Examining School Participatory Budgeting within a High School Context

by

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ABSTRACT

Student voice has been an inactive component of public education since its conception. Educational practitioners and stakeholders create, define, and uphold federal, state, and local policy centered on growing student educational outcomes. However, most often students are not provided space or opportunities to actively engage with policy or decisions that directly impact their educational experiences. To boost student voice, this action research study explored school participatory budgeting's impact on student engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High School. School participatory budgeting (SPB) is an innovative civic learning tool designed for students to learn democracy in action through the process of participating in the student voice committee on campus, developing proposals, and voting to fund improvement projects that build a stronger school community.

This study utilized a parallel-results convergent MMAR that involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, analyzing them separately, and integrating results into study findings. Participants included eight students that were members of the student voice committee. Study participants completed pre- and post-surveys as well as participated in a focus group. The study and intervention were supported by Mitra's Pyramid of Student Voice and The Social Change Model.

Results of the study indicated that school participatory budgeting had a positive impact on students' engagement with school decision making, civic engagement, and leadership development. Results also revealed that participants were able to lead change for collective student voice, engage civically through real world application, encourage participatory democracy over elite democracy, and increase both communication and

i

collaborative skills. Furthermore, an integration of quantitative and qualitative data was presented, along with connections to the existing research questions and literature. Additional discussion centered on the limitations of the study, implications for practice, future cycles of research, and recommendations for educational practitioners.

DEDICATION

This dissertation and body of work is dedicated to my family and friends who have not only supported me through this educational journey but also have always encouraged me to pursue my dreams through hard work, excellence, integrity, and discipline.

To my parents, I dedicate this to you for your vision, insight, and determination. To my mother, Ingrid H. Johnson, I am nothing without your grace and diligence. For every idea I shared, to each stressed phone, and every inch of doubt within myself, your assurance never swayed–you knew I'd finish, you prayed for it, and it was so. To my father, Tyrone E. Johnson, your teachings and your commitment to both discipline and integrity have guided me through life and completion of this program. Before I ever saw it for myself, you told me, "Sara, college ain't for everybody, but college is for you." You have challenged me to be better, to never stop learning, and to always lead by example even when it is challenging to do so. To my brother, Barney B. Johnson, I am blessed to have you not only as a sibling but also as a mentor. You push me to be better, you spare no critique, and you keep me grounded. To my best friend, Ashley J. Dubuisson, I've said it before, and I will say it again. The world would be a significantly better place if everyone was blessed to have a friend like you. You inspire me to push through obstacles and challenges by encouraging me every step of the way. I could not have accomplished this without your support. To my dog child, Vice Nathaniel Davis, thank you for being the perfect pal through completion of this program. I never felt alone because you were always a grunt, a pant, or a snore away.

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To my current and former school principals, I want to personally thank you for growing me as a school leader through your example, guidance, and support. Mrs. Kristen Jordison, you took a chance on me by offering me my first leadership role as Director of Academic Programs at BASIS Scottsdale. You taught me the importance of building a strong team and navigating school challenges with grace. Mr. Todd Stevens, you taught me the importance of leading with grace, empathy, and high standards all while fostering an environment that is fun and engaging. Dr. Cain Jagodzinski, thank you for teaching me to trust the process and to embrace innovation as a school leader. You encouraged me to think out of the box and to be willing to pivot when necessary. Finally,

iv

thank you, Dr. Janelle Danskey, you are an extraordinary leader, I am so fortunate to have the opportunity to learn under your leadership. You have not only supported me through your words but most importantly through your actions. You have invested in my growth as a leader and have modeled the attributes I strive to embody as a future school leader.

I am also incredibly grateful for the participants who engaged in this study. These students took a leap of faith to believe in my vision for expansion of student voice through school participatory budgeting (SPB). Their insight, support, and engagement not only informed my work as a researcher but expanded my perspective as a school leader. An additional thank you to all faculty and staff at Arcadia High School who supported the effort to implement SPB, as well as my journey in pursuit of my doctoral degree. I am forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

x

LIST OF FIGURES

xi

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The topic of leadership is an ongoing focal point among scholars. A considerable body of interdisciplinary evidence exists exploring leadership development for adults and students attending institutions of higher education. However, there is limited research on leadership education for adolescents, and existing studies mostly emphasize character traits most associated with leadership as an innate ability rather than a developmental process that can be activated in all (Kagay et al., p. 76, 2015). Overall, there is support for the collective benefits of student leadership, such as an improved sense of belonging, higher educational aspirations, increased development of self-concept, decreased substance abuse, etc. (Eccles & Barber, 1999). However, there is still a lack of research on the best practices or frameworks of leadership development for adolescents to address self-identified barriers in their leadership efficacies.

More importantly, research on adolescent leadership is often discussed from an adult perspective, despite developmental differences in cognition and emotional maturity, as well as more limited opportunities for youth to apply leadership skills and learn from their leadership experiences. Leadership frameworks created for adults may therefore not have sufficient relevance to understanding how adolescents perceive and develop their own leadership capacity (Whitehead, 2009). According to Whitehead (2009), to understand better where a young person is in the development of his or her leadership skills. It is necessary to understand the student's perspective on leadership, and the motivations behind his or her decision to engage in leadership opportunities.

1

Student voice has been an inactive component of public education since its conception. Educational practitioners and stakeholders create, define, and uphold federal, state, and local policy centered on growing student educational outcomes. However, most often students are not provided space or opportunities to actively engage with policy or decisions that directly impact their educational experiences. Too often students are kept at a very introductory level of engagement to start and end with surveys of attitude that are discussed but largely do not have the teeth to steer educational outcomes. When opportunities do arise to bring students to the table, the question of concern forms--*which students are brought to the table and why?*

The development of leadership efficacy in adolescents is an essential component of the investment in the continued success of a democratic society (Cinar, 2019). Ultimately, educational institutions are tasked to play a key role in developing quality leaders. The focus of this study is secondary schools. While many provide a multitude of opportunities to be involved on campus, there is little if any oversight or evaluation of the effectiveness of programming in preparing students to be effective leaders after graduation. With continued evidence of the benefits of active student clubs, there can be numerous problems in their operation, including temporary organization of a club that is disbanded at the end of each school year, discontinuity in a club across years of school attendance, and member circulation due to matriculation and graduation (Cinar, 2019). Essentially, with frequent changes of members and lack of consistency, an institutional culture cannot be created, organizational traditions and habits do not emerge, and clubs cannot become a center for goals and ideals (Cinar, 2009). With little oversight, frequent

changes, and lack of leadership training many potential student leaders are unable to build their leadership efficacy. More specifically, most student involvement opportunities on campus generally do not provide options for students to authentically use their agency and voice in a way that directly impacts the policies, decision making, or budget of the school they attend. Simultaneously this can deter the development of individual members' leadership efficacy.

In developing the next generation of leaders, educational practitioners must comprehend students' perceptions of leadership and how being involved in school activities impacts their leadership development. Often thoughts of leadership can bring up images of brave, commanding, powerful and dynamic individuals (Yukl, 2020), which may lead some students to view leadership as unattainable in alignment with their current perceptions of their own leadership efficacy. By better understanding student presumptions, educators can encourage teenagers to shift their understanding of how to cultivate leadership skills and develop their own agency through the stages of awareness, interaction, and mastery (Kagay, 2015).

Problem of Practice

Currently I work as an Assistant Principal of Student Services at Arcadia High School in Phoenix, Arizona. My current role requires the oversight of all clubs and activities, fundraisers, district, and state testing, 9-10th grade discipline, and instructional leadership. Through my oversight of clubs and activities, I see first-hand the positive effects early student involvement in clubs on campus can have on students' sense of belonging, academic performance, character development, and behavior. However, I have also observed that a lack of inclusion, community ownership, and purpose in the

investment of strong student leadership programming are limiting student engagement and involvement that mirrors the diversity reflected in our campus's enrollment.

   While the Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD) and my school site, Arcadia High School (AHS) have both made strides to boost opportunities for student leaders to voice their opinions, there is still limited opportunity for students to have a direct vote or say in site-level and district-level decision-making. My action research study aligns directly with the district's vision of a strategic partnership with student stakeholders and elevates this vision to allow actionable opportunity for students to not only be heard but to also directly determine how a portion of school funds are allocated. Previous cycles of action research provided a baseline on student motivations to engage in leadership roles on the AHS campus. This baseline data highlighted a need to broaden access to leadership opportunities on campus by not only boosting leadership development and engagement but also fostering opportunity for students to have a direct impact on school-based decision making through civic engagement on campus. Through my research, I evaluated how implementing school participatory budgeting (SPB) would impact students' engagement with school-based decision making, civic engagement, and leadership development when provided a platform to directly determine how to spend $6,000 of the school's budget. SPB is a democratic process in which students are provided an opportunity to determine how a portion of the school's budget is to be spent and used. Student participants follow five interactive phases: designing the process, collecting ideas, developing proposals, campaigning, and voting, and implementing and evaluating.

Context for the Study

Arcadia High School is a public, four-year secondary school, and is one of the 30 schools within the Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD) that serves over 22,000 students total each year. Arcadia High School's mission is that all stakeholders show respect for educational integrity by aligning with the pillars of RKDA—respect, kindness, diversity, and achievement. The student population at Arcadia High School consists of 1,650 students with over 80 certified teachers. The staff population is representative of a multitude of experiences and backgrounds that have culminated in 74% of teachers holding advanced degrees. Arcadia's budgeting is determined by the school district and then the site budget is determined by the principal on how to allocate funds. Students currently do not have any direct voice in how monies are currently spent or allocated. Efforts to boost student voice have been taken by the school district through the facilitation of the Student Advisory Board (SAB) which is a group of five students from each of the five high schools in SUSD that come together to problem solve and help shape the overall student experience. Students meet monthly with SUSD District Leadership to collaborate and share current concerns and opportunities for improvement. Last year, the SAB collaborated directly with district cabinet members to amend the district school dress code to ensure more equity amongst genders. In addition, they have surveyed their home schools for a myriad of topics in particular COVID, which they collected data and then presented this data to the governing board for their consideration.

Efforts to boost student voice at Arcadia High School have been taken through the selection of SAB representative each year, hosting of an annual Teen Town Hall, and expansion of our leadership organizations that directly work with administration including Principal Advisory Board, Student Equity and Inclusion Committee, Titan

Mentors, Unitown, and National Honor Society (NHS). Selection for SAB requires an application and there are limited seats each year based on how many students choose not to retain their seat for the upcoming school year. With an influx of applications in August 2020, our administrative team opted to offer an additional opportunity for leadership by creating the Principal Advisory Board where students that were not selected for the district SAB could still work directly with site administrators to advocate for the needs of our campus directly. This opportunity allowed us to empower more students with the opportunity to be heard and to be a part of change and innovation on campus. In the Spring of 2022, we hosted our second Teen Town Hall in which our student leaders from a host of student organizations gathered to plan and host the event. The goal of the Teen Town Hall was to offer an opportunity for students to pose questions, comments, and concerns directly to the administration to provide a platform for students' voices. With the support of the school district, all five high schools in SUSD hosted a Teen Town Hall in Spring 2022. While efforts have been made to expand opportunities for student leadership as well as the development of adult-youth partnerships, there has been limited opportunity for students to directly impact site-level decision-making. Intentional efforts have been made to bolster students' voices; however, visible action has not been taken to enact change based on direct student feedback.

The school campus currently has over 14 AIA-sponsored sports and over 50 active student-sponsored clubs. Scottsdale Unified School District declares that student activities are defined in Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §15-1121 as student clubs, organizations, school plays, or other student entertainment. Student activities monies are raised by the efforts of students with the approval of the Governing Board (Scottsdale

Unified School District, 2017, p. 1). Currently, student clubs provide the only forum in the school in which students have full discretion on how monies are raised and spent pending administrative approval. The club advisor cannot determine how monies are spent or how monies are raised. All student clubs at Arcadia High School require a club advisor that must be a certified staff member such as a teacher, counselor, or administrator. The purpose of student activities is for each student organization to be student-led with the club advisors merely serving as the supervisor and, at times, a facilitator. Club funds are raised by students and the spending of these funds is determined by the student members. When students want to spend their club funds or if they want to raise club funds, they must follow a process. To run a fundraiser, a club must host a meeting and keep accurate club minutes in which the club votes to host a fundraiser. Then they must clearly outline how the money will be raised and what the funds will be used for. In addition to the club minutes, a fundraiser form must be completed and submitted to the office of Student Services for the Assistant Principal of Student Services to process.

Every club requires a leadership cabinet that encompasses a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Based on data pulled from the Fall of 2020, there were 108 leadership positions for students within student activities. At the time of this report, two clubs had not yet elected their leadership cabinet resulting in the reporting of data for 25 active clubs and 100 leadership positions. As shown in Table 1, in comparison of ethnicity between enrolled students and current student leaders, there is a significant disproportionality in student leadership representation amongst White and Hispanic students most specifically. While Hispanic/Latino students account for 35% of the

7

student population, they only hold 15% of student leadership positions on campus. Additionally, White students account for 55% of the student population; however, they hold 72% of all current student leadership positions. In reference to other demographics, both Asian/Pacific Islanders and African American students account for a higher percentage of leadership positions than their enrollment percentage. More specifically, Asian/Pacific Islander students account for 2% of student enrollment but represent 5% of student leadership positions and African American students account for 4% of the student population and 7% of all student leadership positions.

Table 1

AHS Demographic Data by Ethnicity for Enrollment & Student Leadership Positions

Leadership by Ethnicity	Total #	% of Enrollment	Total #	% of Student Leaders
American Indian/Alaskan Native	37	3%	1	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	35	2%	5	5%
African American	57	4%	7	7%
Hispanic/Latino	503	35%	15	15%
White (not Hispanic)	796	55%	72	72%
Multi-Racial	18	1%	0	0%
Total	1450		100	

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

In terms of gender and academic placement, student enrollment in comparison to student leadership positions is referenced in Table 2 and Table 3. Female students account for 49% of the student population and represent 54% of student leaders while males represent 51% of the student population and 46% of current student leaders. As for academic placement, students that have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504, or are currently English Language Learners (ELL) students display slightly disproportionate levels within current student leadership positions. General education students account for 81% of the enrollment and represent 86% of all student leaders while SPED students account for 7% of the student population and 4% of leadership positions. Students with a 504 account for 11% of the student population and 9% of leadership positions while ELL students account for 1% of the student population and 0% of leadership positions. Additionally, the average overall GPA for current student leaders is 4.12. Based on the data presented, a student leader at Arcadia High School is most likely to be a White female student within the general education population with a 4.12 GPA. This profile of what statistically equates to an Arcadia student leader will be utilized to inform the recruitment process of student leaders for the student voice committee discussed later in Chapter 3 as a measure to ensure an inclusive representation of the student body.

Table 2

AHS Demographic Data by Gender for Enrollment & Student Leadership Positions

Leadership by Gender	Total #	% of Enrollment	Total #	% of Student Leaders
Total	1450		100	
Female	744	49%	54	54%
Male	706	51%	46	46%

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Table 3

AHS Academic Placement for School Enrollment & Student Leadership Positions

Leadership by Academic Placement	Total #	% of Enrollment	Total #	% of Student Leaders
General Education	1170	81%	86	86%
IEP	99	7%	4	4%
504	164	11%	9	9%
ELL	17	1%	0	0%

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Purpose of Study

Participatory budgeting (PB) refers to the collective allocation of a public budget as determined by community members; thereby, sharing the power and influence with the community. PB originated in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil where the city took on an

experimental variant of democracy in which civic decision making was one that mixed both participation and equity by empowering community members to redirect resources to the greatest needs. With respect to current research on participatory budgeting, this action research study explored school participatory budgeting's impact on student engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High School. School Participatory Budgeting (SPB) is an innovative civic learning tool designed to improve student agency, collaboration and critical-thinking skills and prepare young people to be active, informed, and engaged participants in civic life for the long term (Center for the Future of Arizona, n.d.). Students learn democracy in action through the process of participating in SPB steering committees on campus, developing proposals, and voting to fund improvement projects that build a stronger Arcadia school community. The data in this study were collected to evaluate the effectiveness of school participatory budgeting in boosting student voice and influence in school decision-making. Taking together, the related research literature and the efforts to develop adolescent leadership opportunities and leadership development programs to prepare high school students to be civically engaged after graduation, the study addressed the below questions:

Research Questions

1. RQ1: To what extent does school participatory budgeting impact students' engagement in school decision making?

2. RQ2: How does school participatory budgeting impact students' civic engagement with their school?

3. RQ3: What impact does school participatory budgeting have on student leadership engagement?

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH GUIDING THE PROJECT

In this chapter, I discuss two theoretical perspectives, the Social Change Model (SCM) of leadership development and Mitra's (2006) pyramid of student voice. Mitra's pyramid of student voice makes the case for how and why to promote student involvement in school decision-making (RQ1) and students' civic engagement in their schools (RQ2). The Social Change Model of Leadership Development underscores how and why engaging in opportunities to enact social change fosters students' leadership development (RQ3). I conclude the chapter by summarizing existing research related to participatory budgeting, which informs the intervention around which this study is centered.

Social Change Model of Leadership Development

My review of the adolescent leadership literature indicated that early models conceptualized leadership in terms of traditional hierarchies, where one leader commands and controls followers. Newer models and emerging research have instead emphasized the development of leaders throughout an organization, to build the capacity to collaborate with others in authentic ways to accomplish common goals (Rosch et al., 2015). In addition, traditional models asserted that leadership ability, knowledge and skills were inherent traits, while more recent scholars such as Cress, et al. (2001) assert that potential leadership exists within every student. Astin's (1984) Theory of Involvement stated that the quality and quantity of student involvement in academic and social interactions influenced student learning and development. His theory advocated for

the need for students to be immersed with opportunities to engage with their interests outside of the classroom to build their leadership capacity.

Consistent with these recent conceptual understandings that leadership is guided by organizational capacity building as well as individualized leadership efficacy development, the Social Change Model (SCM) emphasizes leadership as a process rather than a role. It seeks to separate leadership from position or authority, thereby creating the conditions to form a more non-hierarchical system in that anyone can participate (Kezar et al., 2017). Key tenets of the model include the acknowledgment that leadership happens both in and outside of formal positions and is inherently collaborative in nature (Dugan et al.,2015).The model is composed of seven core values within a three-level model: (a) personal values--consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment; (b) group values--collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility; and (c) social values—values of citizenship and change (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996). Through the composition of these seven core values, the SCM framework seeks social change through collective action and activism through the elevation of shared values of equity, social justice, self-knowledge, personal empowerment, collaboration, citizenship, and service. The two primary goals of the SCM are to develop greater self-knowledge and leadership competence as well as to facilitate positive social change within an institution or a community. As pictured in Figure 1.1., the SCM examines leadership development through three perspectives: the individual, the group, and the community or society--all of which directly affect one another through both isolated and collaborative efforts to enact social change. The letters pictured within the diagram indicate the nature of the process of social change within an institution or community--

with each interface intersecting with another to develop a continuous loop of ongoing

feedback through reciprocity amongst each of the three components.

Figure 1

Three Components of the Leadership Development Model
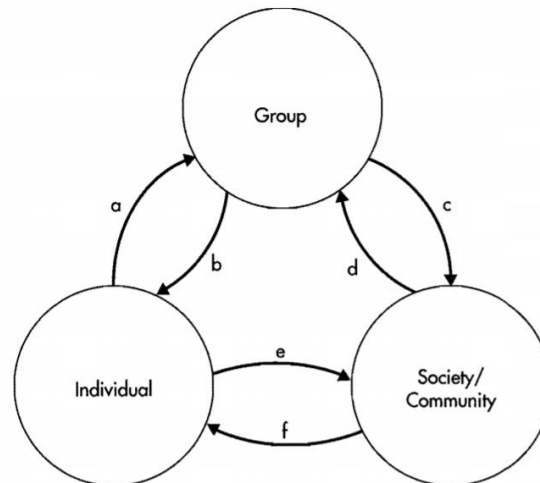
Figure 1. Three components of the leadership development model

Figure 1.1 Three Components of the Leadership Development Model. Higher Education
Research Institute. (1996). *A social change model of leadership development: Guidebook*
(Ver. III). College Park, MD: National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs.

In developing the next generation of leaders, educational practitioners must

comprehend students' perceptions of leadership and of being involved on campus. Often

thoughts of leadership can bring up images of brave, commanding, powerful and dynamic

individuals (Yukl, 2020), which may lead some students to view leadership as

unattainable in alignment with their current perception of their own leadership efficacy.

By understanding student presumptions, educators can encourage teenagers to shift their

understanding of the attainment of leadership skills and develop their own efficacy

through the stages of awareness, interaction, and mastery (Kagay, 2015). When

institutions and communities embrace the framework of the SCM they can bridge the gap between low leadership self-efficacy and selective student leadership opportunity by designing opportunities for students to engage in leadership for a collective effort of social change rather than the pursuit of a position or heightened authority. By shifting the focus of leadership to one of collective capacity rather than individual ambition of authority and power, the opportunity to engage in leadership expands to a broader range of students outside of the highly ambitious students that already encompass a heightened sense of leadership self-efficacy.

Machida-Kosuga (2017) asserts that self-correcting cycles of leader self-efficacy changes are optimal for the development of students' leadership competencies. In analyzing both leader self-efficacy and self-efficacy generally, Machida-Kosuga (2017) highlights that fluctuation in both areas serves as indicators of true development as students with moderate efficacy in both areas are more likely to enhance within specific leadership competencies. Students with heightened self-efficacy or leader self-efficacy are less likely to engage in leadership development due to overconfidence in their abilities whereas, students with low self-efficacy or leader self-efficacy are likely to view their failures as barriers to their development--both factors limiting a student's capacity for growth. Machida-Kosuga (2017) concluded that self-efficacy concepts could assist students in their leadership competency development when students engage with leadership as a process rather than as a position of authority or power as emphasized in the SCM.

Dugan and colleagues (2015) address the gap between espoused values and actual practice by decentering individual-leader development and focusing on pragmatic ways that leadership education can be utilized to enhance collective leadership capacity to advance social and political change. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996) served as the framework of this study as it approaches leadership as a "purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive change" (Komives et al., 2009, xii). This study concluded that leadership education might reproduce power dynamics and contribute to fatalism by not addressing factors of complex power and authority relationships.

Linder (2019) interrupts the false dichotomy of leader and activist by intersecting these concepts to challenge the dominance of traditional service-learning and leadership programs. While Linder (2019) asserts that leadership and activism are not mutually exclusive, he argues that their intersection can be used as a vessel to contribute to a more equitable and just educational environment. He argues that leadership has historically focused on positional power leaving students of color to frequently engage in informal leadership and service to their communities rather than engaging in formalized leadership programs organized by school leaders. Shifting to an interconnected conceptualization of leadership and activism can result in better support programs and services for students and educators.

The Social Change Model is not without its critics. Some scholars contend that maintaining the values of the dominant culture as well as politics of respectability fails to address power dynamics, oppression, and community cultural wealth (Barnes et al., 2018;

Harper & Kezar, 2021). Barnes et al. (2018) argue that "ignoring the power dynamics that shape leadership development divorces marginalized leaders from the products of their labor, delegitimizes protest and civil disobedience as leadership activities and denies minority populations from seeing themselves represented in the leadership canon" (Barnes et al., 2018, as cited by Harper & Kezar, 2021, p.161). Rather than disregard the Social Change Model entirely, Harper and Kezar (2021) propose a new configuration of the Social Change Model for Leadership that incorporates Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth by integrating new values within the traditional values outlined in its initial iteration. The new individual values are liberation and storytelling. Liberation is an ongoing process derived from Yosso's (2005) aspirational capital in which individuals actively and authentically participate in leadership regardless of perceived barriers the group or society may self-create while storytelling allows individuals to communicate their values and beliefs to mobilize groups and stakeholders toward action (Harper & Kezar, 2021). The publication of *New Configuration of Social Change Model of Leadership* (Harper & Kezar, 2021, p. 162) introduces recommended values to be embedded within the existing Social Change Model. Newly recommended group values are system challenging, to actively confront oppressive systems, policies, and practices that inhibit real change; power and oppression/acknowledgment, to encourage an explicit acknowledgment of power dynamics to ensure a voice for all; and support networks, to lean on support networks for guidance, support, and motivation towards enacting impactful change (Harper & Kezar, 2021). Harper & Kezar (2021) present fellowship as an added value to the community, "fellowship is a supplement to the value of citizenship as there must be a level of comradeship to positively enact change." (p. 164).

Figure 2

New Configuration of Social Change Model for Leadership
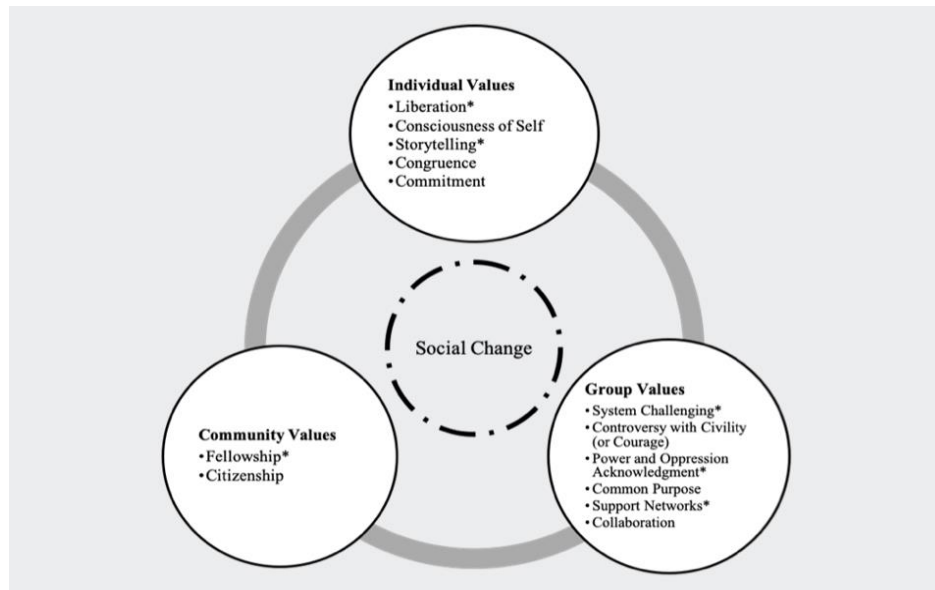
Note. This adapted model was developed by Harper & Kezar in 2021, inserting additional values to the existing Social Change Model for Leadership to address power dynamics, oppression, and lack of consideration for community cultural wealth. New values are fashioned with an asterisk*. From "Leadership Development for Radically Minoritized Students: An Expansion of the Social Change Model of Leadership," by J. Harper and A. Kezar, 2021, *Journal of Leadership Education,* 20(3), p. 162. Copyright 2019 by Association of Leadership Educators.

In consideration of this theory and its given critiques, the Social Change Model's emphasis on leadership as a process rather than a position deconstructs archaic leadership discussions that center on leadership as predisposed traits rather than a social construction that can be deconstructed and reconstructed. In implementing participatory school budgeting, Harper and Kezar's (2021) modification of the Social Change Model will be utilized as the theoretical framework of this study to highlight leadership as a process but also embed community cultural wealth within the framework. This adaptation highlights

a focus on equity and diversity in which leadership is perceived as a process that is informed by community cultural wealth components to ensure consideration of all voices, experiences, and knowledge. This consideration ensures that leadership opportunities are afforded to all students rather than students that are most aligned with the dominant culture or who exhibit traditional traits of leadership that are often embedded within extrovertedness that highlight individuals who are commanding, brave, and powerful.

Pyramid of Student Voice

Fielding (2001) champions the commonly accepted definition of "student voice" to be students' ability to influence decisions that affect their lives. Student voice scholars find the barriers to student leadership are often traditional structures that require a systemic approach to reform to rebuild organizational capacity inclusive of student perspective as a necessary component for decision making at an institutional and community level (Lyons, 2018; Mitra, 2006; Brasof, 2014). Mitra's (2006) pyramid of student voice (Figure 1.2) signifies the importance of structural strategies for schools to promote active student leadership. Mitra (2006) asserts that students' voice exists within a pyramid of three levels--being heard, collaborating with adults, and building capacity for leadership. At the broadest level, a student's voice is limited to the sharing of their opinions with adults who then interpret student feedback and then hold the authority and power to choose to act on student feedback. At this first level, students are not invited to fully participate as active stakeholders in institutional decision-making; however, their feedback is sought and considered. At the middle level, students work alongside adults in partnership to accomplish school goals through active collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement. The final level at the top of the pyramid,

'Building capacity for leadership', includes an explicit focus on enabling youth to share

in the leadership of the student voice initiative. At this level, students can serve as a

source of criticism and protest in schools by questioning issues such as structural and

cultural injustices within schools (Mitra et al., 2009). All levels of the pyramid seek to

incorporate student leaders and student voice as a part of the democratic fabric and

makeup of school-based decision-making.

Figure 3

Mitra's Pyramid of Student Voice
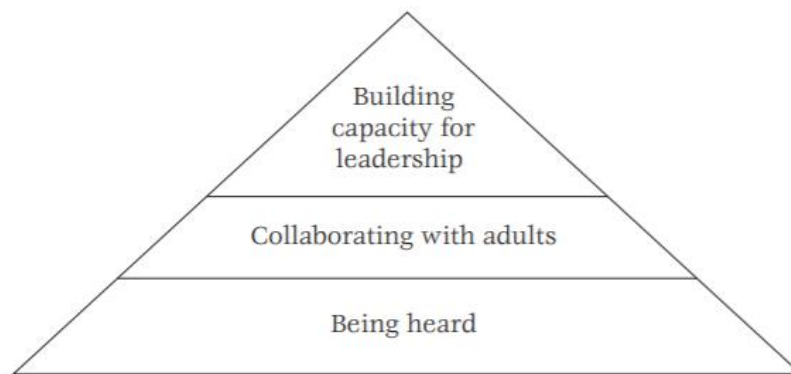
Figure 3. Mitra's Pyramid of Student Voice. From "Increasing student voice in high school reform: Building partnerships, improving outcomes," by D. L. Mitra and S.J. Gross, 2009, *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 37(4), p. 523. Copyright 2009 by SAGE Publications.

In consideration of student clubs as democratic organizations in the way they are

run, Cinar (2019) asserts that student clubs have the capacity to perform four functions:

fostering social skills, fostering democratic education and governance skills, teaching

students how to use leisure time to contribute to one's community, and fostering civil

society skills (community service). It is in this way that student activities serve as an

educational branch for students to develop civic engagement and leadership competencies. Through student clubs and organizations, students can develop the necessary governance skills to enhance their ability to strengthen their leadership efficacy and agency to utilize their voice within adult-youth partnerships. Lyons (2018) developed a set of scales to measure building student leadership capacity in high schools with a focus on adult-youth partnerships. In consideration of how students have been centered within previous research studies, I have outlined four case studies in the accompanying paragraphs.

Fricks (2011) examines the expression of "the best interests of the student" as a statement aligned with moral and ethical decision-making for secondary school principals. Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2001) Ethics of the Profession and Its Model for Students' Best Interest served as the framework for Frick's study to analyze how eleven secondary school principals interpreted their experience of leadership decision-making as a moral activity in relation to the ethical decision making within the district system. A mixed sampling design was used to select eleven principals from school districts in central and southeast Pennsylvania to maximize variation along predetermined personal and demographic criteria. Frick's (2011) research concluded that secondary principals referenced their own responsibility and respect as important aspects of serving the needs of students, but none of the participants mentioned student rights or student voice within this decision-making process. Many administrators and district leaders commonly state that they are making their decisions based on "the best interest of the student(s)"; however, the determination of what is "best" for the student is unclear as the decision-making for the individual student versus the interest of students (all or most) are often

approached from conflicting moral or ethical thinking. More often, when working with individual students, administrators are more likely to consider extenuating circumstances and make determinations that align with their moral code. However, decisions made with the consideration of most students are often generalized for all students typically from a top-down directive from the district office that leaves the principal with an ethical decision to make.

Zimmerman's (2007) case study on Lummi CEDAR Project and KASA, both youth-led organizational models, was conducted collaboratively with five youth leaders from the Movement Strategy Center in Oakland, California. The study asserted that community goals could be met by focusing on youth involvement and leadership by restructuring internal organizational relationships within youth organizations to focus on youth-led programming rather than youth as clients or as participants. The Spectrum of Youth Leadership is described by the degree to which youth are empowered and provided the opportunity to participate and lead with the continuum of youth leadership ranges from organizations where adults serve as clients to those where youth have some decision-making power, to groups where youth occupy all major leadership positions (Zimmerman, 2007, p. 301). The case study concluded that youth involved youth-led organizations can affect every aspect of a community, from individual development to lasting policy change, when provided the space to elevate their voice, influence, and agency.

Kezar & Maxey (2014) conducted a case study on five higher education institutions to understand grassroots movements that utilized the collective action of both

students and faculty and staff in campus activism. This case study included five institutions of higher education that represented different sectors--community college, liberal arts college, private research university, technical university, and regional public university. There were 165 grassroots leaders, 84 staff and 81 faculty members, that were interviewed. This study concluded that students learn the importance of leadership through collaboration in coalitions with faculty and administrators and through this collective action can shape local, regional, and national politics.

Ardizzone (2007) attests that youth is at the forefront of global social, economic, and political developments. Utilizing the philosophies of the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire and John Dewy, Ardizzone (2007) asserts that education must present youth with critical pedagogy and peace education to raise critical consciousness and to give voice to youth within the school. This qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews of 25 New York City youth from prosocial non-formal organizations: Global Kids, Global Action Project, New Youth Conservationists, TRUCE, Youth Force, and Youth Peace/Roots) to generate themes within their experiences in formal education. This study concluded that giving voice to youth allows them to become agents of change, and that it is the collective responsibility of the community and formal education settings to provide outlets for expression so that youth can assert themselves creatively, socially, and politically.

The Pyramid of Student Voice highlights a hierarchy of student voices that starts at the lowest level of listening to students and then progresses to collaboration between adults and youth with the leadership at the top of the pyramid with the goal of students

making decisions while adults assist. Critics warn that the Pyramid of Student Voice has the potential to highlight tokenism which could in time increase student disengagement, distrust, and alienation from the school community (Waters-Lynch, 2008; Mitra & Gross, 2009). Merriam-Webster (2022) defines tokenism as the policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort to be inclusive. So often, leadership opportunities are afforded to model high-achieving students with little if any behavior or disciplinary concerns. Waters-Lynch (2008) urges schools to "move beyond venerating exceptional young individual leaders to a system that empowers many students to lead change in their school and communities." (p. 71). When implementing systems to boost student voice we must make considerable efforts to evaluate the voices that we are elevating to ensure that our student leaders are representing the diversity of experiences and perspectives of the student body. In consideration of this critique, this action research study included criteria to ensure a balanced representation of student leaders that truly highlight the diversity of experiences and backgrounds on campus. These will be explained further in chapter 3.

Participatory Budgeting/Governance

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic process in which a government, agency, or organization allocates a portion of their budget for residents or community members to deliberate and determine how these funds should be best allocated to meet the needs of the community (Baiocchi, G., 2001; Cabannes, Y., 2004; Wampler, B., 2012). PB started in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989 and is currently implemented in over 11,500 cities internationally including government agencies, housing

organizations, and schools allowing participants to learn democracy through engaging in the process of it (Dias et al., 2019). Both youth participatory budgeting (YPB) and school participatory budgeting (SPB) have emerged as a more recent phenomena with recent student outcomes highlighting increases in students' political efficacy, sense of belonging, and increased civic and leadership skills (Bartlett, T. & Schugurensky, D., 2021; Cohen et al., 2015; Collins et al., 2017; Gibbs et al., 2021; UIC Great Cities Institute, 2020). School participatory budgeting is a shift from an adult-centric model of decision-making to one that transfers power to youth by forging adult-youth partnership where youth work with adults to identify and solve problems through democratic processes (Bartlett et al., 2021).

Because the approach is slowly growing and the research on its outcomes is relatively nascent, only a few peer-reviewed studies have examined its impact on students, although the preliminary evidence is promising. Gibbs and colleagues (2021) utilized quantitative survey research methodology in a middle school in Mesa, Arizona to better understand whether a deliberative integration of participatory school budgeting (SPB) in schools increases students' sense of political efficacy. This study included 28 student participants from various backgrounds that aligned with the school's demographics in the areas of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and dis/ability. All students were introduced to SPB through school assemblies and their history classes. From there a steering committee that represented the school's demographics solicited ideas for a total of 208 ideas from the student body. The steering committee then organized these ideas, placed the ideas into themes, and identified the most feasible and popular ideas. After this exercise the top 20 ideas were placed on a primary ballot for the entire student body with

the top five choices selected for the final ballot. The final five proposals were ranked in priority order with votes collected from students, staff, and family members. Each steering member participant responded to 45 survey items which measured the extent to which they each believed they had grown in areas related to political efficacy as a result of their participation in SPB (Gibbs et al., 2021). The study's theoretical framework is grounded in Bandura's Sources of Political Efficacy (2000) which describes political efficacy as a combination of both an internal dimension which is the belief in one's own ability or the ability of one's group to influence a system and an external dimension which is one's belief in the system's openness to change (Gibbs et al., 2021). The study's conclusion included a large effect size (Cohen's d=1.46), suggesting that SPB is an effective approach to developing students' political efficacy.

The University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute (2020) piloted SPB in three Chicago public high schools during the 2017-2018 school year and in five Chicago public high schools during the 2018-2019 school year. Each school had differing forms of implementation. At Sullivant High School, Participatory Budgeting Chicago (PB) teamed up with two youth leadership enrichment programs to lead an 8-week curriculum to guide students through all steps of the PB cycle which culminated in a school-wide vote at the end of the school year with the winning project being a student recreation room. Hyde Park Academy launched a six-week PB cycle with mostly juniors through four civics classes led by a civics teacher which culminated in the approval of two winning projects: (1) a school store that accepts Thunderbucks (2) an outdoor seating area. Al Raby High School launched a six-week participatory budgeting cycle led by civics teachers in collaboration with PB Chicago through two civics classes. The project

proposals were developed in small groups in the classroom and then presented to a leadership committee which consisted of administration, teachers, facilities staff, and a social worker. Students developed six project proposals for the final ballet and surveyed the entire student body via Google Classroom. Highlights from the findings include teachers reporting an increase in students' critical thinking, interdisciplinary skills, and classroom engagement; an increase in students reporting they feel they have a voice in their school; students reported collaboration and communication skills as the most important skills they gained through the process; and students responded that as a result of the SPB experience they have a better understanding of how skills gained at school can be utilized in the real world.

Wampler (2000, 2007) asserts there are several limitations of participatory budgeting (PB) that reduce its overall impact on social justice, public learning, and administrative reform. Limitations of PB include limited interest from participants to learn about rights or fiscal responsibility of the government but rather they are interested in obtaining approval of their project which leads to participants exiting PB programs once their initial proposal or needs are met rather than working with the program for long-term community solutions (Wampler, 2007). Additionally, PB can secure short to medium-term solutions rather than benefit from the long-term problem solving needed to best serve the community. There is an additional concern that limited participation of marginalized members of the community limits equitable access and participation within the process (Pin, 2020; Wampler, 2000, 2007). Pin (2020) asserts that it is necessary to center racial equity in all elements of the PB process to recover the radical core of the

process which is to extend political inclusion by centering the community rather than elites.

In consideration of these critiques, as I will discuss further in chapter 3, I inserted measures within my student recruitment to ensure that study participants are representative of the school population across demographics including race, gender, academic placement (ELL, IEP, 504), grade level, etc. Additionally, I acknowledge that this study provided short-term outcomes to boost students' voices; however, the larger goal is to continue to build upon students' voices to ensure students have a say within the school decision-making that directly impacts their educational experience. While the study provided short-term outcomes, it will provide data to validate the need for further expansion of school participatory budgeting within my school district.

Conclusion

While the research on SPB has found it generally has a positive impact on students' perceived voice in decision-making as well as their political efficacy there hasn't been much research examining how SPB affects leadership engagement or development. This action research study aims to further existing knowledge and research of SPB to provide context on the impact SPB implementation can have on adolescent leadership engagement and development. Both theoretical perspectives, the Social Change Model (SCM) of Leadership Development and Mitra's (2006) Pyramid of Student Voice align directly with the implementation of SPB. The Social Change Model seeks social change through collective action and activism with the primary goals to develop greater self-knowledge and leadership competence as well facilitate positive

social change within an institution or a community. In alignment with SPB, the SCM provides a framework in which all students can expand their development as leaders collaborating to enact change. Mitra's pyramid of student voice emphasizes both the need for civic engagement as well as student voice for students to develop the necessary governance skills to enhance their ability to strengthen their leadership efficacy and agency to utilize their voice within adult-youth partnerships. The implementation of SPB seeks to attain the top level of Mitra's pyramid (2006) which is building capacity for leadership in which youth directly share in the decision making on campus by being sources of criticism, feedback, ideas, and solutions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This action research study explored school participatory budgeting's impact on

student engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership

development at Arcadia High School. School Participatory Budgeting (SPB) is an

innovative civic learning tool designed to improve student agency, collaboration and

critical-thinking skills and prepare young people to be active, informed, and engaged

participants in civic life for the long-term (Center for the Future of Arizona, 2022).

Students "learned democracy by doing" through a process of joining the student voice

committee which served as the steering committee on campus, developing proposals, and

voting to fund improvement projects that build a stronger Arcadia school community

(Center for the Future of Arizona, 2022). The school model stems from the widely

adopted municipal Participatory Budgeting model–a democratic process in which

community members decide how to spend a portion of the public budget. Students were

recruited for the study and worked with a team of student leaders and the school

community through a process of curating ideas, developing proposals, and participating

in a campus-wide vote that educated students on a real electoral process. This study was

conducted to engage high school students in learning democracy by influencing decisions

that impact their lives and transform their school community directly.   I examined the

impact students' engagement with SPB had on their sense of belonging, being heard,

collaborating with adults, and building capacity for leadership. Taking together, the

related research and the efforts of Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD) to build

opportunity for student advocacy and student voice, this study proposed the following questions to frame the research:

Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent does school participatory budgeting impact students' engagement in school decision making?

RQ2: How does school participatory budgeting impact students' civic engagement with their school?

RQ3: What impact does school participatory budgeting have on student leadership engagement?

Research Design

The purpose of this Mixed Methods Action Research (MMAR) study was to identify the effectiveness of school participatory budgeting on student engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High School. Coghlan and Brydon-Miller (2014) argue that youth as assets are missing from the social dialogue in their schools and communities and should be included to ensure their future civic involvement. The implementation of SPB allowed students to actively participate in being agents of change by engaging civically in determining how best to allocate $6,000 from the school budget.

Previous Cycles of Action Research

The design and focus of this study have been informed by two previous cycles of action research. Cycle 0 of this study was conducted during the of Fall 2020 to gather reconnaissance for future cycles of action research at Arcadia High School. This cycle of action research was purely qualitative in design as it consisted of three semi-structured interviews of current site and district staff members. These interviews sought to attain insight into the perceptions of faculty and staff on why students elect to participate in student leadership opportunities on campus and to evaluate what hinders their participation. The semi-structured interviews were analyzed utilizing Strauss and Corbin's (1998) constant comparative method from grounded theory. Jotted notes were taken during each interview and the audio from each interview was reviewed multiple times to track trends, note direct quotes, and review the effectiveness of each interview question. The most important concepts from each interview were coded and compared with themes pulled from all interviews to identify commonalities and differences in perspectives. General themes from this intervention revealed that staff members perceived social capital, socioeconomic status, recruitment efforts, peer influence, and connection to the school community to be the biggest influences and hindrances for students' motivation to engage or ignore student leadership opportunities on campus. Cycle 0 offered preliminary evidence that staff members believed students would be likely to engage in leadership if they had opportunities to develop or have a strong association with the school community. While Cycle 0 did not explicitly focus on student voice or the perspectives of students themselves, the findings lent support to the possibility that a program to give students direct input into school budgeting decisions

33

may also improve student leadership engagement by deepening students' connection to campus through civic engagement.

Cycle 1 of this action research study was conducted in the spring of 2021. The purpose of cycle 1 of this study was to identify the effectiveness of an equity checklist. I created the equity checklist to evaluate how club sponsors evaluate and reflect on their club effectiveness in comparison to the student club members. This checklist included five categories: leadership, recruitment practices, community engagement, equity, and club procedures. This cycle of action research used a sequential mixed methods design which was informed by participatory action research (PAR). The goal of the quantitative strand of this study was to (1) identify if staff members have alignment in their understanding of current recruitment methods and equity analysis of current school climate, and (2) assess staff members' perceptions of student club priorities on the equity checklist via the post-survey. The goal of the qualitative strand of this study was to better understand how the equity checklist has affected the staff members' perceptions and understanding of both the current recruitment methods in place and perceived notions of equity and diversity on campus by conducting focus group interviews with pre-selected staff members who served as club advisors and Equity & Inclusion committee members. The justification for integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods for cycle 1 of this action research project was to provide maximum relevance for the research questions by providing multidimensional insight through the integration of multiple data sources (Ivankova, 2015).

In summary, Cycle 0 of this research project set out to examine motivators and roadblocks for students seeking leadership roles on campus while Cycle 1 examined the recruitment methods of staff in encouraging students to seek leadership roles. Cycle 0 revealed that staff members connect a lack of inclusion within student leadership representation to a lack of advising and encouraging students of different backgrounds to go out for various leadership opportunities on campus. Participants emphasized that if more students felt a connection to campus, they would be more likely to engage in various activities on the campus as well as seek leadership roles when encouraged by teachers, family members, and peers. In addition, Cycle 1 findings suggested that the equity inventory tool was a positive tool in evaluating how students view their organizations in the context of five categories: leadership, recruitment practices, community engagement, equity, and club procedures. The Equity Inventory can be found below.

Figure 4

Equity Inventory

EQUITY INVENTORY

Directions: The club advisor will lead their club through the Equity Inventory. The club will be asked a question and will as a collective determine the current status: rarely, sometimes, always. Next, the club will determine the priority level for improvement for the question topic: high, medium, low. Prior to progressing to the next section, the club will discuss what they are doing well and an area in which they can improve.This inventory serves as tool for open discussion.There are not any right or wrong answers.

Club Name:

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
Rarely	Sometimes	Always		High	Med	Low
			LEADERSHIP			
			Do all club members have an opportunity to develop their leadership skills?			
			Are our leadership roles clearly defined?			
			Do we follow a democratic process when selecting club leadership roles?			
What are we doing well?						
Where can we improve?						
			RECRUITMENT PRACTICES			
			Do we promote our club via school communication platforms such as ANN, PTO, School website, etc.?			
			Do we have platform for club information that prospective members can easily access? (I.E. club social media account, google classroom?			
			Do we encourage classmates outside of our friend group to join our club?			
What are we doing well?						
Where can we improve?						
			COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT			
			Do we beleive that our collective actions makes a greater difference for student learning than our indivudal efforts?			
			Do we collborate with other clubs?			
			Do we collborate with school staff?			
			Do we collborate with the local community?			
What are we doing well?						
Where can we improve?						
			EQUITY			
			Do we use structures and protocals to ensure balanced participation?			
			Do all group members have an equal voice?			
			Do we challenge our own preferences and judgements in order to consider other ideas?			
			Do we encourage students from different backgrounds to join our club?			
			Do we provide a safe space for students from different backgrounds to feel welcome?			
What are we doing well?						
Where can we improve?						
			CLUB PROCEDURES			
			Are we clear about our desired results in both the short and long term?			
			Do we have clear and shared criteria for determining success?			
			Do we keep a roster of active club members?			
What are we doing well?						
Where can we improve?						

In the next cycle of related research, I conducted a content analysis of the SUSD Student Activities Club Sponsor Handbook in the fall of 2021 to better inform this action research study. Content Analysis is defined as the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes (Given, 2008). The purpose of the content analysis was to better understand how students are centered within student activities within SUSD by addressing the research question: How are students centered within student activities policies and procedures within SUSD? The coding framework for this content analysis can be found below.

Table 5

Coding Framework for Content Analysis

Coding Categories and Descriptions	
Main Coding Category	
Governing Board Policy and Procedures	This category applies to the governing board sanctioned policies and procedures for student activities that are aligned with the Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §15-1121. Policy refers to procedures designed to maintain compliance with the Governing Board policies, the Universal Systems of Financial Records (U.S.F.R.), and the Arizona Revised Statutes for every student club, organization, school play, or other student entertainment. The category applies whenever an element of policy is specially assigned to a club sponsor or student club leader. An example might be that club secretaries are required to record club minutes for all official club meetings. This is a required procedure for the club in compliance with the Governing Board as well as state statutes.
Coding Sub-Categories	
Student Specific	This subcategory should be used when material outlines procedures that highlight specific actions of student club members. The above reference to club secretaries keeping accurate club minutes would be coded as student specific.
Club Sponsor (Staff) Specific	This subcategory should be used when material outlines procedures that highlight specific actions of club sponsors (staff). A reference to the club sponsor attending yearly club sponsor training should be coded as club sponsor specific.
Site/District (Admin/Bookstore/District) Specific	This subcategory should be used when material outlines procedures that highlight specific actions of site and district level staff such as administration, bookstore personnel, governing board, etc. A reference to the school principal signing off a fundraiser form should be coded as site/district admin specific.

After completing the coding of the SUSD Student Activities Club Sponsor
Handbook, a multitude of findings were revealed. The main findings were a focus on
procedures to alignment to district and state requirements rather than guidance for
running a club, majority of procedures were staff centered, and there was a limited
outline of student involvement throughout the handbook. In the process of coding this
handbook, I continued to return to the definition of student activities as defined by the
Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §15-1121 which is defined as student clubs,
organizations, school plays, or other student entertainment with student activities monies
being raised by the efforts of students (*Student Activities Club Sponsor Handbook* 2017).
In the handbook this definition is shared on page 1 of the document that is titled, "Student
Activities Introduction." This page also outlines the expectations and responsibilities of
the governing board, district administration, student activities treasure/assistant
treasurers, principal/assistant principal, and the club sponsor. However, there is not a
single mention of student responsibilities which is unique since the definition of student
activities specifically states that it is student run with money raised by students; yet they
are not centered within the main procedures to run a club or organization. Additionally,
this handbook is very detailed on the procedures for running a fundraiser, completing
purchase orders, field trips, etc.; however, this same type of document is not available for
students. Club sponsors (staff) are required to go through a yearly training to sponsor any
student organization on campus; however, student leaders (president, vice president,
secretary, and treasurer) do not receive any training about how to fulfill their role or their
positions.

Current Cycle of Action Research

For this dissertation cycle of research, I used parallel-results convergent MMAR, which involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously. First, I implemented the quantitative strand of this study, to assess participants' self-assessment of their engagement with school decision making, civic engagement, and leadership development by administering a pre-survey of attitudes. I collected observational data from all student voice committee meetings. Both the quantitative and the qualitative strands were used to inform semi-structured interview questions for a student focus group where students had an opportunity to add context to their experiences with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development. In addition, qualitative data was derived from samples of student work and observations through the implementation of SPB. The study concluded with a post-survey of attitudes from participants to assess the impact school participatory budgeting had on their engagement in school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development. The justification for integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods for this action research project was to provide maximum relevance for the research questions by providing multidimensional insight through the integration of multiple data sources (Ivankova, 2015).

Study Setting

The setting for this action research study is Arcadia High School, a public, four-year secondary school that is part of Scottsdale (Arizona) Unified School District (SUSD). The 2021-2022 population consists of approximately 1,650 students enrolled in

grades 9 through 12, with over 80 certified teachers. Arcadia generally performs well on state accountability measures, with a 2021 four-year graduation rate of 91.7%, a dropout rate of 2.4%, and postsecondary enrollment rate of 70%.

The school campus currently has over 50 active student-sponsored clubs, and each organization has a certified staff member serving as an advisor. The purpose of student activities is for each student organization to be student-led with the club advisors merely serving as the supervisor and at times a facilitator. Every club requires a leadership cabinet that encompasses a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Currently, our campus has clubs that fall into many interest areas ranging in the general areas of service-orientated clubs, cultural clubs, special interest clubs, and academic clubs. Through participation in these clubs, students have discretion over the decision-making of their club by determining how club funds are raised and how club funds are spent. While students have autonomy in the decisions, they make over the clubs they lead and participate in, this autonomy does not transfer into a direct impact on the school-based decisions. Our campus does have an active student government with student officers voted in by their peers through school-wide voting; however, their decision-making is centered on boosting school spirit initiatives and planning campus events which does not yield influence in the decision-making processes of the school. In addition to a lack of direct influence in school-based decision-making, our student government is also limited in scope with only 30 student members set to represent a student body of 1,650 students. The students selected are highly motivated and are voted in by their peers; however, the demographics of members do not equitably represent the demographics of the student

body in terms of race, gender, grade-point average (GPA), socioeconomic status, and program placement (SPED, ELL, 504).

For the implementation of SPB, a steering committee of students was formed to lead the effort in all three phases of SPB—idea collection, proposal development, and project expo and community voice. The steering committee is referred to throughout this study as the student voice committee and it consisted of 28 student members. The demographics of the student voice committee are discussed in tables 6-8 which appears later in this chapter.

Study Participants

Eight SPB student voice committee members participated in the data collection for this study. Seven students completed the pre-survey, and seven students completed the post-survey; only five participants completed both the pre- and post-surveys. Four students participated in the focus group. Students were recruited through word of mouth, student advertising and marketing, as well as peer and staff recommendations. The participants were purposefully selected to participate in this study based on their roles and insight into the problem of practice. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) define purposeful sampling as qualitative sampling that intentionally selects individuals and sites to learn or understand a central phenomenon by giving a voice to "silenced" people or groups. I used maximal variation sampling to ensure that participants were racially and ethnically diverse and that their representation reflects the diversity of the student body to reflect the full scope of student perspectives more accurately on the wants and needs of the campus, this is reflected below in tables 2-4. Table 5 presents demographic

information by participant and outlines which data collection activities they participant completed.

Table 6

Participant Demographic Data by Ethnicity

Leadership by Ethnicity	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
African American	1	13%
Hispanic/Latino	3	38%
White (not Hispanic)	4	50%
Total	8	

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Table 7

Participant Demographic Data by Gender

Leadership by Gender	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
Female	6	75%
Male	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Table 8

Participant Demographic Data by Academic Placement

Leadership by Academic Placement	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
General Education	6	75%
IEP	0	0%
504	2	25%
ELL	0	0%

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Table 9

Demographic Data by Participant and Data Collection

Pseudonym	Grade	Primary Home Language	Ethnicity	Gender	Educational Placement	GPA	Data Collection Activities
Natalia	11	Arabic	White	Female	504	4.53	Pre-survey Post-survey Focus group
Jocelyn	11	English	Hispanic	Female	Gen Ed	3.6	Post-survey
Lance	10	English	White	Male	Gen Ed	4.1	Pre-survey Post-survey
Kelly	10	English	White	Female	Gen Ed	4.44	Pre-survey Post-survey Focus group
Junior	11	Spanish	Hispanic	Male	Gen Ed	2.11	Pre-survey Post-survey Focus group
Candice	11	English	African American	Female	Gen Ed	4.0	Pre-survey Post-survey Focus group
Ester	11	English	White	Female	504	4.16	Pre-survey
Melinda	11	English	Hispanic	Female	Gen Ed	4.24	Pre-survey Post-survey

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Intervention

This action research study identified the effectiveness of SPB on student engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High School. In supporting the exploration of my problem of practice, SPB was utilized as this study's intervention. School participatory budgeting is an innovative practice used internationally that invites individuals to have a direct decision in how money from school budgets is allocated to benefit school communities (Cohen et al., 2014; Gibbs et al., 2021; UIC Great Cities Institute, 2020). The four core tenets of participatory budgeting are voice, vote, social justice, and oversight (Collins et al., 2017; Wampler, 2007). In previous SPB programs implemented in other schools, students chose to allocate resources from school site budgets ranging from $2,500-$25,000. Students voted to fund projects such as the development of a student recreation room, installation of vending machines, redesigns of lunchrooms, additions of outdoor seating, design of a senior student lounge, creation of a school store, setting up water bottle filling stations, introducing a meditation room, incorporation of additional shading structures, and purchase of musical instruments to enhance music program.

For the Arcadia High School SPB project, students determined how to spend a budget of $6,000. The money was from the school's tax credit account that was approved by our site council, which is a site-based committee that is run by the principal, Dr. Danskey. There were no restrictions on how it could be spent so long as it was used for optional student extracurricular activities.

Timeline and Procedures

The implementation of the intervention and data collection took place from October 2022-March 2023. To begin, I recruited student participants for the student voice committee/steering committee through word of mouth, student advertising and marketing, staff recommendations, and targeted selection. Students from all backgrounds were encouraged to participate, especially students that could benefit from leadership opportunities that may not always be available to them. Staff were advised to recommend students that typically aren't selected or predisposed for leadership positions or enrichment opportunities on campus. Opportunities were available to the school community to learn about SPB its implementation at Arcadia High School. Selected student participants were given consent forms for parental approval. If a parent did not grant their student permission to participate in the study, they still had the option to participate on the committee. The seven study participants completed a pre-survey of attitudes that was analyzed utilizing statistical analysis. This data was utilized to inform and construct the semi-structured interview questions for the focus group. The first five questions from the focus group questions were adapted from Brown's (2018) dissertation in which SPB was examined to see how participation in the process implementation might contribute not only to citizenship learning but also to the expansion of student voice.

After the committee was formed and pre-survey data was collected, the intervention included three stages: idea collection, proposal development, and project expo/community vote.

Student Voice Committee Demographics

The student voice committee (steering committee) consisted of 28 students, with seven of these students participating in the data collection for this study. Students were recruited through word of mouth, student advertising and marketing, as well as peer and staff recommendations. The participants were purposefully selected to participate in this study based on their roles and insight into the problem of practice. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) define purposeful sampling as qualitative sampling that intentionally selects individuals and sites to learn or understand a central phenomenon by giving a voice to "silenced" people or groups. As displayed in tables 4-6 below, there is a slight overrepresentation of specific historically minoritized groups. Our Asian and Pacific Islanders represented 7% of the committee and only 2% of our student enrollment and our students that currently have a 504 represent 29% of the committee and only 11% of the student population. I used maximal variation sampling to ensure that participants were racially and ethnically diverse and that their representation reflects the diversity of the student body to reflect the full scope of student perspectives more accurately on the wants and needs of the campus, this is reflected below in tables 6-8.

Table 10

AHS Demographic Data by Ethnicity for School Enrollment & Steering Committee

Members

Leadership by Ethnicity	Total #	% of Enrollment	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
American Indian/Alaskan Native	37	3%	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	35	2%	2	7%
African American	57	4%	2	7%
Hispanic/Latino	503	35%	10	36%
White (not Hispanic)	796	55%	13	46%
Multi-Racial	18	1%	1	4%
Total	1450		28	

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Table 11

AHS Demographic Data by Gender for Enrollment & Steering Committee Members

Leadership by Gender	Total #	% of Enrollment	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
Total	1450	100%	28	100%
Female	744	49%	21	75%
Male	706	51%	7	25%

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Table 12

AHS Academic Placement for Enrollment & Steering Committee Members

Leadership by Academic Placement	Total #	% of Enrollment	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
General Education	1170	81%	17	61%
IEP	99	7%	0	0%
504	164	11%	8	29%
ELL	17	1%	3	11%

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Phases of Implementation

Phase 1: Idea Collection. Once committee members were finalized, they began phase one of the SPB process where they collected ideas from enrolled students to gain perspective on how the students feel the money should be allocated for the school. Teachers were encouraged to participate by leading discussions in their classrooms and submitting ideas to the student voice committee. Once the committee had a comprehensive list of ideas from the student body, they then worked to consolidate the list by combining similar ideas and eliminating ideas that are not feasible for implementation. Students finalized their list of ideas to build into group proposals.

Phase 2: Proposal Development. In phase two of SPB implementation, participants began the process of designing their proposals within their self-selected groups. Students drafted their proposals by obtaining multiple vendor quotes, designing an implementation timeline, as well as crafting the need for the proposal and its benefit to the school community. Prior to finalizing design proposals, each group received administrative approval for the proposal to appear on the ballot. Once cleared for the ballot, students began to campaign their proposals on campus with option to advertise through our student-run Arcadia News Network (ANN), poster creation, word of mouth, and social media. Four of the student voice committee members participated in a focus group, and seven completed a post-survey after their proposals were finalized.

Phase 3: Project Expo/Community Voice. Phase three of this study consisted of students campaigning for their proposals to the student body as well as the entire school body submitting a ballot for their top proposals. During this phase, I also collected quantitative data from the election data. I analyzed all the data collected throughout

phases one, two, and three by coding the transcribed focus group recording, conducting

statistical analysis of the pre- and post-surveys, and conducting descriptive analysis of the

election results.

Table 13

Timeline and Procedures of the Action Research Study

Time frame	Actions	Procedures
	IDEA COLLECTION	
November	Recruit student voice committee members	• Offer the opportunity to participate in the study • Distribute consent forms and letters • Actively recruit student committee members • Offer learning opportunities to the school community about SPB
December	Administer pre-survey to student participants	• Participants complete pre-survey • Conduct statistical analysis • Construct semi-structured questions for focus group
December-January	Idea Collection	• Student committee members solicit ideas from the study body • Teachers work with history classes to submit idea collection surveys • Researcher collects observational data • Committee members combine similar ideas and finalize list of ideas to craft into proposals
	PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	
February	Student participants design proposals	• Students design proposals • Students attain quotes for proposals • Steering committee reviews proposals, offer feedback, and select top proposals • Researcher collects observational data
February	Design Proposal Presentations	• Student groups attain final administrative approval • Students may begin campaigning pending panel approval
	PROJECT EXPO & COMMUNITY VOICE	
February	Students campaign	• Student groups market and advertise their proposals to the school community
March	School wide voting	• Student body vote and submit ballots • Results collected via Google Form • Results communicated to school community
February	Administer post-survey to student participants	• Participants complete post-survey
February	Conduct focus group with steering committee	• Facilitate and record focus groups • Take jotted notes • Transcribe audio recordings • Code audio recordings
November-March	Analyze data	• Transcribe audio recordings • Code transcribed recordings • Code student work samples • Conduct statistical analysis of pre-and post-surveys

Data and Measures

As previously noted, a mixed methods action research design was utilized to gather data to answer the research questions for this action research study. Quantitative measures consisted of the pre-survey, post-survey, and district demographic data. The qualitative measures consisted of the audio transcripts of the semi-structured focus group, observational data from committee meetings and presentations, and student work samples.

Quantitative measures and analyses. The quantitative data collected for this study consists of pre- and post-surveys including survey questions from Brown's (2018) dissertation as well as survey tools utilized by Gibbs and colleagues (2021) and Bartlett and Schugurensky (2023). The pre- and post- instruments are identical, and each includes a series of five-point Likert-scaled items that capture the three main constructs from my research questions (see Table 10). Both the pre- and post- survey contained 41 items and three subcategories–school decision making, civic engagement, and student leadership. Students' viewpoints were captured with a 5-point Likert scale to measure rate of frequency. I considered values of 5 to be always, 4 often, 3 sometimes, 2 rarely, and 1 to be never. All data analysis were performed using SPSS.

Table 14

Research Questions, Constructs, and Survey Items

Research Questions	Construct	Survey Items
1	Students' engagement with school decision-making	#10-35
2	Students' civic engagement with their school	#26-35
3	Students' leadership development	#36-51

My quantitative data analyses examined the descriptive statistics for pre- and post-surveys separately, including mean, standard deviation, range, frequency, and mode. To understand whether participating in school participatory budgeting impacted school decision making, civic engagement, and leadership development, I then conducted a series of paired sample t-tests. I compared students' responses on the pre-intervention survey to their responses to the post-intervention survey, to determine whether their perceived voice in decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development significantly differed before and after participating in the program (see Table 4 for the survey items aligned with each research question construct).

Qualitative data and analyses. As mentioned previously, I collected qualitative data through my focus group. After the committee had finalized their proposal ideas, I conducted a focus group for participants to add context to their experiences in the areas of engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development. While the committee consisted of 28 students, the focus group included a sample size of four participants. The focus group was open to all twelve students that had

signed permission slips to engage in research. The four students that participated in the

focus group signed up through a google form. The demographics of the focus group

participants are shown in tables 11-13 below. The focus group protocol was semi-

structured (see Appendix B for preliminary questions).

Table 15

Focus Group Demographic Data by Ethnicity

Leadership by Ethnicity	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
African American	1	25%
Hispanic/Latino	1	25%
White (not Hispanic)	2	50%
Total	4	

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic
Data.

Table 16

Focus Group Demographic Data by Gender

Leadership by Gender	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
Female	3	75%
Male	1	25%
Total	4	100%

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Table 17

Focus Group Demographic Data by Academic Placement

Leadership by Academic Placement	Total #	% of Steering Committee Members
General Education	3	75%
IEP	0	0%
504	1	25%
ELL	0	0%

Note. Scottsdale Unified School District. (2020). Arcadia High School Demographic Data.

Transcribed focus group interviews, archival data, and student work samples were analyzed using a coding system. The coding process required the development of specific coding categories used to analyze the data through inductive analysis (Mertler, 2020).

The coding categories were inserted into a table that was used as reference as the narrative data was reread and coded; it is also included in the appendix as a reference to the reader. The coding system allowed me to draw connections between the research questions and the coding data, which allowed data triangulation to identify any potential contradictions with the patterns identified through quantitative data. The qualitative conclusions drawn from this data are reported in narrative form that has been organized by themes that emerged from data analysis. Kagay et al. (2015) utilized this method in their qualitative study and reported their data in narrative form that was structured by the six themes that emerged from the data analysis from their reflective questionnaires, semi-structured focus group interviews, and field observations.

Triangulation. For the purpose of this study, I integrated the quantitative results with the qualitative ones to complete a convergent MMAR. A convergent MMAR requires the collection of both forms of data simultaneously and analyses of the findings will occur separately through parallel-results convergent synthesis. This structure was utilized to best inform my research questions and to provide the best context for my surveys of attitude. The focus group allowed students to add perspective to their responses inspired by the surveys they completed. Students had the opportunity to expand upon their answers and to better discuss their experiences and their perceptions.

Internal Validity

To ensure internal validity this study utilized tested survey questions from pre-and post-surveys that were utilized in previous studies by Gibbs and colleagues (2021), Barlett and Scharwenka (2023) as well as the Participatory Budgeting Project (2020). The

pre-survey influenced the outcome of the post-survey. Since both surveys used the same questions, one can expected a higher productivity level of participants due to familiarity with the questions, and enhanced awareness for the study's purpose. Additionally, the development of this school's participatory budgeting process aligned with UIC Great Cities Institute (2020) SPB Toolkit which has been tested through Chicago-wide SPB implementation. For the qualitative data, I utilized Otter AI to transcribe the transcript. Once transcribed, I listened to the audio and corrected transcription to ensure accuracy of student statements. I utilized pseudonyms for study participants and did not correct the grammar or sentence structure of the transcript to ensure the voice of participants was reported with accuracy.

Role of the Researcher

As the Assistant Principal of Student Services, I serve as both the researcher and the practitioner of this action research study. For the four years prior to this study, I oversaw our student activity programming for the entire campus, and I actively work with both club advisors and student leaders to support their programming, ideas, and fundraising efforts. For this study, I recruited students to join the student voice committee/steering committee. I administered a survey of attitudes with all participants of the study, facilitated their committee meetings, as well as facilitated a focus group. My primary role as the researcher of this study was to collect and analyze both sets of qualitative and quantitative data while my role as the practitioner was to support participants in their process of implementing school participatory budgeting. This action research study is derived from my passion for student programming as well as uplifting

student voice. In the implementation of this study, I have considered my own positionality as an administrator and the impact that may have on how students authentically engage with the process. Taking my positionality into account, I took strides to build rapport and mutual trust with my student participants by outlining my reasoning for conducting this study to ensure that students understood that the goal was for this to be student-run and student-centered. The students drove the implementation of SPB and were active participants in leading this process. By highlighting the student-centered focus, I sought to empower my student participants to take ownership of this experience and authentically engage without fear or apprehension of what they should say or how they should respond in the presence of a school leader.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this Mixed Methods Action Research (MMAR) study was to identify the effectiveness of school participatory budgeting on student engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High School. This action research project utilized a parallel-results convergent MMAR that involved collecting both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously. The justification for integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods for this action research project was to provide maximum relevance for the research questions by providing multidimensional insight through the integration of multiple data sources (Ivankova, 2015). The quantitative measures of this study consisted of a pre-survey, post-survey, and district demographic data. My qualitative measures consisted of a semi-structured focus group. The results of this study are organized in this section by research question broken into sub-categories of quantitative and qualitative findings:

Research questions

RQ1: To what extent does school participatory budgeting impact students' engagement in school decision making?

RQ2: How does school participatory budgeting impact students' civic engagement with their school?

RQ3: What impact does school participatory budgeting have on student leadership engagement?

Pre and Post Survey

The survey contained 41 items and three subcategories–school decision making, civic engagement, and student leadership. Students' viewpoints were captured with a 5-point Likert scale to measure rate of frequency. I considered responses of 5 to be always, 4 often, 3 sometimes, 2 rarely, and 1 to be never. Seven members of the student voice committee responded to both surveys in full. No data were missing from any of the survey items. Analysis of Likert items was performed using SPSS where I entered data into a spreadsheet and ran descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, and range. I also conducted bivariate statistics a series of paired sample t-tests to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between students' responses to the pre- and post-surveys.

Semi-Structured Focus Group

I conducted a focus group to add context to participant experiences in the areas of engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development. While the committee consists of 28 students, the focus group included randomly selected sample size of four participants. The focus group protocol was semi-structured and took approximately 45 minutes to complete. I digitally recorded the focus group and transcribed it later with the use of Otter AI by listening the recording and editing errors directly onto the transcript. I conducted the focus group approximately 14

weeks after the innovation was introduced. Analyses of this data was conducted utilizing

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) constant comparative method from grounded theory. I

started with open coding on the interview transcript and compared pieces to create initial

codes. Next, I utilized axial coding to start creating categories that weaved similar codes

together. I ended with selective coding to compare categories with categories to build

primary categories to connect them to. The coding system drew connections between the

research questions and the coding data, which allowed data triangulation to identify any

potential contradictions with the patterns identified through quantitative data. The

qualitative conclusions drawn from this data are reported in narrative form that has been

organized by research question that emerged from data analysis.

Table 18

Grouping of Initial Codes to Form Emergent Themes

Theme	Initial Codes Grouped to Form Theme	Research Question
Theme 1: Wanting to Lead Change for Collective Student Voice	Advocating for student needs Being a part of change Doing vs. talking Long term vs. short term change Selective voice vs. collective voice Student voice Wanting to have a say Youth-adult partnerships	RQ1: To what extent does school participatory budgeting impact students' engagement in school decision making?
Theme 2: Engaging Civically through Real World Application	Accessing a budget Civic engagement Real world application Roadblocks to change Voting	RQ2: How does school participatory budgeting impact students' civic engagement with their school?
Theme 3: Voicing Concern for Elite Democracy within Student Leadership	Elite democracy vs. participatory democracy Lack of equity amongst student groups	
Theme 4: Increased Leadership Efficacy through Open Communication and Collaboration	Communicating with peers Connecting students with the process of SPB Connecting with peers outside of friend group Connection to campus Increased leadership efficacy Leadership Development Understanding the process of change	RQ3: What impact does school participatory budgeting have on student leadership engagement?

Research Question 1: To what extent does school participatory budgeting impact students' engagement in school decision making?

Quantitative. The analysis showed that overall means and standard deviation on the pre and post surveys for the construct of school decision making to be close, with an overall average of 3.22 (*SD* = 0.58) for the pre-survey and 3.37 (*SD*=0.44) for the post-survey (see Table 2). These means indicated that students entered and left the SPB process agreeing about the frequency in their experience with SPB having a positive impact on students' engagement with school-based decision making. In reviewing individual pre- and post-survey items that comprise the school decision making construct, most indicated a slight descriptive increase from pre-survey to post-survey (see Table 2). The largest change was for the statement, "I feel comfortable speaking to school staff about problems in school" with an average increase of 0.69 from pre-program to post-program. Additionally, there was a mean decrease of -0.43 when students responded to "Adults in my school value student feedback."

Table 19

Pre and Post School Decision Making Survey Means

Variables	Pre-Survey	Post-	M₂-M₁
	M (SD)	Survey	
	3.22 (0.58)	*M (SD)*	0.15
		3.37 (0.44)	
I feel that I can make change at my school.	3.29 (0.95)	3.67 (0.80)	0.38
I feel that I have a voice in decision making at my school.	2.86 (0.90)	3.33 (.82)	-0.08
I feel connected to my school community.	3.14 (0.69)	3.17 (0.75)	0.03
I feel comfortable speaking to my teachers about problems in school.	4.00 (1.00)	3.83 (0.98)	-0.17
I feel comfortable speaking to school staff about problems in school.	3.14 (0.90)	3.83 (0.98)	0.69
I feel that my ideas are heard by adults on campus.	2.86 (0.69)	3.00 (0.63)	0.14
I have ideas on how to solve problems on campus.	3.71 (1.11)	3.83 (0.75)	0.12
I feel comfortable sharing ideas to school staff about solving problems on campus.	3.57 (0.79)	3.33 (1.03)	-0.24
I help to make decisions that impact my school.	3.43 (0.79)	3.50 (0.84)	0.07
I feel the school administration considers my opinion when making decisions impacting our campus.	3.00 (1.15)	3.17 (0.41)	0.17
I feel the school administration seeks student feedback when making school decisions.	2.86 (1.21)	3.17 (0.75)	0.31
The adults on campus encourage student feedback.	2.86 (0.90)	3.33 (1.03)	0.48
Adults in my school listen to students.	3.57 (0.79)	3.17 (0.41)	-0.40
Adults in my school value student feedback.	3.43 (0.53)	3.00 (0.63)	-0.43
Adults in my school act on student feedback.	2.57 (0.79)	3.00 (0)	0.43
My school encourages students to be a part of the decision-making process.	3.14 (1.21)	3.50 (1.05)	0.36

Table 20

Pre and Post School Decision Making Survey Composite Means

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
School Decision Making Pre-Survey	7	1.62	2.38	4.00	3.22	0.58	0.33
School Decision Making Post-Survey	6	1.12	2.94	4.06	3.37	0.44	0.20

To ascertain whether the growth in school decision-making was statistically significant between pre- and post-surveys for individual participants, paired t-tests were run for the five participants that completed both the pre- and post-surveys. The results (see Tables 3, 4 & 5) showed that while the participant's level of perceived impact on school decision making increased from pre-program (*M* = 3.12, *SD* = 0.56) to post-program, this increase was not statistically significant (*M* = 3.45, *SD* = 0.44; t = -1.23, *p* < .001, *d* = -.73).

Table 21

Paired Samples Statistics for School Decision Making

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
School Decision Making Pre-Survey	3.12	5	0.56	0.25
School Decision Making Post-Survey	3.45	5	0.44	0.20

Table 22

Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Significance	
				Lower	Upper			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
School Decision Making Pre-Survey & School Decision Making Post-Survey	-0.33	0.61	0.27	-1.09	-0.42	-1.23	4	0.14	0.29

Table 23

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardized[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
School Decision Making Pre-Survey & School Decision Making Post-Survey	Cohen's d	0.61	0.27	-1.09	-0.42
	Hedge's correction	0.76	-0.44	-1.17	0.34

Qualitative. In coding and recoding the focus group transcript, eight initial codes emerged—advocating for student needs, being a part of change, doing vs. talking, long term vs. short term change, selective voice vs. collective voice, student voice, wanting to have a say, and youth-adult partnerships. Students consistently connected their experience with SPB to that of acting on feedback with a goal to improve campus on behalf of the entire student body. From these initial codes, the first theme emerged— leading change for collective student voice. During the focus group, participants consistently connected their membership in student voice committee to their desire to not only have a voice in what happens at their school but also to advocate for all student voices on campus rather than selective groups of students. For instance, Natalia shared

67

that while she may not have been selected for application-based leadership opportunities such as student government, student advisory board, and National Honor Society she still found a way to have her voice included by joining the student voice committee. Natalia shared that, "being able to have a voice when I am not able to achieve a position like StuGo [student government] as a student and make a change is important to me." Participants expressed that student voices are highlighted on campus, but they aren't always reflective of the collective school community. They emphasized that certain organizations such as student government, sports, and fine arts programs are highlighted but students that are not a part of those groups struggle to find ways to have their opinions shared. Kelly highlights this when stating,

> There are organizations around school that do show students' voice, but I feel like this one really helps, any student let their voice out. And I think the fact that we can bring everyone's voice, like every student's voice of the school or think of an idea from their opinions and then we can make it a change that everyone will benefit from.

Additional participants added that the main difference between this committee and other student clubs is that the goal is to bring about change based on the collective feedback of students rather than their sole opinions as student leaders. Candice described the committee as a forum for all students to have space to voice their ideas and opinions so that they can be shared with stakeholders on campus. In consideration of stakeholders on campus, Kelly identified barriers to access as well as confusion on where to start and who to go to for what,

I think there's like a lot of confusion over who controls what and who gets to make what rules and all this stuff. So even if we don't clear that up, I think it's important that students can feel like oh, I can do something, like, teachers aren't completely in control, like, this is our school. Yes, they have authority, but we are also in control of ourselves. And we are in control of what actions we choose to do. And if one of those actions is coming to this club, then that can help you in feeling like your thoughts are being heard.

To alleviate this confusion, participants view the student voice committee as a bridge between connecting collective student feedback to school community stakeholders to take action. Regarding acting on collective feedback, Candice stated,

We're not the ones like posing things, we're getting the opinions of the students themselves. And we're taking action from that. I feel like this club, like the PB [participatory budgeting] thing, I think it'll engage students more to want to engage in what we're doing. Especially since their decisions might happen, instead of it just being taken into like, small consideration and forgotten about, you know, because we don't forget about what people are requesting.

In sum, my participants were able to see themselves as connectors between the student body and the stakeholders on campus. They felt that they had the ability to advocate collectively for students by consistently seeking feedback from students while simultaneously recruiting students to participate in the process.

Research Question 2: How does school participatory budgeting impact students' civic engagement with their school?

Quantitative. The analysis showed that overall means and standard deviation on the pre and post surveys for the overall construct of civic engagement to be close, with a

69

mean of 4.41 (*SD*=0.35) for the pre-survey and a mean of 4.50 (*SD*=0.46) for the post-survey (see Table 6). These means indicated that students entered and left the SPB process agreeing about the impact their experience with SPB had on their civic engagement. In reviewing the individual pre- and post-survey questions for the topic of civic engagement broken down per question there was a slight increase from pre-survey to post-survey (see Table 10). The largest increase was for the statement, "I know about participatory democracy" with an increase of 0.93 from pre-program to post-program. There was also an increase of 0.50 when students responded to, "I know what school participatory budgeting is." Additionally, there was a decrease of -0.67 when students responded to "I expect to vote as soon as I am allowed to", as well as a decrease of -0.50 when students responded to, "I know what a budget is.

Table 24

Pre and Post Civic Engagement Survey Means

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Civic Engagement Pre-Survey	7	1.01	3.89	4.90	4.41	0.35	0.12
Civic Engagement Post-Survey	6	1.30	3.70	5.00	4.50	0.46	0.21

Table 25

Pre and Post Civic Engagement Survey Means by Question

Variables	Pre-Survey	Post-	M_2-M_1
	M (SD)	Survey	
	4.41 (0.35)	*M (SD)*	0.09
		4.50 (0.46)	
I know what school participatory budgeting is.	4.00 (1.15)	4.50 (0.84)	0.50
I know about participatory democracy.	3.57 (0.79)	4.50 (0.55)	0.93
I know about school regulations.	3.71 (1.11)	4.00 (1.10)	0.29
I know what a budget is.	5.00 (0)	4.50 (0.84)	-.50
I am concerned about fixing problems at my school.	4.43 (0.53)	4.67 (0.52)	0.24
I am interested in participating to make changes in my school.	4.86 (0.38)	4.83 (0.41)	-0.02
I feel confident I can make a difference in my school.	4.29 (0.76)	4.33 (0.82)	0.05
I believe when people work together, they can make a difference.	4.86 (0.38)	4.83 (0.41)	-0.02
I want to work on projects to improve my school.	4.86 (0.38)	4.83 (0.41)	-0.02
I expect to vote as soon as I am allowed to.	4.67 (0.82)	4.00 (1.67)	-0.67

To determine whether there was any change between pre- and post-surveys for individual participants, paired t-tests were run for the five participants that completed both the pre- and post-surveys. A paired samples t-test (see Tables 7-9) showed that the participant's level of perceived impact on civic engagement increased from pre-program ($M = 4.44$ $SD = 0.42$) to post-program ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.51$; t = -0.97, $p <$ .001, $d = -.73$). However, the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 26

Paired Samples Statistics for Civic Engagement

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Civic Engagement Pre-Survey	4.438	5	0.419	0.187
Civic Engagement Post-Survey	4.520	5	0.512	0.229

Table 27

Paired Samples Test for Civic Engagement

				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					Significance	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df		One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Civic Engagement Pre-Survey & Civic Engagement Post-Survey	-0.08	0.19	0.08	-0.32	0.15	-0.97	4		0.19	0.39

Table 28

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval Lower	Upper
Civic Engagement Pre-Survey & Civic Engagement Post-Survey	Cohen's d	0.19	-0.43	-1.34	0.51
	Hedge's correction	0.24	-0.35	-1.07	0.41

Qualitative. In coding and recoding the focus group transcript, there were seven initial codes that emerged to form two themes—*Voicing Concern for Elite Democracy within Student Leadership Engaging Civically through Real World Application*. Voicing Concern for Elite Democracy Within Student Leadership emerged from two initial codes—elite democracy vs. participatory budgeting and lack of equity amongst student groups. Engaging Civically through Real World Application emerged from five initial themes—accessing a budget, civic engagement, real world application, roadblocks to change, and voting. Where the latter is concerned, participants connected their experience with SPB to continuous opportunities for real world application through both skills and experience. In terms of skills, the participants highlighted that their participation in SPB allowed them to learn how to build interpersonal skills with students outside of their friend groups, how to work within a budget as well as how to go through a process of voting. Kelly shared, 'To me this is a model of the real world. You're here to learn how to interact with people and you're using those skills after you graduate out in the real world." They linked civic engagement within their school to a heightened connection to campus through purpose building. Natalia shared,

> To be civically engaged in school, it just feels like you have more of a purpose at school more than just going there. Like, it isn't just coming to school and learning. It's like you're coming to school and you're helping the school. And, I mean, it's not like you have a job, but it's kind of like a job, you know.

Candice shared that having a pre-allocated budget of $6,000 allowed the committee to further engage with the process because not only were they given a platform to advocate for student needs, but they also were provided funds to put action to their plans. She shared that the biggest accomplishment for the committee was already having funds allocated because it allowed them to save time to jump directly to attaining student feedback rather than first fundraising to attain money for the budget. Candice stated, "We can have great ideas, but if we're not funded, it isn't going nowhere. We haven't had to fundraise ourselves, so we save time just in that area."

Participants highlighted the school wide vote for SPB as an opportunity for students to engage with the voting process and learn how it works before they participate in a formal election. For many students the school-wide election day was their first voting experience. Participants felt that providing an experience that mirrored a true election would best prepare students for the experience of casting a vote once they are of age. As shared by a Candice,

> I think it'll help students' civic engagement, in the future, especially, because most of us are underage. So voting isn't necessarily the top thing on our mind, even when it is election time. It helps us learn what the process is at least walking in, going up to the booth, what its gonna look like setup wise, and how there are long lines to do this every single time. And like, how your vote does matter, and like they're all counted, and all of that. So, I definitely think it helps them just know the process. And then also, us providing information for them later about voting outside of school will help them learn about it now.

Overall, student participants reported that their engagement with SPB allowed them to engage in opportunities to build real world skills as well as model real world

experiences. While they highlight SPB's impact with civic engagement at the school level, their focus is centered on the future impact that SPB will have on their civic engagement within their community once students are of age to vote.

The second theme connected to civic engagement was *Voicing Concern for Elite Democracy with Student Leadership*. While students highlighted the importance of advocating for collective student voice over selective student voice, they specifically identified concerns within the hierarchy of student leadership structures of democracy on campus. They voiced direct concerns about the structure of democracy within our student government. Because students are elected by their peers to represent the student body, students are engaging in a democratic process; however, the students highlighted that this process is not participatory because once students are elected for the student government, they then have the power to make decisions on behalf of the collective student body. Kelly compares the democracy of the SPB process to the democracy of student government,

> It's [SPB] more of a democracy instead of just like, I think electing people and like, voting, like when you elect a person for stugo [student government], or something similar, each grade elects somebody that is democracy. But when each person can individually, put in their specific ideas, and then like vote on it, I feel like that kind of creates more of a sense of like, oh, I can control what's going on here. Or like, I have a bit of a more say.

Another Natalia shared, "Stu go [student government], is voting for one person to make the choices, which is a republic, I feel like this club is more of a democracy." The students expressed that the student voice committee provided a platform for everyone to

have a voice rather than a few select students who are tasked with making decisions on behalf of the school.

Overall, student' perspective on democracy within student leadership highlighted a desire for a more participatory democracy over an elite democracy. They expressed a clear desire to be inclusive of all students and to consistently engage the student body throughout the process before, during, and after the school-wide vote.

Research Question 3: What impact does school participatory budgeting have on student leadership engagement?

Quantitative. The analysis showed that overall means and standard deviation on the pre and post surveys for the construct of leadership development to be close, an average of 4.36 (SD=0.90) for the pre-survey and 4.28 (SD=0.74) for the post-survey (see Table 11). These means indicated that students entered and left the SPB process disagreeing about the impact their experience with SPB had on their leadership development. In reviewing the pre- and post-survey questions for the construct of leadership development broken down per question, 10 of the 16 items decreased on average from pre-survey to post-survey (see Table 15). The largest decrease was -0.57, for students' responses to "I can collaborate in a team." In addition, there was a decrease of -0.48 when students responded to, "I can resolve conflicts." The largest increase was for the statement, "I can speak in front of other people" with an increase of 0.67 from pre-program to post-program.

Table 29

Pre and Post Leadership Development Means

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Leadership Development Pre-Survey	7	1.35	3.59	4.94	4.36	0.90	0.85
Leadership Development Post-Survey	6	1.42	3.29	4.71	4.28	0.74	0.63

Table 30

Pre and Post Leadership Development Survey Means by Question

Variables	Pre-Survey M (SD)	Post-Survey M (SD)	M_2-M_1
I can listen carefully before responding.	4.14 (0.90)	4.00 (1.10)	-0.14
I can lead a discussion with other students.	4.57 (0.53)	4.67 (0.52)	0.10
I can speak in front of other people.	4.00 (1.15)	4.67 (0.82)	0.67
I can persuade others.	4.14 (0.69)	4.17 (0.75)	0.02
I can collaborate in a team.	4.57 (0.53)	4.00 (0.63)	-0.57
I can organize others to solve a problem.	4.43 (0.53)	4.00 (0.63)	-0.43
I can organize idea proposals.	4.57 (0.79)	4.50 (0.55)	-0.07
I can resolve conflicts.	4.14 (0.69)	3.67 (0.82)	-0.48
I can make decisions in a group.	4.43 (0.79)	4.33 (1.21)	-0.10
I can market/advertise proposals.	4.43 (0.79)	4.50 (0.55)	0.07
I can motivate others to get involved.	4.14 (0.69)	4.00 (0.63)	-0.14
I feel comfortable working with students who have different learning abilities.	4.43 (0.79)	4.83 (0.41)	0.40
I respect other people's ideas, even if I disagree with them.	4.71 (0.49)	4.50 (0.55)	-0.21
I consider myself to be a leader.	4.29 (1.25)	4.17 (1.17)	-0.12
My peers consider me to be a leader.	4.29 (0.76)	3.83 (0.98)	-0.45
I can express my opinions confidently to my peers.	4.29 (0.76)	4.33 (0.82)	0.05

To measure change between pre- and post-surveys for individual participants, paired t-tests were run for the five participants that completed both the pre- and post-surveys. A paired samples t-test (see Tables 12-14) showed that the participant's overall level of perceived impact on civic engagement decreased from pre-program ($M = 4.26$ $SD = 0.50$) to post-program ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.55$; t = -0.08, $p < .001$, $d = -.73$). However, this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 31

Paired Samples Statistics for Leadership Development

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Leadership Development Pre-Survey	4.26	5	0.50	0.22
Leadership Development Post-Survey	4.23	5	0.55	0.25

Table 32

Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Leadership Development Pre-Survey & Leadership Development Post-Survey	0.02	0.66	0.30	-0.80	0.85	0.08	4	0.47	0.94

Table 33

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

| | | Point | 95% Confidence Interval | |
	Standardizer[a]	Estimate	Lower	Upper
Leadership Development Pre-Survey	Cohen's d	0.66	0.04	-0.84	0.91
& Leadership Development Post-Survey	Hedge's correction	0.83	0.02	-0.67	0.73

Qualitative. In coding and recoding the focus group transcript there were five initial themes that emerged—communicating with peers, connecting students with the process of SPB, connecting with peers outside of friend group, connection to campus, and increased leadership efficacy. From these five initial codes, one primary theme emerged, which I coded as *Increased Leadership Efficacy through Communication and Collaboration.* Students expressed increased leadership efficacy through their collaboration with peers outside of their peer groups by engaging with new ideas and getting a better understanding about the process of change. Students expressed a new understanding that it takes time to implement something, and that change is not immediate. Candice shared,

> I've learned what it takes to bring change to the school. Like, it isn't just like a simple thing, like you asked for it, and you get it. You have to go through a long process. And I've also learned that you can't change everything. Like, just yourself, you know, you need people.

In understanding the process of change, students also highlighted that processes and policies are in place for different reasons at times due to school, district, state, and national policies and regulations. In understanding this, Candice shared,

I've learned the perspective of the departments on campus, like when we talk about the cafeteria and like their food, everyone doesn't like the food well, like, they can't do anything either. Like, everyone blames them [cafeteria workers]. But it's like because that's who they see near the food. There's more to it besides that, we make assumptions about what can be changed. And it's like, well, you don't know how much that costs. You don't know where's that gonna go? They just have an idea and they're like, don't think about the plan or action it takes to make that happen.

In understanding misperceptions, student participants took strides to communicate back to the student body why certain ideas could not be in place allowing them to further engage with students outside of their social circles. A Candice shared, "It's [SPB] made me go out and talk to people I wouldn't talk to necessarily, or even freshmen that I know but I don't talk to as much because I feel like their opinion matters because they're just starting high school." Natalia expressed that SPB allowed her to build upon her collaborative skills and build up her confidence as a student leader both in and outside of the student voice committee. Junior shared, "I'm not used to working with other people, I usually do things myself, but this has helped me be able to communicate and see other people's points of view." On the topic of leadership development, a Kelly shared,

I don't do many clubs, and I'm not in a sport or anything but I do like to take on leadership. So, I think just being in this club kind of helps me take that role a little bit more like, say, we're having a meeting, I can help guide the discussion. So, it's kind of like a confidence boost, and then teaching me how to step into that leadership role. So then maybe in a class discussion, or something, I can take that role.

Through the process of SPB, students expressed a heightened sense of leadership efficacy in the areas of communication and collaboration. They were able to step outside of their social circles and engage with both students and school stakeholders to develop proposals that represent the collective voices of the student body.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed my mixed-methods and the data findings used to answer my research questions. The quantitative data analysis produced evidence that participants experienced minor shifts of growth in the areas of school decision making and civic engagement. The quantitative data also indicated a minor decrease in leadership development. The qualitative data analysis produced four themes that provided additional context to the quantitative strands of data of this action research study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Discussion

The purpose of this Mixed Methods Action Research (MMAR) study was to

identify the impact of school participatory budgeting on students' engagement with

school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High

School. In doing so, I set out to answer the following research questions.

Research questions

1. RQ1: To what extent does school participatory budgeting impact students'
   engagement in school decision making?

2. RQ2: How does school participatory budgeting impact students' civic engagement
   with their school?

3. RQ3: What impact does school participatory budgeting have on student leadership
   engagement?

Connections to the Literature

Using both quantitative and qualitative data, I found that SPB had a positive impact

on my students' engagement with school decision making. While there was not statistical

significance due to a small sample size, the overall pre-survey and post-survey means did

indicate a slight increase from pre-program to post-program. Given the fact that students

were not only provided a platform to highlight their voices but were also allocated

financial resources to support their implementation, students were able to directly impact

the school's budget. In understanding the tiers of Mitra's Pyramid of Student Voice (2006), most often schools center their student voice practices at the broadest level where they seek student feedback but ultimately the adults determine whether to act on the requested feedback. In understanding the three pillars of Mitra's Pyramid of Student Voice (2006), the steering committee was able to participate at the highest level defined as building capacity for leadership. This means the students in the committee as well as the collective student body was able to vote and make decisions while adults assisted, which centered the students throughout the process. Zimmerman's (2007) research avidly supports centering students in leadership to meet community goals by urging youth organizations to focus on youth-led programming rather than youth functioning as the clients. By empowering youth and providing opportunity for them to have some decision-making power, students can affect every aspect of a community, from individual development to lasting policy change.

When implementing systems to boost student voice we must make considerable efforts to evaluate the voices that we are elevating to ensure that our student leaders ae representing the diversity of experiences and perspectives of the study body. Critics warn that Pyramid of Student Voice has the potential to highlight tokenism which could, in time, increase student disengagement, distrust, and alienation from the school community (Waters-Lynch, 2009; Mitra & Gross, 2009). Students on the steering committee consisted of 28 students from diverse backgrounds and experiences to mirror the diversity of student enrollment on campus. According to Ardizzone (2007), giving voice to youth allows them to become agents of change within their institutions. SPB served as an

84

educational branch for students to develop civically by providing space to elevate their voice, influence, and agency. Both strands of data indicated a positive attribution between SPB and students' civic engagement with their school. Students indicated that the application of real-world skills and experiences allowed them to better understand the change process as well as the voting process. Understanding stakeholder needs, seeking input, and refining processes allowed students to build their civic competencies. Students were able to engage in civic education that allowed them to participate in democracy by modeling it. This aligns with Cinar's (2019) consideration of student clubs as democratic organizations that have the capacity to perform four functions: fostering social skills, fostering democratic education and governance skills, teaching students how to use leisure time to contribute to one's community, and fostering civil society skills (community service).

The Social Change Model (SCM) emphasizes leadership as a process rather than as a role that enables anyone to build upon their leadership efficacy. The student voice committee did not assign any leadership roles among themselves; the committee functioned as a group of students with a desire to advocate for collective student voice. Without assigning any position or authority to any specific members, students were able to separate leadership from position or authority and instead focus on a common goal which was the implementation of SPB. Throughout the process, students learned to play to each other strengths, communicate different ideas and collaborate with peers outside of their social circles. While the quantitative strand of data indicated a slight decrease in leadership development from the pre-survey to post-survey, the qualitative strand

indicated that students felt growth in their leadership with their ability to collaborate with peers and communicate their ideas and opinions clearly and effectively.

School Wide Election Results

The school election vote occurred after the data collection of this action research study. To mirror a formal election, the school-wide vote was hosted in the auditorium lobby where there were 24 voting booths with a Chromebook loaded with a google form for students to cast their votes. During each class period, history classes rotated in and out of the voting location for students to cast their vote while students that did not have a history class were able to cast their vote during lunch. In total, 896 students (see Table 1) cast their votes. As outlined in Table 1, the top choice was bathroom beautification, and the runner up was campus outdoor seating and plants. The student voice committee announced via the school news network that they would be funding both projects with their $6,000 budget. In addition to the SPB election, we also had four volunteers from the Maricopa County Recorder's Office run a voter registration booth, where students who would be eligible for the next election could register to vote. In total, we registered 204 eligible students to vote which is 26% of the junior and senior student population.

Table 34

AHS Proposal Descriptions and Total Votes

Proposal Title	Proposal Description	# of Votes	% of Students
Library Lounge Nook	The library lounge area will be a functional and inviting space that would provide students with a comfortable and convenient place to study, read, or relax. With its range of amenities, like charging ports and board games, and comfortable seating options, it is sure to be a popular spot for students in need of a break from their busy academic schedules!	116	12.9%
Bathroom Beautification	The Bathroom Beautification Proposal is to help improve our bathrooms. Specifically, the money will go towards or as many bathrooms as our budget allows and supplying feminine products in the girls' bathrooms. This is only the beginning we will continue to see if there are any other improvements that can be made such as paper towels, sanitation signs, hand sanitizers.	573	64%
Campus Outdoor Seating and Plants	Overall beautification of the campus. Our school is an outdoor one, so we will be adding plants and seating to make attending an outdoor school a comfortable experience. This proposal will add plant boxes to certain windows, as well as more varied seating options and tables outside.	189	21.1%
Positive Affirmation Posters	The Positive Affirmation Posters are to help students that are struggling mentally or physically to get motivated and to not feel alone. You will mainly find this in the school bathrooms, Cafeteria, and inside hallways. We also want to include art and quotes created by students to inspire everyone to try their hardest!!	16	1.8%

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: To what extent does school participatory budgeting impact students' engagement in school decision making? The analysis showed that overall means and standard deviation on the pre and post surveys for the subcategory of school decision making to be close, 3.22 (0.58) for the pre-survey and 3.37 (0.44) for the post survey. These means indicated that students reported an increase in their engagement

87

with school decision making after their participation in SPB. While there was an overall increase between the pre-and post-survey results, there were some discrepancies among some questions that had similar themes. For instance, students responded positively at a growth rate of 0.48 in their response to, "The adults on campus encourage student feedback" and they had a growth rate of 0.36 to the statement, "Adults in my school act on student feedback." However, in response to the statement, "Adults in my school listen to students" there was a decrease of -0.40 and there was a decrease of -0.43 to the statement, "Adults in my school value student feedback." Additionally, there was a growth rate of 0.69 to the statement, "I feel comfortable speaking to school staff about problems in schools"; yet there was decrease of -0.24 to the statement, "I feel comfortable sharing ideas to school staff about solving problems on campus." Lastly, students had a positive response rate of 0.38 to the statement, "I feel that I can make a change at my school" and a positive rate of 0.07 to the statement, "I help to make decisions that impact my school." However, there was a negative response rate of -0.08 to the statement, "I feel that I have a voice in decision making at my school."

In reviewing these discrepancies amongst responses, I have determined several variables that may have impacted how students responded. First, the students completed the pre-and post-survey on their own time. To ensure more consistency in the future, it would be best practice to have the students complete the surveys at the same time in a proctored setting. This would allow for the same controlled environment, as well as allow me as the researcher to answer any clarifying questions for students. In consideration of their responses to the questions, I am curious if participants defined adults differently. For instance, if the questions were framed with a focus on the specific adult group such

as school administration, district leadership, teachers, security, etc. this may have impacted how students responded to the question as some students may feel that a specific adult group takes more consideration of student voice over other adult groups. This may explain why there was a decrease of -0.17 to the statement, "I feel comfortable speaking to my teachers about problems in school" but an increase of 0.69 to the statement, "I feel comfortable speaking to school staff about problems in school." If participants defined school staff as school administration this may explain why the rate was higher since participants were able to work directly with school administration throughout the SPB process. In the future, these discrepancies could be better defined and clarified by following up with student participants after they complete their surveys or to ask the questions directly to participants and have them answer on a printed or digital survey.

The qualitative strand of data for this research question provided substantial context on the impact SPB had on participants' engagement with school decision making. While the quantitative data had several inconsistencies, the qualitative data highlighted that overall participants felt that they not only had a chance to elevate their voice but more importantly they were able to advocate for the collective voice of the entire student body. Students reported that not only were they able to solicit student feedback, but they were also able to act on this feedback directly through collaboration with adults on campus. In consideration of both strands of data, I believe that students had a positive experience with SPB because they had a direct impact on how a portion of the school budget was spent; however, that direct impact is limited to their participation with the student voice committee and may not be representative of their experiences with adults

89

and decision making outside of this committee. Ultimately, that may have influenced how participants responded on the pre-and post-surveys.

Research Question 2: How does school participatory budgeting impact students' civic engagement with their school? The analysis showed that overall means and standard deviation on the pre and post surveys for the subcategory of civic engagement to be close, 4.41 (0.35) for the pre-survey and 4.50 (0.46) for the post-survey. These means indicated that students entered and left the SPB process agreeing about the impact SPB had on their experience with civic engagement. While there was an overall increase between the pre-and post-survey results, there were some discrepancies among some questions that had similar themes. For instance, participants had a response rate of 0.50 to the statement, "I know what participatory budgeting is"; however, they had a response rate of -0.50 to the statement, "I know what a budget is." While students had an initial response rate of 5.00 to the statement, "I know what a budget is" this dropped to 4.50 after their participation with SPB. This may be attributed to their experience with working within a budget, students initially knew what a budget was, but many had never worked directly within a budget to reach a goal which may have impacted how they responded on their post-survey. Additionally, participants responded at a rate of 0.24 to the statement, "I am concerned about fixing problems at my school" and had a response rate of 0.05 to the statement, "I feel confident I can make a difference in my school." Yet, they had a decline of -0.02 to the statement, "I am interested in participating to make changes in my school" and a decline of 0.02 to the statement, "I want to work on projects to improve my school." The most shocking response was a decline of -0.67 to the statement, "I expect to vote as soon as I am allowed to." I am unsure what this could be

90

attributed to as focus group participants reported a high interest in engaging civically in the future especially through voting. This is a question that would serve well to have additional clarification through a follow up survey or interview. The response rate may have been impacted by student cultural experience; for instance, if a student is not a current American citizen they may not see voting in a future election as a viable option in the near future—this might impact how they respond to a question about voting.

The qualitative strand of data provided two themes to add context to the discrepancies amongst the responses from the pre and post surveys. The two themes that emerged were students engaging civically through real world application and students voicing concern for elite democracy within student leadership. Students expressed that SPB gave them direct opportunity to engage with and lead a democratic process on their campus which has prepared them and the study body for participation in the next local or national election. Additionally, students highlighted inequity within student leadership on campus. They highlighted that while there is opportunity for student voice to be heard this is done through elite democracy rather than participatory democracy. Students vote for their student government leaders through a yearly election; these elected students are then the representatives for the student body and make decisions on behalf of the student body with or within out student body input.

Research Question 3: What impact does school participatory budgeting have on student leadership engagement? The analysis showed that overall means and standard deviation on the pre and post surveys for the subcategory of leadership development to be close, 4.36 (0.90) for the pre-survey and 4.28 (0.74) for the post-

survey. These means indicated that students left the SPB process slightly disagreeing about the impact SPB had on their leadership development. In reviewing the survey questions in more detail, there was a consistent pattern of growth in student's comfort with public speaking. For instance, participants had a response rate of 0.10 to the statement, "I can lead a discussion with other students", a response rate 0.67 to the statement, "I can speak in front of other people" and a response rate of 0.05 to the statement, "I can express my opinions confidently to my peers." Participants perceptions of themselves as leaders had a decrease of   -0.45 to the statement, "My peers consider me to be a leader" and response rate of -0.12 to the statement, "I consider myself to be a leader." Comparing these responses to the qualitative data, there is some alignment in the fact that students highlighted that they grew as leaders specifically in the areas of communication and collaboration. The quantitative decrease may be attributed to students' experience stepping into a leadership role with higher responsibilities such as managing a school budget, connecting with the student body, and working with peers outside of one's friendship groups. There previous experience in student clubs may not have required as much responsibility or commitment which may have impacted how they responded to the survey instrument.

Limitations

      Quantitative. In reflecting on the limitations of this study, sampling, and the implementation of the data collection method emerge as possible limitations associated with this research design. While twelve students from the student voice committee submitted permission slips to participate in the study, only seven students completed the pre-survey and six completed the post-survey. Of those students, only five completed

both the pre- and post-survey. Due to the small sample size, statistical tests could not identify significant relationships with the data sets. A larger sample size could have yielded more accurate results on students' perceptions from pre-survey to post-survey. Additionally, the nature of the data collection method excluded students' experiences on election day. Without the inclusion of the election day experience for the post-survey and the focus group, students were not able to able to reflect on their overall experience which may have impacted their responses on both the post-survey and during the focus group.

Qualitative. In reflecting on the limitations for the qualitative strand of my study, I found that as the researcher I should have incorporated time within my intervention to follow up with participants about their responses in focus group as well as the pre and post surveys. For the focus group, after I transcribed, coded, and develop my four themes I should have set up a follow up meeting with my participants to review my findings. This would have been a helpful tool in ensuring that I was properly portraying their voices, ideas, and concerns with accuracy. Additionally, due to the discrepancies in responses between the pre and post surveys, a follow up interview with participants would have allowed for clarification directly from the participants. This could have served as an additional validation piece for my finding.

Another limitation was that the implementation of SPB did not include any direct instruction on democratic education which may have impacted students' civic engagement through the process. For instance, during the focus group participants were asked, "What does it mean to you to be civically engaged with your school?" to which the students expressed that they did not know what civic engagement meant. I then

provided them with a definition prior to their responses, this highlighted for me that students had not been previously introduced to the term and therefore, lacked a full scope of understanding civic engagement within the context of both their school as well as their community.

Continuous Improvement

In reflecting upon the design and function of this mixed methods action research study, I identified two areas that need revision or improvement---extending the study and adjusting the timeline. Extending the study from 14 weeks to a full school year would help to expand the learning of participants as well as obtain more substantial data on the effectiveness of SPB's impact on students' engagement with school-decision making, civic engagement, and leadership development. While this action research student did yield positive results, more time is needed to measure the growth of students from pre-program to post-program. Creswell (2019) advises as a validity strategy that researchers spend a prolonged time in the field. Creswell (2019) states that the more experience a researcher has with participants in their actual setting, the more accurate and valid their findings will be.

The timeline of this study would do well to be adjusted to ensure that the school-wide vote occurs before students participate in the focus group and complete their post survey. By adjusting this timeline, the researcher provides more opportunity to collect substantial data to inform the research questions. Since the focus group questions were designed for students to reflect on their overall experience, their experience leading the school-wide vote could further enhance their responses. This could also impact their response on the post-survey after seeing the outcome of the project. Since the students

had never done SPB before, they did not have a full understanding of what the school-wide vote would look like, and this experience may have had a substantial impact on how they answered their post-survey questions.

Future Research Cycles. In continuing to increase student voice opportunities and enhance civic engagement, I recommend further research cycles that explore the implementation of SPB through history classes with an aligned curriculum to embed a learning process into its implementation. Evidence from this research cycle indicates that students grew in their ability to impact school-decision making, to civically engage, and to build their leadership efficacy. However, there was a lack of an embedded curriculum to incorporate civic learning directly into the SPB implementation. Additionally, the current cycle was an optional enrichment opportunity for students. Therefore, the students that opted in to participate may have already had an affinity to boost their own student voice. By embedding the SPB process into the classroom, a practitioner could obtain substantial data from students with a range of experiences which would also provide a larger sample size for data collection from pre-program to post-program. By embedding SPB into history classes, students will be able to apply their learning of democracy and governance directly to the development of their proposals.

Given (2012) asserts that knowledge is constructed between an inquirer and a participant through an inquiry process that is iterative with insights and understanding emerging through joint construction of the inquirer and the participant. To foster student voice to its greatest potential to be transformative, a further cycle of action research could utilize youth participatory action research (YPAR) to further embed students within the process design and within the design of the research methodology. Students would then

95

function as field researchers with additional ownership over the process of implementation. For instance, students could work collaboratively with staff to design the data collection materials such as a pre- and post-survey that they would co-proctor with staff. Adults and youth would also complete data analysis that could provide a wealth of information in terms of the lens through which students analyze results in comparison to staff.

Next Steps at Arcadia High School

Our goal at Arcadia High School is develop SPB into one of our signature programs for our campus which will allow us to strive towards educational equity. To reach this goal, we will need to enhance our practices in several key areas. We will need to continue to enhance our recruitment methods for student leaders, expand the program throughout our campus, and seek long term funding.

Enhanced Recruitment Methods. By continuing to enhance our methods of recruitment for student leadership opportunities on campus we can work to ensure our student representation is an accurate reflection of our student body which aids in striving towards educational equity. So often, leadership opportunities are afforded to model high-achieving students with little if any behavior or disciplinary concerns. Waters-Lynch (2008) urges schools to "move beyond venerating exceptional young individual leaders to a system that empowers many students to lead change in their school and communities." (p. 71). When implementing systems to boost student voice we must make considerable efforts to evaluate the voices that we are elevating to ensure that our student leaders are representing the diversity of experiences and perspectives of the student body. In order to enhance our recruitment practices for future years I propose that the student

voice committee design a google form that staff can submit recommendations for the committee. This google form would be designed to have teachers and staff reflect and recommend students that meet criteria that would allow for a wide range of perspectives and experiences such as a recommendation for a student that may struggle in a class but has the potential for leadership, or a student that may be easily be distracted in class but has an affinity for classroom discussions on topics of his or her interest. By designing our recommendation form to attain more students that are in wide range of campus rather than our top tier academic students, we will be able to craft a student voice committee that has a vast perspective of student life on campus.

Other recruitment methods would include presenting in classes to target specific student populations which would include presenting to our ELL classes, our LRC (special education) classes, math and reading intervention classes, and our AVID elective courses. These presentations would allow our committee to connect with students of disenfranchised populations and invite them to join the process to further enhance their school and their campus. Students would have the opportunity to join the google classroom and the Remind app to get notifications for upcoming meetings and events. Outside of classroom presentation, committee members would recruit students through general advertising via the Arcadia News Network (ANN), hanging posters around, and through word-of-mouth.

All nominated students for the student voice committee would be delivered a physical invitation to join as well as receive an invitation via email that includes both the student and parents to notify them that they have been recommended for an opportunity to represent the student body on the student voice committee. This invitation would be

97

translated for the parents in their native language so that they can discuss the opportunity and encourage their child to join and participate in SPB.

Expansion of SPB Program. By expanding the SPB program on campus to classrooms as well as throughout SUSD, we will be able to include more students through the process to give them a direct opportunity to grow their voice, civic engagement, and leadership efficacy. It is my recommendation that SPB be run through the history department, to ensure that more students have access to engage in all phases of SPB. Site level expansion would involve collaborating with the history department to connect SPB lesson plans to the history curriculum. In order to expand SPB within SUSD, we would first want to build partnerships with SPB organizations that can provide support, resources, and guidance on its expansion within the district. In addition, our student voice committee could serve as a model for other schools in the district that wish to implement SPB, our committee members could collaborate to train other school sites and student leaders on how to implement SPB successfully at their school sites.

Seek Long Term Funding. This current year we were able to fund SPB through our site council funds of $5,000 as well as through a grant of $1,000 from the Scottsdale Charros which brought our budget to $6,000. In building SPB as a signature program at Arcadia High School we must be cognizant of how we can fund the project long term. In order to fund SPB, we can continue to foster relationships with existing partnerships as well as build new partnerships within our community. For the 2023-2024 school year, we received a $5,000 grant from the Scottdale Charros to fund SPB. In addition, we have been building a partnership with the SUSD Foundation who invited the student voice committee to present at their board meeting in January 2023. Students presented on SPB

and their vision for its expansion at Arcadia High School. By presenting to the board of the SUSD Foundation, our students were able to start to foster a relationship that may lead to financial support in the future. An additional revenue source that can fund SPB long term is the creation of a tax credit account which would allow residents of Arizona to donate their tax credit of $400 directly to the SPB at Arcadia High School which would be a great funding source long term.

Recommendations for Educational Practitioners

If implemented with fidelity SPB is a tool that can not only enhance students' voice, civic engagement, and leadership development but also it is a tool that can boost your stride towards educational equity. SPB allows students to engage in a real democratic process that fosters participatory governance and democracy rather than elite democracy. So often, it is our most academically inclined students that are afforded the opportunities to engage in leadership positions that have the largest impact on the student body; however, if we can flip that and boost the number of leadership opportunities and diversity students that enter these roles, we can foster a school environment that is both inclusive and equitable. If we say we care about student voice, we have to provide a platform for all student voice to be represented rather elevating select few student voices or simply elevating the viewpoints that we agree with.

Conclusion

The purpose of this action research study was to identify the impact of SPB on students' engagement with school decision-making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High School. As a school, we hold an abundance of opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities and sports; however, we

are still building in our capacities to foster opportunities for students to engage and collaborate directly with staff, administration, and community members in efforts to further enhance the school campus. School participatory budgeting (SPB) creates a bridge to building the leadership capacity of our students by providing them an opportunity to directly impact the school budget. Without barriers to participation, SPB embeds equitable and inclusive practices that build upon the collective voice of the student body rather than a narrowly selected voice of a few student groups on campus.

In the post-survey I asked students, "What changes do you think could be made to improve the SPB process for future years?" They shared the following:

1. As a committee, take more time to familiarize the staff and student body with what school participatory budgeting is and how the steering committee functions so that more students engage with the process and share their feedback.

2. As the club sponsor, provide more understanding to the steering committee and student body about how the school budget is set up and where the money is generally allocated. This would allow better transparency for students to both observe and evaluate how the school allocates funds compared to student expectations and assumptions of how school funds are spent. This could have a direct impact on what students recommend as proposal ideas.

3. As a committee, recruit more students from all the different parts of the school to better represent a collective voice. This would be inclusive of athletes, student club members, fine arts, CTE and especially students that are not currently connected to any activity on campus outside of their classes.

4. As the club sponsor, increase the allocated time to implement SPB from one semester to the full school year to ensure the steering committee can pace itself and not be rushed to meet deadlines. This would also allow for bi-weekly meetings instead of weekly meetings which can be a challenge for students participating in multiple clubs.

5. As a committee, collaborate to establish clear expectations for committee members. This could boost regular attendance at meetings as well as better distribute work assignments within student groups. This will better allow the committee to stay on pace, work efficiently, and not be stalled in our progress when group members are missing.

Students must learn the importance of leadership through collaboration with peers as well as in coalitions with teachers and administrators. Thus, through their collective action as coalitions they have the power to shape policies, programs, and strategic plans at the school, district, state, and national level. It is imperative that we listen to the voice of students, especially in crafting our efforts to help prepare them for their futures as contributors to society. By developing youth-adult partnerships that center youth as the leaders, we task them with the charge of being change agents for the future they want to create with the support of faculty and staff that can mentor and foster their leader efficacy. If we truly believe children are our future, then we must allow them opportunities to hold the reigns while we hold space on all sides to nurture, guide, and support their development.

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APPENDIX A

PRE-SURVEY FOR STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Pre-Survey Information

Dear Student Leader:

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and your responses will be confidential if you choose to participate. The data collected will be used for statistical purposes to better inform our research and school decision-making practices. This survey is being conducted to gather information about your leadership experience and your experience in the decision-making process at your school.

Survey: To protect your confidentiality, please enter your unique identifier. Your unique identifier is the first three letters of your mother's first name and the last four digits of your phone number. Thus, for example, if your mother's name was Sarah and your phone number was (602) 543-6789, your code would be Sar 6789. The unique identifier will allow us to match your pre-intervention survey responses and your post-intervention responses when we analyze the data.

My unique identifier is: _____ _____ (e.g., Sar 6789, see paragraph above)

I. Demographic Data

1. What grade are you currently in?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
2. How would you best describe your race and/or ethnicity?
   a. African American/Black (Non-Hispanic)
   b. American Indian/Alaskan Native
   c. Asian
   d. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
   e. Hispanic/Latino
   f. White (Not of Hispanic origin)
   g. Mixed Race/Ethnicity
   h. Prefer not to answer
3. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Non-Binary
   d. Not Listed
   e. Prefer not to answer
4. Last school year, how many extracurricular activities were you a part of at your school of enrollment? (0-4+)
5. Last school year, how many extracurricular activities were you a part of **outside** of school? (i.e. club sports, youth groups, etc.)

6. Have you done any of the following in the last 12 months? (Check all that apply)
    ● Volunteered outside of school
    ● Voted in a student election
    ● Volunteered within your school
    ● Ran for a student government/council position
    ● Participated in march or protest
7. Which of the following best describes the average grades you get in school?
    a. Mostly C's and below
    b. Mostly C's
    c. Mostly B's and C's
    d. Mostly B's
    e. Mostly A's and B's
    f. Mostly A's

II. Feedback

8. What is **your main criteria** for you in determining whether or not a student is successful in leadership (Select top five criteria)
    ❏ Acceptance of failure
    ❏ Group accomplishments
    ❏ Achievements and recognition
    ❏ Charisma
    ❏ A sense of community
    ❏ Establish a network of trusted peers
    ❏ Off campus recognition
    ❏ General opinion about the person
    ❏ Goal setting
    ❏ Good relationships with peers
    ❏ Motivation
    ❏ Others (specify_____)
9. What do you find to be the **three most important motivators** for students seeking leadership roles at Arcadia High School?
    ❏ Improve employability
    ❏ Assist and support fellow students
    ❏ Build up a resume with a leadership role
    ❏ Assist in improving the campus
    ❏ Build upon and develop leadership skills
    ❏ Improve learning and interpersonal skills
    ❏ Encouraged by a staff member to participate
    ❏ School communication/advertising about student leadership roles
    ❏ Encouraged by friends or peers to participate
    ❏ Other (please specify_____)

Likert Scale
Pre-Survey
Directions: For the following section please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements listed below on a 5-point Likert Scale.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

Student Voice/School Decision Making

10.	I feel that I can make change at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I feel that I have a voice in decision making at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I feel closely connected to my school community.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I feel comfortable speaking to my teachers one-on-one.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I feel that my ideas are heard by adults on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I feel comfortable talking to school staff about problems in school.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I think up ideas on how to solve problems on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I feel comfortable sharing ideas to school staff about solving problems on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I help to make decisions that impact my school.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I feel the school administration considers my opinion when making decisions impacting our campus.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I feel the school administration seeks student feedback when making school decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The adults on campus encourage student feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Adults in my school listen to students.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Adults in my school value student feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Adults in my school act on student feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	My school encourages students to be a part of the decision making process.	1	2	3	4	5

Civic Engagement

26.	I know what school participatory budgeting is.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	I know about participatory democracy.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	I know about school regulations.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	I know what a budget is.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	I am concerned about fixing problems at my school.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	I am interested in participating to make changes in my school.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	I feel confident I can make a difference in my school.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	I believe when people work together they can make a difference.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	I want to work on projects to improve my school.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	I expect to vote as soon as I am allowed to.	1 2 3 4 5
	Leadership Development	
36.	I can listen carefully before responding.	1 2 3 4 5
37.	I can lead a discussion with other students.	1 2 3 4 5
38.	I can speak in front of other people.	1 2 3 4 5
39.	I can persuade others.	1 2 3 4 5
40.	I can collaborate in a team.	1 2 3 4 5
41.	I can organize others to solve a problem.	1 2 3 4 5
42.	I can organize idea proposals.	1 2 3 4 5
43.	I can resolve conflicts.	1 2 3 4 5

44.	I can make decisions in a group.	1 2 3 4 5
45.	I can advertise proposals.	1 2 3 4 5
46.	I can motivate others to get involved.	1 2 3 4 5
47.	I feel comfortable working with students who have different learning abilities.	1 2 3 4 5
48.	I respect other people's ideas, even if I disagree with them.	1 2 3 4 5
49.	I consider myself to be a leader.	1 2 3 4 5
50.	My peers consider me to be a leader.	1 2 3 4 5
51.	I can express my opinions confidently to adults.	1 2 3 4 5

Open Ended Questions

1. I think the biggest problems faced by my school are

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. If I could improve one thing about my school, it would be

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

APPENDIX B

POST-SURVEY FOR STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Post-Survey Information

Dear Student Leader:

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and your responses will be confidential if you choose to participate. The data collected will be used for statistical purposes to better inform our research and school decision-making practices. This survey is being conducted to gather information about your leadership experience and your experience in the decision-making process at your school.

Survey: To protect your confidentiality, please enter your unique identifier. Your unique identifier is the first three letters of your mother's first name and the last four digits of your phone number. Thus, for example, if your mother's name was Sarah and your phone number was (602) 543-6789, your code would be Sar 6789. The unique identifier will allow us to match your pre-intervention survey responses and your post-intervention responses when we analyze the data.

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    c. Asian
    d. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
    e. Hispanic/Latino
    f. White (Not of Hispanic origin)
    g. Mixed Race/Ethnicity
    h. Prefer not to answer
3. What is your gender?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Non-Binary
    d. Not Listed
    e. Prefer not to answer
4. Last school year, how many extracurricular activities were you a part of at your school of enrollment? (0-4+)
5. Last school year, how many extracurricular activities were you a part of **outside** of school? (i.e. club sports, youth groups, etc.)

114

6. Have you done any of the following in the last 12 months? (Check all that apply)
   - Volunteered outside of school
   - Voted in a student election
   - Volunteered within your school
   - Ran for a student government/council position
   - Participated in march or protest
7. Which of the following best describes the average grades you get in school?
   a. Mostly C's and below
   b. Mostly C's
   c. Mostly B's and C's
   d. Mostly B's
   e. Mostly A's and B's
   f. Mostly A's

II. Feedback

8. What is **your main criteria** for you in determining whether or not a student is successful in leadership (Select top five criteria)
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   ❏ Group accomplishments
   ❏ Achievements and recognition
   ❏ Charisma
   ❏ A sense of community
   ❏ Establish a network of trusted peers
   ❏ Off campus recognition
   ❏ General opinion about the person
   ❏ Goal setting
   ❏ Good relationships with peers
   ❏ Motivation
   ❏ Others (specify_____)
9. What do you find to be the **three most important motivators** for students seeking leadership roles at Arcadia High School?
   ❏ Improve employability
   ❏ Assist and support fellow students
   ❏ Build up a resume with a leadership role
   ❏ Assist in improving the campus
   ❏ Build upon and develop leadership skills
   ❏ Improve learning and interpersonal skills
   ❏ Encouraged by a staff member to participate
   ❏ School communication/advertising about student leadership roles
   ❏ Encouraged by friends or peers to participate
   ❏ Other (please specify_____)

Likert Scale
Post-Survey
Directions: For the following section please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements listed below on a 5-point Likert Scale.

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Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	
Always				

Student Voice/School Decision Making

10.	I feel that I can make change at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I feel that I have a voice in decision making at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I feel closely connected to my school community.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I feel comfortable speaking to my teachers one-on-one.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I feel that my ideas are heard by adults on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I feel comfortable talking to school staff about problems in school.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I think up ideas on how to solve problems on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I feel comfortable sharing ideas to school staff about solving problems on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I help to make decisions that impact my school.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I feel the school administration considers my opinion when making decisions impacting our campus.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I feel the school administration seeks student feedback when making school decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The adults on campus encourage student feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Adults in my school listen to students.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Adults in my school value student feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Adults in my school act on student feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	My school encourages students to be a part of the decision making process.	1	2	3	4	5

Civic Engagement

26.	I know what school participatory budgeting is.	1	2	3	4	5

27.	I know about participatory democracy.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I know about school regulations.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	I know what a budget is.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I am concerned about fixing problems at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I am interested in participating to make changes in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I feel confident I can make a difference in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I believe when people work together they can make a difference.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I want to work on projects to improve my school.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I expect to vote as soon as I am allowed to.	1	2	3	4	5
	Leadership Development					
36.	I can listen carefully before responding.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I can lead a discussion with other students.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I can speak in front of other people.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	I can persuade others.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	I can collaborate in a team.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	I can organize others to solve a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	I can organize idea proposals.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I can resolve conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	I can make decisions in a group.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	I can advertise proposals.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I can motivate others to get involved.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I feel comfortable working with students who have different learning abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	I respect other people's ideas, even if I disagree with them.	1	2	3	4	5

49.	I consider myself to be a leader.	1 2 3 4 5
50.	My peers consider me to be a leader.	1 2 3 4 5
51.	I can express my opinions confidently to adults.	1 2 3 4 5

Open Ended Questions:

1. What worked well about your school's PB process?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What problems did your school's PB process encounter?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What changes do you think could make your school's PB process better next

year?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you think your school should have a PB process again next year? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

119

APPENDIX C

IRB RECRUITMENT CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent of_____:

My name is Ms. Sara A. Johnson and I am the Assistant Principal of Student Services at Arcadia High School as well as doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Molly Ott, a faculty member in MLFTC and the dissertation chair and advisor of my study. We are conducting a research study in which we will be piloting school participatory budgeting to explore its impact on student engagement with school decision making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High School.

School Participatory Budgeting (SPB) stems from the widely adopted municipal Participatory Budgeting model–a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend a portion of the public budget. Your student has been selected to serve on the student voice committee to evaluate ideas, draft proposals, campaign proposals to the study body to best determine how $6,000 from our school budget should be used. The purpose of your student's participation on the study's student voice committee is to collaborate with students and staff in the process of implementing school participatory budgeting by co-leading its three stages: idea collection, proposal development, and project expo.

We are asking for your approval of your student's participation in the research study, which will involve the completion of a pre-and post-survey at the start and conclusion of the research project as well as participation in a student focus group which will be a debrief amongst student leaders about the SPB process and your student's experience with SPB to further refine its implementation for future years.

I would like to audio record this focus group interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; your student can change their mind after the interview starts as well. I will ask for your student's oral consent at the time of the interview for those who are selected. We anticipate participation in the focus group to take 1 hour total and the completion of the pre-and post-survey to take 20-25 minutes for each completion.

Your student's participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. Students under 18 years of age must have written parental approval in order to participate in this study.

The benefit of participation is the opportunity for your student to collaborate with peers to boost their campus involvement, develop leadership skills, enhance their civic engagement as well as build their student agency and advocacy skills for the needs of the student body. Interview responses will also inform future iterations of the study. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of our students and staff. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

In the survey, to protect your student's confidentiality, I will ask him or her to create a unique identifier known only to your student. To create this unique code, use the first

three letters of your mother's first name and the last four digits of your phone number. Thus, for example, if your mother's name was Sarah and your phone number was (602) 543-6789, your code would be Sar 6789. The unique identifier will allow us to match your post-intervention survey responses and your retrospective, pre-intervention responses when we analyze the data.

Your student's responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but student names will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team – Dr. Molly Ott, molly.ott@asu.edu or Sara A. Johnson at sarajohnson@susd.org or 480-484-6323.

Thank you,

Sara A. Johnson, Doctoral Student & Assistant Principal of Student Services
Dr. Molly Ott, Associate Professor

Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study and will let me audio record your responses by verbally indicating your consent.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact Ray Buss at (602) 543-6343 or the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480) 965-6788.

By signing below you are agreeing for your student to be part of the study.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature:_____

Date:_____

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Focus Group Guide

PB Student Voice Steering Committee Members

Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is Ms. Johnson, and the purpose of this study is to explore school participatory budgeting's impact on student engagement with school decision making, civic engagement, and leadership development at Arcadia High School. This focus group will help in understanding student PB committee members' evaluation of the school participatory budgeting process at Arcadia High School.

This interview will not take longer than an hour. In addition, I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded. You also can change your mind after the interview starts; just let me know if you want to stop the interview at any time.

Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and you do not have to respond to any question that you do not wish to answer. To protect your identity and the identity of others, please refrain from using specific names or identifiers (use 'Person A' instead, for example).

Do you agree to have the interview recorded? [If yes, begin recording now.]

Do you agree to participate in this interview? [Verbal consent to participate.]

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions

1. Let's start with your own experience in the School PB process. How was your experience as student voice committee members? What aspects of the experience did you enjoy the most and which aspects did you enjoy the least?

2. Let's now talk about the School PB process itself. In your view, what have been its main positive aspects and its main accomplishments in its first year?

3. What have been the main challenges faced by the School PB process in its first year?

4. What are the main things you have learned from participating in School PB?

5. What are your main recommendations for School PB in the future?

6. How important is it to you that student voices be considered and heard on a school campus?

7. What impact do you feel School PB has had on student engagement with school decision making? How can this be further expanded?

8. What does it mean to you to be civically engaged with your school?

9. What impact do you feel School PB has on students' civic engagement with their school? How can this be further expanded?

10. What impact has School PB had on your experience as a student leader on campus? What could enhance this experience for you?

11. Do you have any other comments?

APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Molly Ott

Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe -
Molly.Ott@asu.edu

Dear Molly Ott:
On 10/4/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review: Initial Study	
Title:	Examining School Participatory Budgeting within a High School Context
Investigator: Molly Ott	
IRB ID: STUDY00016610	
Category of review:	Expedited (7)(a) Behavioral research (7)(b) Social science methods
Funding: Name: Scottsdale Unified School District	
Grant Title:	
Grant ID:	
Documents Reviewed:	• IRB 18+ PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • IRB PARENTAL CONSENT FORM.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Johnson_IRB Protocol for TEL 799.docx.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol; • Johnson_Supporting Materials_09-18-2022.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • SUSD_Approval_Sara_Johnson.pdf, Category: Off- site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • SUSD_Approval_Sara_Johnson.pdf, Category: Sponsor Attachment; • WRITTEN CHILD ASSENT FORM AGES 11- 14.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • WRITTEN CHILD ASSENT FORM AGES 15- 17.pdf, Category: Consent Form;

The IRB approved the protocol effective 10/4/2022. Continuing Review is not required for this study.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

*REMINDER – Effective January 12th 2022, with to all staff, and can be found here. IRB is all other to face health in-person interactions human subjects **require** adherence current policies for ASU faculty, students visitors. Up-to-date information regarding ASU's to the COVID-19 Management Strategy approval related research activity involving human subjects, protocols r elated COVID-19 management including coverings, checks, facility access, governed current policy.*

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Sara Johnson

        Sara Johnson

APPENDIX F

SUSD RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Engaging all students in world-class, future-focused learning

Mohave District Annex

8500 E. Jackrabbit Rd.

Scottsdale, Arizona 85250

Telephone: 480-484-6144

Website: www.susd.org

July 14, 2022

Sara Johnson
Arizona State University

Dear Sara:

Your request to conduct your study of school budging impact on student engagement in school decision making, civic engagement, and leadership development is approved. Please provide us with the results of your study when it is completed. Best wishes to you!

Sincerely,

Dr. Cindy Bochna, PhD
Director of Assessment and Accountability