'combined' sample; however, there were several differences between the current and exited-EB

sample. Specifically, exited-EBs performed higher academically than current-EBs—this was to be expected for ELA but perhaps not for mathematics. Additionally, mean differences showed that exited-EBs were perceived by teachers as having better social-emotional competencies than current-EBs. Regression results also indicated that exited-EBs reported less negative mental health outcomes. There were no significant findings at the $p < .05$ level with regard to the overall SEC. However, a post-hoc multiple regression showed that TR SEC, EB status (current vs. exited) and academic achievement may be intertwined. Finally, the school climate analysis of current vs. exited-EBs suggested a trend ($p < .10$) indicating that exited-EBs reported worse perceptions of school climate compared to their current-EBs counterparts.

Lastly, our qualitative data analysis showed that EBs reported several positive themes and fewer negative themes. Overall there were eight positive themes and four negative themes. However, it was notable that the negative themes were mostly reported by current-EB or related to former EB status in ESL classes. Specifically, the EB population reported to have experienced bullying associated with their limited English proficiency.

The current findings suggests that EBs would benefit significantly from interventions to foster their qualities of resiliency. Social-emotional learning programs should target EBs' needs. For example, Castro-Olivo's (2014) study implemented an adapted SEL intervention for Spanish speaking EBs and found an increased knowledge of SECs and resiliency in EBs. Future research could follow Castro-Olivo's model to adapt and implement SEL interventions, targeting the EB population. Moreover, future research should consider the SEL brief by Jager et al. (2018) to possibly expand the definitions of SECs offering a broader understanding of EBs' and SECs.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that EBs would benefit from academic support, positive integration into the school system, and peer support groups. School psychologists are encouraged to create workshops and activities specifically designed to facilitate sharing of

experiences and bonding among EBs and non-EBs. Additionally, bullying should be addressed by a schoolwide intervention helping students appreciate and respect differences in their peers. EB's are a diverse and complex minority group that strive towards integrating into our educational system. Despite the diverse experiences and characteristics that EBs may have, it appears to be common for EB to present as tremendously resilient.

References

- Adams, S. R., & Richie, C. (2017). Social emotional learning and English language learners: A review of the literature. *Intesol Journal*, 17 (1), 77–93.
- Albeg, L. J., & Castro-Olivo, S. M. (2014). The relationship between mental health, acculturative stress, and academic performance in a Latino middle school sample. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 18, 178-186. doi:10.1007/s40688-014-0010-1
- Ardasheva, Y., Tretter, T., & Kinny, M. (2011). English language learners and academic achievement: Revisiting the threshold hypothesis. *Language Learning*, 62(3), 769–812. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00652.x
- Aud, S., Hussar, W., Planty, M., Snyder, T., Bianco, K., Fox, M., ... Drake, L. (2010). *The condition of education 2010* (NCES Report 2010-028). Retrieved from National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences website: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010028.pdf>.
- Bartlett, L., Mendenhall, M., & Ghaffar-Kucher A. (2017). Culture in acculturation: Refugee youth's schooling experiences in international school in New York City. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 60, 109-119. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.04.005
- Batalova, J., & Alperin, E. (2018, July 10). Immigrants in the US with the fastest-growing foreign-born populations. *Migration Information Source*. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source>
- Bunch, M. (2011). Testing English language learners under no child left behind. *Language Testing*, 28(3), 323–341. doi:10.1177/0265532211404186
- Castro-Olivo, S. M. & Merrell, K. W. (2012). Validating culture adaptations of a school-based social-emotional learning programme for use with Latino immigrant adolescents. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, 1-15. doi:10.1080/1754730X.2012.689193

- Castro-Olivo, S. M. (2014). Promoting social-emotional learning in adolescent Latino ELLs: A study of the culturally adapted strong teens program. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 29(4), 567-577. doi:10.1037/spq0000055
- Cervantes, R. C., Padilla, A. M., Napper, L. E., & Goldbach, J. T. (2013). Acculturation-related stress and mental health outcomes among three generations of Hispanic adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 35(4), 451-468. doi:10.1177/0739986313500924
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*. New York, NY: Routledge Academic.
- Cohen, J. (2006). Social, emotional, ethical, and academic education: Creating a climate for learning, participation in democracy, and well-being. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(2), 201-237. doi:10.17763/haer.76.2.j44854x1524644vn
- Cohen, J., McCabe, L., Michelli, N., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, 111(1), 180–213. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/library>
- CASEL (2018). In CASEL's *core SEL competencies*. Retrieved from <https://casel.org>
- Cook, A., Perusee, R., & Rojas, E. (2015). Promoting college access among Latina/o English language learners: Implications for professional school counselors. *Journal of School Counseling*, 13(18), 1-43. Retrieved from <http://jsc.montana.edu>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research (3rd ed.): Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.
- De Jong, E. J. (2004). After exit: Academic achievement patterns of former English language learners. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 12(50), 1-20. doi:10.14507/epaa.v12n50.2004

- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405–432.
doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x
- Elias, M. J., Parker, S. J., Kash, V. M., & Dunkeblau, E. (2007.). Social-emotional learning and character and moral education in children: Synergy or fundamental divergence in our schools. *Journal of Character Education*, 5(2), 167–181.
- Elias, M. J., & Haynes, N. M. (2008). Social competence, social support, and academic achievement in minority, low-income, urban elementary school children. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23(4), 474-495. doi:10.1037/1045-3830.23.4.474
- Elias, M. J., & Leverett, L. (2011). Consultant's corner: Consultation to urban schools for improvements in academics and behavior: No alibis. No excuses. No exceptions. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 21(1), 28-45.
doi:10.1080/10474412.2010.522877
- Gandara, C. P., Aldana, S. U. (2014). Who's segregated now? Latinos, language and the future of integrated schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(5), 735-748.
doi:10.1177/0013161X14549957
- Garcia, O., Kleifgen, J. A., & Falchi, L. (2008). From English language learners to emergent bilinguals. *Equity Matters: Research Review No. 1*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED524002.pdf>
- Golman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. New York, New York: Bantam Books, Inc.
- Gregory, A., & Fergus, E. (2017). Social and emotional learning and equity in school discipline. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 117-136

- Gregory, A., & Roberts, G. (2017). Teacher beliefs and the overrepresentation of Black students in classroom discipline. *Theory Into Practice*, 56(3), 187-194. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2017.1336035
- Haynes, J. (2007). *Getting started with English language learners: How educators can meet the challenge*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Hernandez, D., Denton, N., & Macartney, S. (2008). Children in immigrant families: Looking to America's future. *Social Policy Report*, 22(3), 1–24. doi:10.1002/j.2379-3988.2008.tb00056.x
- Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D. R., & Borowski, T. (2018). Equity and social-emotional learning: A cultural analysis. *CASEL Assessment Work Group Brief series*. Retrieved from: <https://measuringSEL.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Frameworks-Equity.pdf>
- Kanno, Y., & Gromley, J. (2013). English language learners' access to and attainment in postsecondary education. *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.*, 47 (1), 89-121. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43267775>
- Krueger, R., & Casey, M. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Krumpal, I. (2018). Social desirability. In B. Frey (Ed.) *The SAGE encyclopedia of educational research, measurement, and evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc. doi:10.4135/9781506326139.n638
- LeBuffe, P. A., Shapiro, V. B., & Robitaille, J. L. (2016). The Devereaux student strengths assessment (DESSA) comprehensive system: Screening, assessing, planning, and monitoring. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.05.002>

Lickona, T., & Davidson, M. L. (2004). *School as a Caring Community Profile-II (SCCP II)*.

SUNY Cortland: Center for the 4th and 5th Rs. Retrieved June 11, 2019, from

<http://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/assessment-instruments.dot>

McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Wang, K., Rathbun, A., Barmer, A., Forrest

Cataldi, E., & Bullock Mann, F. (2018). *The Condition of Education 2018 (NCES 2018)*.

US Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED583502.pdf>

Murphey, D. (2014). The academic achievement of English language learners: Data for the U.S

and each of the states. *Child Trends*. doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.33510.63041

Niehaus, K. & Adelson, J. (2013). Self-concept and native language background: A study of

measurement invariance and cross-group comparisons in third grade. *Journal of*

Educational Psychology, 105(1), 226-240. doi:10.1037/a0030556

Niehaus, K., Adelson, J., Sejuit, A., & Zheng, J. (2017). Native language background and

academic achievement: Is socioemotional well-being a mediator? *Applied Developmental*

Science, 21(4), 251–265. doi:10.1080/10888691.2016.1203790

Pearson (2018). *PARCC Final Technical Report for 2017 Administration* (2017 Technical

Report).

Perreira, K. M., & Ornelas, I. J. (2011). The physical and psychological well-being of immigrant

children. *The Future of Children*, 21(1), 195-218. doi:10.1353/foc.2011.0002

Potochnick, S. R., & Perreira, K. M. (2010). Depression and anxiety among first-generation

immigrant Latino youth: key correlates and implications for future research. *The Journal of*

nervous and mental disease, 198(7), 470–477. doi:10.1097/NMD.0b013e3181e4ce24

Rawlings, L., Capps, R., Gentsch, K., & Fortuny, K. (2007). *Immigrant integration in low-*

income urban neighborhoods. Retrieved from Urban Institute website

https://www.urban.org/research/publication/immigrant-integration-low-income-urban-neighborhoods/view/full_report

Redfield, S. E., & Nance, J. P. (2016). American Bar Association: Joint task force on reversing the school-to-prison pipeline. *The University of Memphis Law Review*, 47(1), 1-180. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2736323

Reyes, J., Mocerri, D., Patel, K. & Elias, M. J. (2009, November). Bullying in schools: The complex relationship between student ethnicity, school ethnic composition, and climate. Presentation at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive, Therapies 43rd Annual Convention, NY.

Romer, N., Ravitch, K., Tom, K., Merrell, K. W. (2011). Gender differences in positive social-emotional functioning. *Psychology in the Schools*, 48(10), 958-970. doi: 10.1002/pits.20604

Rubin, D. B. (1987). *Multiple Imputation for Nonresponse in Surveys*. New York: Wiley.

Rodriguez, D., Ringler, M., O'Neal, D., & Bunn, K. (2009). English language learners' perceptions of school environment. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 23(4), 513-526. doi:10.1080/02568540909594678

Rowe, H. L., & Trickett, E. J. (2017). Student diversity representation and reporting in universal school-based social and emotional learning programs: Implications for generalizability. *Educational Psychology Review*, 1-25.

Sam, D., & Berry, J. (2010). Acculturation: When individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 472-481. doi:10.1177/1745691610373075

- Shin, N. (2018). The effects of the initial English language learner classification on students' later academic outcomes. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 40(2), 175–195. doi:10.3102/0162373717737378
- Simon, N. S., & Johnson, S. M. (2015). Teacher turnover in high-poverty schools: What we know and can do. *Teachers College Record*, 117(3), 1-36.
- Slavin, R., & Cheung, A. (2005). A synthesis of research on language of reading instruction for English language learners. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(2), 247–284. doi:10.3102/00346543075002247
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using Multivariate Statistics* (6th Edition). Boston, Massachusetts: Pearson
- Taylor, R. D., Durlak, J. A., Oberle, E., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development*, 88(4), 1156-1171.
- Tharinger, D. J. (1998). School psychologists: Promoting secure and autonomous attachment: A focus on supervision. *The School Psychologist*, 52, 106-123.
- Tienda, M., & Haskins, R. (2011). Immigrant children: Introducing the issue. *The Future of Children*, 21(1), 3-18. doi:10.1353/foc.2011.0010
- Umansky, I. (2016). To be or not to be EL: An examination of the impact of classifying students as English learners. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 38(4), 714–737. doi:10.3102/0162373716664802
- US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences. (2010). *The condition of education 2010* (NCES Report 2010-028). Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010028.pdf>.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences. (2018). *The condition of education 2018* (NCES Report 2018-144). Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED583502.pdf>

United States Census Bureau (2017). More than 77 million people enrolled in US schools, Census Bureau reports (Release No. CB17-142). Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/school-enrollment.html>

Vera, E., Hook, K., Daskalova, P., Hill, L., Galvin, S., Fritsche, ... Gruber, E. (2017). Understanding the socioemotional worlds of English learners: A retrospective study. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 28(2), 137-163.
doi:10.1080/10474412.2017.1305279

Viera, A. J., & Garrett, J. M. (2005). Understanding interobserver agreement: The kappa statistic. *Family Medicine*, 37(5), 360-363.

Way, N., Reddy, R., & Rhodes, J. (2007). Student's perceptions of school climate during the middle school years: Associations with trajectories of psychological and behavioral adjustment. *Community Psychology*, 40, 194-213. doi:10.1007/s10464-007-9143-y

Whiteside, K. E., Gooch, D., Norbury, C. F. (2017). English language proficiency and early school attainment among children learning English as an additional language. *Child Development*, 88(3), 812-827. doi:10.1111/cdev.12615

Wilde, J. (2010). *Comparing results of the NAEP long-term trend assessment: ELLs, former ELLs, and English-proficient students*. Paper session presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, Denver, CO. Retrieved from http://www.nce.gwu.edu/files/uploads/16/AERA_2010_Wilde.pdf

- Winsler, A., Kim, Y. K., & Richard, E. R. (2014). Socio-emotional skills, behavior problems, and Spanish competence predict the acquisition of English among English language learners in poverty. *Developmental Psychology* 50(9), 2242-2254. doi:10.1037/a0037161
- Zins, J. E., & Elias, M. J. (2007). Social and emotional learning: Promoting the development of all students. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 17(2-3), 233-255. doi: 10.1080/10474410701413152

Appendix A

Measures

<i>Devereux Student Strengths Assessment-Mini, Form A</i>					
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
During the past 4 weeks, how often did the student....					
Accept responsibility for what she/he did?	0	1	2	3	4
Do something nice for somebody?	0	1	2	3	4
Speak about positive things?	0	1	2	3	4
Pay attention?	0	1	2	3	4
Contribute to group efforts?	0	1	2	3	4
Perform the steps of a task in order?	0	1	2	3	4
Show care when doing a project or school-work?	0	1	2	3	4
Follow the advice of a trusted adult?	0	1	2	3	4

Note: Scale to measure teacher-reported social emotional competencies

<i>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire</i>			
Scale Items	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
I get a lot of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness.	0	1	2
I get very angry and often lose my temper.	0	1	2
I would rather be alone than with people my age.	0	1	2
I usually do as I am told.	0	1	2
I worry a lot.	0	1	2
I have one good friend or more.	0	1	2
I fight a lot. I can make other people do what I want.	0	1	2
Other people my age generally like me.	0	1	2
I am nervous in new situations. I easily lose confidence.	0	1	2
I am often accused of lying or cheating.	0	1	2
Other children or young people pick on me or bully me.	0	1	2
I get along better with adults than with people my own age.	0	1	2
I have many fears, I am easily scared.	0	1	2

Note: Adapted scale for student self-reported negative mental health.

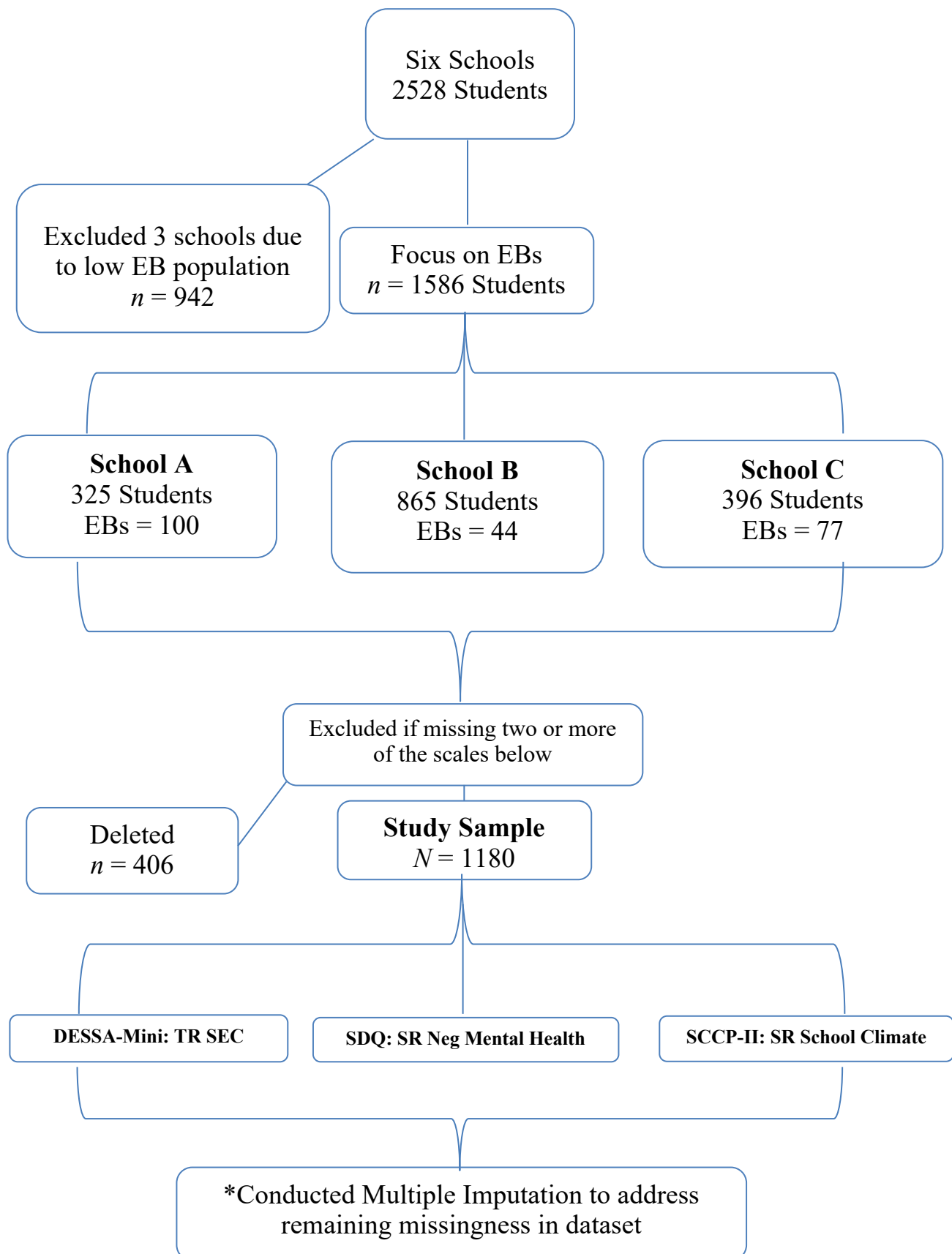
School As a Caring Community Profile

	Disagree A LOT!	Disagree a Little	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree a Little	Agree A LOT!
Students treat classmates with respect. That means they are polite, think about others' feelings when with them, and don't say bad things to them.	1	2	3	4	5
Students exclude those who are different. "Exclude" means to leave out of groups or other activities.	1	2	3	4	5
Students help each other, even if they are not friends.	1	2	3	4	5
When students do something hurtful, they try to make up for it.	1	2	3	4	5
Students try to get other students to follow school rules.	1	2	3	4	5
Students work well together.	1	2	3	4	5
Students are disrespectful toward their teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
Students help new students feel accepted.	1	2	3	4	5
Students pick on other students. To "pick on" means to put down or to tease.	1	2	3	4	5
Students are willing to forgive each other. When you "forgive", you are telling someone that you are not angry with them anymore.	1	2	3	4	5
Students resolve conflicts without fighting, insults, or threats. That means when students are upset with others or disagree, they will find a way to deal with it without fighting, insulting, or threatening others.	1	2	3	4	5
Students like being in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
Students are involved in helping to solve school problems.	1	2	3	4	5
Students can talk to their teachers about problems that are bothering them.	1	2	3	4	5
In this school, students don't feel like they learn anything useful. That means that students don't think that what they learn can be used in their everyday life or future.	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers go out of their way to help students who need extra help.	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers in this school like to come here.	1	2	3	4	5
In this school you can count on adults to try to make sure students are safe.	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers are unfair in their treatment of students.	1	2	3	4	5
Students here have a lot of school pride.	1	2	3	4	5

Note: Student self-reported perceptions of school climate

Appendix B

Sampling Strategy



Appendix C

Focus Groups Protocol

EB Focus Group Protocol

*****Identify this information as it might come up during Focus groups**

A. About the student	
1. What Grade are you in?	2. Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
3. Primary language? <input type="checkbox"/> _____	
4. How long have you been in the ESL class? <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	

Guidelines

1. Introduction
 - a. OVERVIEW OF INTRODUCTION
 - i. MOSAIC Project—learn about your experiences as Emergent Bilinguals Or, Multilingual students in schools.
 - ii. DEFINE PORPUSE
 - iii. My Role as lead of Focus Group
 - b. CONFIDENTIALITY
 - i. Brief principal letter
2. **Group introduction** by first name, and how do you identify yourself?
 - a. Can you introduce yourself by first name, say what your first language is and being that English is not your first 1st language, tell me how you identify yourself?
3. **Start Focus Group with Question: Ask for examples throughout the group.**
 - a. Pros and cons of speaking more than one language
 - i. What are some good things for you?
 - ii. What about some bad things about it?
 - b. Who gives you the most support at school? If you need help, who do you turn to?
 - i. What is your favorite class?
 1. Why?
 - ii. What is your least favorite class?
 1. Why?

FOCUS GROUP CONTENT:

4. Experiences in school as a Multilingual student
 - a. How are your relationships with exited-EB students?
 - b. How is your interaction with native (someone whose first language is English) English speakers?
 - c. Has this changed in the past year or so?
 - i. Why do you think it has changed?
5. Do you feel that you are treated with more, less or same respect as native English speakers?
 - a. On a scale from 1 to 10— (1 being not at all and 10 being very much so) Do you think that your middle school experience as a Multilingual student is different than students who speak English as their first language?
 - i. Who thought of a 10?
 - ii. Who thought of a 5?
 - iii. Who thought of a 1?
 - iv. Examples? Can you give me an example of how you feel different?
6. What could make your experience in school better?
 - a. Emotionally—happier, less worried, or more comfortable?
 - b. Academically—help you with your grades?
7. Do you feel welcomed and part of the school?
 - a. Yes or No
 - b. On a scale from 1 to 10, how welcomed do you feel?
 - c. Are you treated and do you treat others with respect? That means being polite, thinking of others' feelings when with them, and not saying or being said bad things?
8. On a scale from 1 to 10--Do you feel that other students are kind?
9. On a scale from 1 to 10--Do you feel that teachers are kind?
10. Have you been picked on by other students or teachers?
 - a. To “pick on” means to put down or to tease.
 - b. Examples
 - c. Has this been better or worst in the past year? Why do you think it changed?
11. On a scale from 1 to 10--Do you feel comfortable participating in class?
 - i. Examples?
 - ii. Who thought of a 10?
 - iii. Who thought of a 5?
 - iv. Who thought of a 1?
12. On a scale from 1 to 10--Do you feel excluded, or different than other students?
 - a. Excluded means be left out of groups or other activities.
 - i. Examples?
 - ii. Who thought of a 10?
 - iii. Who thought of a 5?
 - iv. Who thought of a 1?
13. On a scale from 1-10 (1 being not all and 10 being very much so) Does anything make you nervous in school? (examples)
 - i. Who thought of a 10?
 - ii. Who thought of a 5?
 - iii. Who thought of a 1?

14. If you feel sad, nervous, or angry, what do you do or who do you go to?
 - a. Biggest support in the school?
15. On a scale from 1-10, do you feel that you can do well in school?
 - i. Who thought of a 10?
 - ii. Who thought of a 5?
 - iii. Who thought of a 1?
 - b. On a scale from 1 – 10, Do you feel that your classmates and teachers know that you can do good in school?
 - i. Who thought of a 10?
 - ii. Who thought of a 5?
 - iii. Who thought of a 1?
16. On a scale from 1-10 do you do well in school?
17. What are your goals for the future? Or, how do you imagine your future?
 - a. What would you like to be when you grow-up?
 - b. Will you go to college?

MOSAIC

The MOSAIC project helps students develop social and emotional skills, such as how to communicate effectively with others, how to control our emotions, how to be kind to others, and how to solve problems with others.

18. Have you heard of the MOSAIC project?
 - a. If so, do you think it has made it a difference in how students treat each other?
 - i. Yes or No?
 - b. What do you like best about the MOSAIC project?
 - c. If you have not heard about it, why do you think that you have not heard about it?
 - d. Would you like to be part of it?
19. Do you learn how to get along with all peers? How?
20. If there is conflict with your peers, does anyone help you resolve conflict?
21. Do you guys learn to talk to people that are not in your friend circle, or are different than you?
22. Do you ever get a chance to talk about what you think is fair?
23. Do you guys learn how to calm yourselves down? How?

Closing—Go Around: Ideal vision for your school (special power)

Appendix D

Coding Focus Groups Data

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS CODING MANUAL
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Emergent Bilinguals. The experience of Emergent Bilinguals at a northeaster urban school was assessed by conducting five focus groups. Using focus group methodology, our participants were provided with an opportunity to respond to semi-structured interview questions and participate in further discussion. This method allows for participants to share their perceptions in a nonthreatening environment (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Directions on how to use the manual: Codes in this manual will be based on a two-point scale (0 for Negative Themes, 1 Positive Themes). In addition, we will code domains within either a positive or negative theme. In order to identify the domains, you will identify under which domain the statement falls and identify which description on the given domain fits better for the given codifiable statement; thus, identifying the statements' to code under the adequate numbered domain.

Coding Scheme

Code 1: *Positive Themes* are statements that the participants describe as positive experiences. Within the positive themes there are statements that the participants report to have experience in the past, these statements should be coded accordingly.

For example,

Step 1: Using the *Coding Spreadsheet*, start with focus group # 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

Step 2: Start with the first identified line to code: 1A.

Step 3: Decide if the line/statement is a—positive (1) or negative (0) experience.

Step 4: Look at coding key to the right of the coding table and decide which domain fits best. For this example, **Relationship Skills**, → enter the domain number: 1, under the domain column (D), then identify the statement that fits best, → Can speak to more people.

Step 5: Copy/paste the identified statement—Can speak to more people, into the code column and enter the identified statement letter → b, under the letter column (E).

Code 2: *Negative Themes* are statements that the participants describe as negative experiences. Within the negative themes there are statements that the participants report to have experience in the past, these statements should be coded accordingly.

THEME	Positive (1) vs. Negative (0)
SUBTHEME: 1 POSITIVE	
1	RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: cooperation, help seeking and providing, and communication.
1a	Helping others
1b	Can speak to more people
2	RESILIENCE: striving to be successful or cope despite adverse situations.
2a	Resilience--e.g., "I had to learn so that I can stand up for myself and for others"
2b	Perceiving benefits from being an EB. E.g., "can help you learn other languages."
2c	Disregarding difficulties, e.g., "things were not difficult."
3	FUTURE ASPIRATIONS Desire or hope to get higher education or a professional job. Goes along with desire for financial success.
3a	Hope for: higher Education/Better work opportunities
3b	Self-report does well academically
3c	Self-report ELA as favorite class
3d	Self-report Math as favorite class
3e	Teachers/others believe you can do well academically
4	POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE: Views school as a caring and supportive environment.
4a	Feeling supported by teachers.
4b	Feeling supported by peers.
4c	Being treated with respect.
4d	Feeling comfortable participating in class or being in school.
4e	Reporting that people in school are kind.
4f	Reporting to feel welcomed in school.
4g	Reports that bullying has gotten better/decreased.
5	ELL GROUP BELONGING: Sense of relationship between EB students, e.g., "we [reference the ELL group] do everything together now."
5a	Identify as an ESL student.
5b	Connected or still connected with EBs.
5c	Appreciation for ESL class.
6	INTEGRATION: Feeling confidence on their acquired English language skills and further engaging in sharing about their own culture with other peers.
6a	Integration—Gaining friendships/feeling included.
6b	Confidence on acquired English language skills.
6c	Reports that learning English is important.
6d	Pride in having learned English.
7	SEPARATION FROM EB/ESL: Emotional and physical separation from EBs-reporting that they no longer speak to peers in ESL and believe that they cannot be identified as exited-EBs.
7a	Separation from EBs/ESL
7b	Believes others cannot identify him/her as not speaking English as their first language
7c	Does not know how to identify self
8	BETTER EXPERIENCE SINCE EXITING ELL
8a	No longer being bullied
8b	Things became easier after leaving ESL

SUBTHEME: 0 NEGATIVE	
9	BULLYING: Aggressive behavior between students that has a perceived or real power imbalance, including verbal (teasing, name calling, taunting, etc.), social bullying/relational bullying which involves hurting someone's reputation, or physical bullying such as making mean or rude hand gestures, pushing, etc.
9a	Bullying Others
9b	Being Bullied
9c	Used to be bullied because of accent/Language
10	STRUGGLES LEARNING ENGLISH (Internal Consistency): Reported difficulty in the process of acquiring the English language. This can be in learning English or acculturating. For example, "I think it's different because we learn it the "proper" way. It was probably harder."
10a	Struggles learning grammar/spoken English
10b	Forgetting native language (sense of shame or inadequacy)
10c	It is hard without English/hard learning English
10d	Acknowledges that it was difficult/lack of friends
11	NEGATIVE CLIMATE: Reports of feeling unsupported or excluded.
11a	Not being treated with respect
11b	Not feeling comfortable participating in class or being in school
11c	People in school are not kind
11d	Feeling excluded/isolated
11e	Disengagement — report that students do not care
12	NO FUTURE ASPIRATIONS: Lack of aspirations, believe or hope to continue to higher education or to have a professional job in the future.
12a	Self-report doesn't do well academically
12b	Doesn't have hope for higher education or professional job