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Hmong Parent Engagement: The Need To Provide Basic Needs Services In Hmong Charter Schools To Increase Parent Engagement

Kevin Xiong

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HMONG PARENT ENGAGEMENT: THE NEED TO PROVIDE BASIC NEEDS SERVICES
IN HMONG CHARTER SCHOOLS TO INCREASE PARENT ENGAGEMENT

by

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A Dissertation in Practice

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor in Education

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Department: Teaching, Leadership, and Professional Practices

Degree: Doctor of Education

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July 17, 2023

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I am constantly reminded of the educational privileges and opportunities I have experienced as a Hmong-American, privileges that were denied to my refugee parents and many like them as they escaped their war-torn country. This dissertation is dedicated to them and to my people – the Hmong!

In memory of my father, Lieutenant Nom Vaj Xyooj,
who fought alongside the American forces in Laos
to stop the spread of communism.
Thank you for giving me love and life!

Kuv txiv aw,
koj nim nrhaw nrhaw ib tug tub los ib tub ntxais
moog rug luas sib tw kawm kuam tau doctor es
hnuv nua kuv kawm taag lawm os.
Ncu txug koj txuj kev nrhaw has txuj kev hluv kuv!

ABSTRACT

The Hmong diaspora and settlement in the United States have a direct impact on how Hmong parents engage in their children's academic journey. With the viewpoint of traditional Westernized parent engagement, Hmong parents may be perceived as engaging too little. However, in order for Hmong parents to be involved in their children's educational journey as part of this Westernized concept, it is imperative that the families' basic needs are met. Otherwise, they will primarily focus on meeting their fundamental basic needs rather than being engaged in their children's academic progress. This research explored two Hmong charter schools in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, as well as 10 parents from one of the two Hmong charter schools. The results from administrator and parent interviews helped to identify basic needs services that are crucial to implementing programs and services within Hmong charter schools in order to increase parent engagement. Ultimately, the research suggests the Holistic Cultural Community Framework (HCCF), which describes a strategy for Hmong charter schools to build programs and services based on the needs of families in order to increase the engagement of parents in the learning process. This framework discusses parent engagement through a culturally responsive approach that caters to the needs of Hmong families.

Keywords: Hmong history, Hmong culture, parent engagement, charter school, basic needs, socioeconomic status, academic achievement

ARTIFACT I: PROBLEM OF PRACTICE ANALYSIS

Introduction

Data have shown that parent engagement effectively supports students' growth in academic performance (Auerbach & Collier, 2012). Earlier research conducted by Henderson (1987) shows how parent engagement affects academic outcomes by (a) positively impacting academic performance if parents sustain a positive learning environment at home; (b) showing significant improvement in language skills, test performance, and school behavior by training low-income parents on school-based programs to support their children; and (c) yielding a positive school environment and achievement if parents and the community continue to demand high quality education. This is further solidified by Finn (1998) who agreed that creating a positive learning environment at home significantly impacts academic outcomes. Both Henderson (1987) and Finn (1998) suggested that parent engagement, whether at home or at school, is a contributing factor to students' academic success.

Analyzing parent engagement in Hmong charter schools also means closely exploring families' basic needs and whether those needs are being met. This is crucial, because as stated by Noor (1981), education *is* part of basic needs. His research illustrated the importance of education to improving the quality of life and the skills needed to be productive in society. Noor (1981) also examined the connections between education and the socioeconomic power of families and institutions, which shows that "basic education is the desire of the socioeconomic elite to keep their privileges." The connection among education, life, and the development of

children are impacted by how institutions are created. Osgood et al. (2010) suggested that when systems and institutions are interrupted and necessary services and programs become unavailable to children as they transition to adulthood, their basic needs are also interrupted. Often, people of color, LGBTQ, women, low income/no income families, and people with different abilities become victims to failed public systems. As Hmong people attempt to assimilate to Western culture, navigating these different institutions further complicates the assimilation process. In other words, Hmong charter schools perpetuate the cycle of harm if they blatantly ignore the low income/no income families whose basic needs are not being fulfilled. Thus, this cycle of harm will continue to ripple for generations in already marginalized families.

Hmong charter schools in Minnesota suffer from a lack of parent involvement, both in school and through virtual learning. The lack of parent engagement in the Hmong community is not due to the lack of parenting skills, but generational and socioeconomic limitations on their abilities to participate, which prolongs the cycle of harm. According to Zhang et al. (2011), socioeconomic statuses, including income, educational level, and race/ethnicity, are contributing factors to limited parent engagement because of the lack of skills needed to support students with homework and school activities. Consequently, subpar English skills, refugee trauma, unemployment, underemployment, limited access to mental and medical health services, and insufficient knowledge of the educational system are all contributing factors to Hmong parents' lack of engagement in their children's education (Vang et al., 2021).

One of the driving goals of the Hmong population in the Twin Cities, and across the nation, is to alleviate their unusually high poverty rate. Traditional elements used to address the multifaceted cycle of poverty are relevant to the needs of Hmong individuals and families. However, they often fail to engage this population mainly due to the Western cultural paradigm

and assumed motivations inherently included in mainstream social service programming. Identified needs, such as educational support from cradle into workplace, developing vocational opportunities for Hmong students, closing the achievement gap, eradicating health disparities, and stabilizing the financial lives of Hmong families, all require a specific cultural lens geared toward the communal Hmong cultural values in order to succeed (Cobb, 2010). Hmong charter schools exist to provide an alternative learning environment for Hmong students; therefore, these schools should be an ideal setting for supporting socioeconomic impact on Hmong families because (a) the schools already contain the students who need the support, (b) available spaces exist to provide the services, and (c) combining these services with existing academic programs would essentially meet the basic needs of Hmong families and students.

Purpose for Study as Inspired by the Researcher's Background

As the researcher of this study with over 10 years of experience in the nonprofit field, I have grown to foster a deep passion working with low income/no income communities that are underrepresented and marginalized. It has been important to me to not only find resources for families who struggle to fulfill their basic needs but to also find opportunities for them to be engaged in the political and systemic decision-making process that mostly impacts them. As I reflect on my life's journey and my parents' traumatic refugee experience, I often wonder how they survived. As a result of my father's enlistment as a Hmong guerilla, led by the U.S. CIA in Laos, my parents had no choice but to escape from their home country once the war ended. They hid in the jungles of Laos, crossed over mountains and rivers, lived in rugged refugee camps, and left their homeland for America to escape war and persecution for a better life and opportunities. Here in America, their sacrifices granted my siblings and me the opportunity to attend school, an opportunity my parents were not given in Laos. They, too, attended adult high school to learn

basic English. My parents also learned how to navigate this entirely new American system of rent, employment, medical and health services, and buying food and household necessities, which are all considered fundamental basic needs to survive in America.

Basic needs services are the resources needed to live and maintain basic life, such as food, shelter, health, wellness, and education (Homeless Hub, 2021). When families have limited financial resources, this leads to many other insecurities that restrain their participation in society. According to Martinez et al. (2021), limited access to basic needs services generally stems from limited access to income, which ultimately leads to limited access to wealth, health and wellness, appropriate education opportunities, and food insecurities. According to the state of Minnesota (State of Minnesota, 2017), it is vital to provide support to children and youth with mental illness through a process “within a system of care broad framework that brings together family, friends, community, professionals, and cross-system supports resulting in a creating of a plan of care that best fits the family’s vision and story.” Thus, infusing basic needs services into schools is critical, particularly in schools where the majority of the families are living in poverty or with an inadequate income.

In the last five years, I have had the opportunity to transition from the non-profit entity, supporting families with their basic needs, to the Hmong charter school spaces in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. This shift in work sectors gave me the opportunity to learn about education, education policies, and academic opportunities, or lack thereof, particularly for marginalized communities. Within these last five years, I was employed by a private school, where parents paid for the students’ entire tuition. Resources and educational opportunities were readily available to the students. These families rarely worried about sufficient clothing, paying rent on time, or adequate food for the family. Parents actively participated in the learning process by

attending school activities, conferences, volunteer events, and classroom visits. However, as I continue to work and support Hmong charter schools in the Twin Cities, parents' school involvement is nearly nonexistent, which is a startling concern. I knew that in private schools and suburban schools, where resources are readily accessible, parents were heavily engaged in the learning process; whereas, in many Hmong charter schools, parents are not engaged.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to first understand the basic needs and demographics of the Hmong community in the Twin Cities. Then, this study explored the definition of basic needs services and the role of these services for survival. Essentially, this research study aimed to discover the relationship between the necessity of basic needs services and parent engagement in schools, especially to understand how charter schools must engage uniquely with Hmong parents so that they are motivated to engage in the learning process. The research question of this study is as follows:

What basic needs and services are essential for involving and engaging parents in their children's academic journey in Hmong charter schools?

Hmong History

Before properly exploring the research question, it is important to understand the background of the Hmong people. The following sections briefly highlight the history of the Hmong people, specifically the Hmong diaspora, culture, religion, and education.

The Hmong Diaspora

The Hmong people do not have a country. They are nomadic people, forced to migrate across Asia as a result of war and persecution. The Hmong people are known to be from China and peacefully lived with the Han Dynasty 4,000 years ago for many centuries. The Hmong

lived a simple, agrarian lifestyle focused on raising crops and farm animals. They were exceptionally traditional in the sense of family, culture, and rituals (Duddeck, 2007). As the Hmong population grew, so did ethnic Chinese, which caused conflicts with land ownership. The disputes resulted in war and persecution, forcing the Hmong to assimilate to Chinese culture. Because the Hmong refused to fully assimilate to Chinese culture, the war and persecution escalated, and most Hmong people migrated to Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, which are in modern day Southeast Asia (Temple of Hmongism, 2013).

For over 2,000 years, the Hmong resettled in Southeast Asia and assimilated to a new way of life (McCall, 1999). The Hmong in the high mountains still depended on agriculture as a way of life, while those in the cities pursued education, employment, and business opportunities. The Hmong continued to embrace their rich cultures and traditions, while assimilating to Southeast Asia cultures. As refugees, the Hmong eventually encountered conflict again.

To help minimize the spread of communism in 1961, U.S. president John F. Kennedy authorized the recruitment of young Hmong soldiers to support the Secret War in Laos. The U.S. government knew that the Hmong lived in the high mountains and jungles of Laos and would essentially be able to navigate these territories. The Hmong served under direction of the American CIA in exchange for land in which they could live and practice Hmong culture and traditions freely. Over 19,000 Hmong men and boys were initially recruited in Laos to support these secret operations in Laos (Duddeck, 2007). This also meant that Hmong boys were being summoned to combat fields. As a result, the U.S. government gave the Hmong people a glimmer of hope by opening schools in Hmong villages, giving girls the opportunity to become nurses and teachers. However, this glimmer of hope was fleeting.

In 1973, a peace treaty enacted the withdrawal of all military activity in Laos. Unfortunately, over 18,000 Hmong men and boys had died as a result of the war. Over 120,000 Hmong people in Laos became refugees as Communist Pathet Lao took control, displacing hundreds of Hmong families. Many families fled into the jungles and crossed the iconic Mekong River to refugee camps in Thailand, while other families immigrated to different parts of the world, including the United States, Canada, France, and Australia (Temple of Hmongism, 2013).

As the Hmong immigrated to different parts of the world starting in 1975, about 38,000 Hmong resettled in the Twin Cities in Minnesota (Religions in Minnesota, 2021). Additionally, thousands of Hmong fled to different refugee camps, particularly in Thailand. In 2004, the Thai government eventually forced the closure of the last Hmong refugee camp, displacing 20,000 Hmong people yet again. Over 5,000 of these Hmong sought refuge in the Twin Cities (Ngo, 2008).

Culture

The Hmong culture comprises 18 clans. Each clan is represented by 18 last names, which are Chang, Cheng, Chue, Fang, Hang, Her, Khang, Kong, Kue, Lee, Lor, Moua, Pha, Thao, Vang, Vue, Xiong, and Yang (Vang, 2008). The Hmong culture implements patriarchy, in which clan leaders are typically men who are elders. Elders are defined as those who are 50 years old and older. The respect of the clan system and elders is highly protected, and their decisions are usually final. Clan leaders' roles include negotiating the dowry of Hmong daughters in weddings, acting as mediators in divorces, resolving family and community conflicts, and making decisions for their respective clan community (Wong, 2020). These practices continue to this day despite the legal process in the United States. Within each clan, there are two primary language dialects, the Hmong green "hmoob ntsuab" and Hmong white

“hmoob dawb” (Yang, 2015). One dialect is not superior to the other. However, the Hmoob white dialect is more widely and universally used than Hmoob green.

The Hmong are exceptionally communal people, meaning everything revolves around the family and community. As such, most Hmong families are large, resulting in households that consist of extended families (Owens, 2007). Traditionally, the large family environment contributed to the success of their agrarian pursuits – the more family members in the household, the more laborers for field work and harvesting season. The Hmong continue to accommodate large and extended families in households. While the Hmong continue to practice the ingrained communal aspect of their culture, it also poses risks to their wellbeing. In America, where education, employment, and income play an integral role in sustaining basic needs, Hmong families struggle to support large households while adjusting to a non-agricultural lifestyle. Low income and no income Hmong with large families could potentially fall victim to public systems.

Regardless of struggles and tribulations, the Hmong community celebrates culture and life at annual Hmong new year celebrations. Typically celebrated between November and December, the Hmong new year celebration is a celebration of villages (in Asia) and cities (in the United States). The celebration centers around the conclusion of a successful harvest. Families often sacrifice an animal to celebrate the completion of the harvest season and conclude the celebration by obtaining spouses for their sons and daughters. Sons and daughters dress in their finest Hmong clothes and sing and dance to their favorite Hmong folksongs (Yang, 2007). Typically several days long, the new year celebration often results in marriages between families across the villages (Yangcheepsutjarit, 2020). Regardless of social and economic statuses, these community celebrations continue to bring Hmong families together to celebrate life.

Religion

Traditional Hmong religious beliefs are considered animistic (Plotnikoff et al., 2002). According to Her-Xiong and Schroepfer (2017), Animism is the belief that all things, living and non-living, have a spiritual life. This means that all beings are spiritually “animated” and alive. Religious healing is an integral aspect of the Hmong tradition. If a person is ill or an unfortunate event happens, the animistic belief of the Hmong would indicate that certain spiritual aspects of that person’s life path did not align correctly. As such, the Hmong also believe in spiritual healing through Shamans.

According to Yang (2012), Shamanism is the practice in which the healer interacts with the spiritual world with the intention to communicate for good health and wellness. As the Hmong community resettled in the United States, adjusting to American culture was shocking. Even more difficult was attempting to heal from the traumatic experiences of war and persecution. The Hmong people believe that the entire Hmong community’s spirit was lost in Laos. Thus, ongoing trauma continues to exist within the community. They believe that because of the war, their current lives are not aligned. In turn, Hmong families experience an extremely high rate of untreated mental health issues. The cycle of harm continues to ripple throughout generations, as the effects of war and refugee trauma are essentially passed down from parent to child (Sangalang & Vang, 2017). The effects of historical trauma and the ensuing increase in mental health within the Hmong community have created a crisis for mental health practitioners who wish to support Hmong families (Vang et. al., 2021). Hmong people rarely seek mental health support, as mental health is considered a taboo topic in their culture. Instead, they often seek healing and support from spiritual Shamans, which can lead to an increase in generational mental health concerns within families. Ultimately, these concerns create obstacles that limit a

family's ability to meet basic fundamental needs. The perpetuating trauma in the Hmong community has caused a negative domino effect on Hmong experiences and mental health for generations.

Education

Traditionally, Hmong families relied heavily on their agrarian lifestyle to survive. Thus, the more children in the family, the more help with farm labor. As such, access to education was quite limited. Additionally, the Hmong practiced patriarchy, which meant that boys were always entitled to the opportunities for an education, if there were any (Wong, 2020). Conversely, gender expectations meant that girls predominately supported the family by performing household chores and raising and caring for younger siblings. This limited the girls' access to an education (Lor, 2013). Hmong boys, on the other hand, had the opportunity to experience an education, oftentimes, away from home in the cities.

Today, in America, education is readily available to both Hmong boys and girls. Strict, traditional Hmong families still refrain from allowing their daughters to attend higher education away from home, if at all. Nonetheless, a report conducted by Hmong National Development (2013) stated that of the 98,076 Hmong people in the United States, who were 25 and over at the time of this research, 15.7% of males graduated with a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 13.3% of females. While these percentages remain low, it is noteworthy that Hmong women were attending U.S. colleges and universities at an equal percentage of their Hmong men counterparts at the time.

Hmong parents and elders highly respect the educational system. After all, regardless of social influence and the historical trauma inflicted on the community, access to free and public education in the United States is the Hmong people's first exposure to formal education (Lee,

2001). They value the importance of education and appreciate their children's access to educational opportunities. In fact, those who survived the genocide in Laos and migrated rely on their children's success in the United States. According to the Chief Executive Officer of Hmong American Partnership, Bao Vang (2021), although parents and elders speak limited English, the Hmong will do whatever it takes to support their children's success. This includes ensuring that their families have access to a stable home, food, and public and free education. Vang (2021) added that Hmong parents primarily focus on their families' health and wellbeing so that their children are prepared for educational opportunities.

Minnesota Hmong Charter School Movement

Upon the closure of the final Hmong refugee camp in Thailand, over 5,000 Hmong resettled in the Twin Cities starting in 2004. About 2,000 students enrolled in Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools (Ngo, 2008). As a result, Hmong non-profit and social services organizations began creating afterschool programs to support the growing needs of these newcomers and English language learners. Community leaders began hosting conversations about the roles of non-profit organizations in education and the importance of holding public schools accountable in creating spaces and opportunities for the new Hmong students (Vang, 2021). Despite investing in specific language programs, the enacted measures were short-term initiatives that did not consider the cultural dynamics of children who had not experienced formal education. In order to combat these cultural deficiencies in the public education sphere, Hmong community leaders and educators began to discuss various opportunities for effective cultural growth alongside educational growth. The emergence of the Hmong charter school movement in 2004 sought to remedy the lack of culturally relevant environments for Hmong students. To date, six charter schools in the Twin Cities focus on Hmong language and culture.

The schools provide culturally relevant experiences to approximately 6,800 students. It is important to note that while the six schools emphasize the Hmong language and culture, charter schools are still public schools mandated by the same state guidelines as traditional public schools in Minnesota. Table 1 lists the six Hmong charter schools in the Twin Cities.

Table 1

Hmong Charter Schools in the Twin Cities

Name of School	City	# of Students	Year Started
HOPE Community Academy	St. Paul, MN	565	2000
Prairie Seeds Academy	Brooklyn Park, MN	789	2004
Hmong College Prep Academy	St. Paul, MN	2378	2004
New Millennium Academy	Brooklyn Center, MN	810	2005
Noble Academy	Brooklyn Park, MN	821	2006
Community School of Excellence	St. Paul, MN	1438	2007

MN Association of Charter Schools (2021)

Hmong education administrators have always been intentional in engaging parents and the community in educational opportunities and growth. Oftentimes, refugee and immigrant families are reluctant to engage with America’s education system, but through culturally specific engagement activities at Hmong charter schools, families trust their children can receive culturally relevant academic programs and services (Vang, 2021). Not only do the staff and administrators speak the Hmong language, but they also understand the cultural dynamics that traditional public schools and mainstream organizations often do not. If traditional school administrators and staff do not understand Hmong history, culture, and unique needs, they are not capable of identifying the basic needs of the Hmong community. This can detrimentally hinder the needs of the Hmong community which poses potential disruption to a child’s ability to learn. This motivates Hmong parents to concentrate on providing for their families’ basic needs

as the primary focus before supporting their children’s learning, despite knowing that education is crucial to their children’s future.

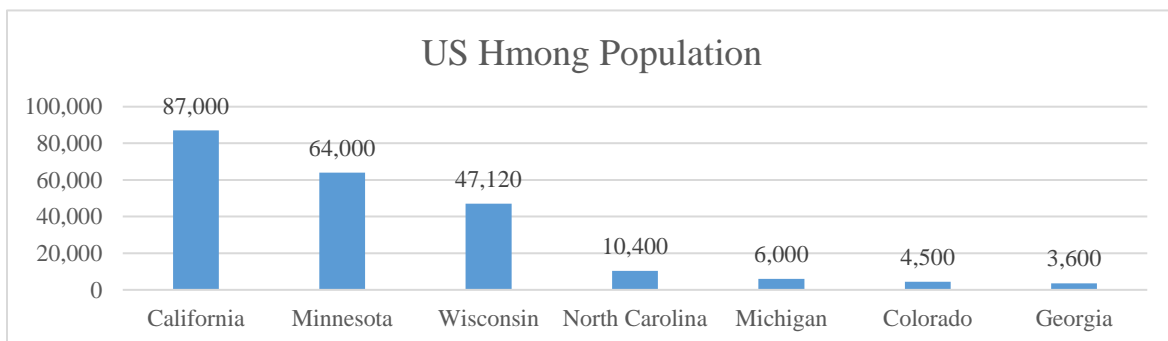
Hmong Minnesota Demographics

Since the resettlement of Hmong refugees in 1975, the Hmong diaspora and narrative continued beyond Laos into different regions of the world. Once in the United States, the Hmong tried to adapt to American culture; they needed to adjust to living in a new country. Both boys and girls were required to attend school. Property rent and other essential bills demanded payment. Although farming was still practiced on a limited basis, income was primarily needed to house and feed Hmong families. The Hmong people were forced to adapt to the American capitalist society, where everyday life depends on income.

Hmong began seeking refuge in Minnesota. Today, Minnesota contains the second largest Hmong population in the United States. The Twin Cities has the largest Hmong population of any metropolitan area (Mocol, 2008). California houses the largest Hmong population in the United States (The Asian Population: 2010, 2012). Despite the differences in climate, the Hmong moved to Minnesota due to the growing sponsorships by Lutheran churches. Figure 1 shows the Hmong population in seven U.S. states.

Figure 1

United States Hmong Population



The Asian Population: 2010 (2012)

According to the Minnesota Historical Society (2008), the first Hmong arrived in Minnesota in November 1975. Today over 81,161 Hmong live in Minnesota, with 94% residing in the Twin Cities. Hmong Minnesotans are relatively young. Of the total population of Hmong in Minnesota, 65% are younger than 30 years old. In fact, 37.4% are younger than 17 years old. Eighty-six percent of Hmong Minnesotans speak both Hmong and English, with only 34% stating that they speak English well. This is a result of the educational attainment data, which shows that 25% of Hmong Minnesotans have obtained less than a high school diploma or no education at all. However, 20% of Hmong Minnesotans have received a bachelor's degree or higher.

The unemployment rate in the Hmong Minnesota community is five times higher than the national rate, 28% compared to 5.8%. This rate is aligned with the income and poverty rate for Hmong families. Of the 16,723 Hmong households, approximately 20% earn incomes below the poverty rate. Minnesota State Demographic Center (2016) shows that 70% of Hmong families consist of four or more members, which illustrates that Hmong families continue to reproduce at a considerably higher rate than other ethnic groups in the United States. With the high unemployment rate, Hmong families rely on public assistance to support and/or supplement their basic needs. Large Hmong families especially rely on assistance, particularly those including extended family members. These public and government resources include income, rental assistance, SNAP for food support, Medicaid or MNSure (Minnesota's healthcare platform based on income), and unemployment benefits. Even with government healthcare support, data shows that 6.4% of Hmong Minnesotans remain uninsured. No data was found regarding underinsured individuals, identified as those who have insufficient health coverage. Table 2 portrays Hmong

demographics in Minnesota regarding population, poverty, unemployment, education, and insurance.

Table 2

Hmong Demographics in Minnesota

Hmong Demographics						
Total Population	% Less Than Poverty Rate	Unemployment Rate	Education Lower Than HS Diploma	Education Higher Than BS/BA	Uninsured	Underinsured
81,161	20%	28%	25%	20%	6.4%	unknown

Minnesota Compass (2021)

Basic Needs Services

As previously mentioned, in order to understand the importance of addressing basic needs in Hmong charter schools, one must recognize the historical and traumatic experiences of the Hmong people as contributing factors to the necessity of offering these services and programs. Hmong parents value the importance of education in America, an opportunity that was scarcely available to them in their homeland. The historical trauma of escaping their war-torn country included hiding in jungles, witnessing the execution of family members and neighbors, and separation from family. These traumatic events have contributed to the Hmong people’s lack of trust in public systems designed to support them. The displacement from one country to another repeatedly has created the fear that perhaps their time in the United States will be temporary as well. Additionally, along with the traumatic experiences of escaping war, their commitment to traditional Hmong roots, cultural backgrounds, animism, and healing rituals contributes to the mistrust of Westernized public programs and support services. Basic needs are defined as those fundamental needs that people in the United States require in order to survive.

In the context of this research, basic needs are considered in areas of workforce development, health and wellness, and nutrition security. These are broadly defined in the following sections.

Workforce Development

As land was stripped from Hmong families, they resettled in the United States in search of better opportunities. While opportunities exist, there is ongoing adjustment and transition from their agrarian lifestyle to a lifestyle steeped in capitalism, an economic system based on market competition and the pursuit of profit. As they adjust to a different culture where income is essential to meet their basic needs, Hmong families continue to struggle.

Workforce development, according to Hmong American Partnership (2020), is the training and support to help Hmong families find suitable and sustainable employment. The workforce development process includes (a) adult education, which incorporates basic English education; (b) training; (c) skills/knowledge building; and (d) job placement. These steps ultimately prepare Hmong for the workforce. These services also include partnerships with businesses and organizations to create opportunities for those who speak limited English or those who are refugees and immigrants with traumatic historical experiences. Considering the high unemployment rate among Hmong Minnesotans, it is imperative that workforce development and employment services are culturally relevant and sensitive toward the Hmong people's historical trauma experiences.

Health and Wellness

Traditional Hmong, even in the United States, still believe in physical and mental healing through Shamanism. Consequently, the number of uninsured and underinsured in the Hmong Minnesota community is the direct result of their traditional healing practices and distrust of Westernized medicine. In fact, according to a study conducted by Johnson (2002), the lack of

English and limited medical terminology translation in the Hmong language all contribute to the distrust of Western healthcare systems. The author suggested that the lack of direct translation in the Hmong language continues to create a lack of understanding (Johnson, 2002). As a result, general health and mental health issues persist in the Hmong community.

Ali et al. (2020) indicated that the Hmong community suffers with a higher rate of infection-related cancers. For example, compared to the general U.S. population, nasopharyngeal carcinoma, gastric cancer, hepatic cancer, and cervical cancer are more prevalent in the Hmong community than common cancers, such as lung, breast, and colorectal cancers. Ali et al. (2020) specified that the main contributors to this high cancer morbidity and mortality are attributed to “genetics, problems in access to health services, and diet-related issues.” These issues are also some of the leading causes of diabetes and high blood pressure, two other health conditions that are widespread in the Hmong community. This is further corroborated by a study completed by Thao et al. (2015), which indicates that Hmong people are three times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than non-Hispanic white patients. As such, developing culturally relevant health and wellness services and programs is essential for the Hmong community.

Nutrition Security

Food is a central aspect of the Hmong community (Vue et al., 2011). As such, during harvesting season, individual families host celebrations honoring the community’s support in a successful harvesting season. This tradition has continued for the Hmong in Minnesota. Traditional Hmong cuisine is a highlight for weddings, funerals, and spiritual healing ceremonies. Although the Hmong may cater other ethnic food, traditional Hmong food unites families and the community.

Acculturation has altered intergenerational nutrition habits within the Hmong community (Franzen & Smith, 2009). Hmong elders rely on traditional greens and herbs, while the younger generation often chooses to consume fast food and Westernized food selections. Regardless of this intergenerational difference, low income and no income families' access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food has been limited. While food pantry organizations in Minnesota have somewhat recognized culturally appropriate food, the Hmong community hesitates to utilize these resources mostly because of the language barrier and lack of knowledge of accessible services (Rao, 2019).

Increasing Basic Needs Services to Increase Parent Engagement in Schools

The level of Hmong parent engagement in their children's academic performance has been inadequate, not because of disinterest, but due to their historical experiences and trauma as nomadic people. Mohatt et. al. (2014) confirms that historical trauma can later lead to other challenges – socially, psychologically, medically, and culturally. In fact, the Hmong diaspora has vastly contributed to Hmong parents' strong desire for their children to excel in the American educational system (Vang, 2021). While the opportunities in America have provided change and acculturation in many aspects, it has provided a positive shift in educational opportunities for the younger generations. However, as much as Hmong parents desire to engage in the academic and learning process, they dutifully bear the fundamental responsibility of ensuring the security of their family's basic needs first.

Social service organizations and government support programs exist to provide these basic needs and wraparound services to low income and no income families, who often rely on these organizations and programs for these supports. According to King (2022), 11% of the population utilized SNAP, and over 40% of the population needed medical support of some kind.

In diverse communities where English is a second language, people utilize community-based organizations (CBO) to help them navigate services.

Currently, only one refugee and immigrant social services organization focuses on the Hmong community in the Twin Cities. Hmong American Partnership (HAP) is a non-profit organization with an annual operating budget of over \$13 million. HAP's mission is to "empower the community to embrace the strengths of our cultures while achieving our potential" (Hmong American Partnership, n.d.). HAP, established in 1990, provides basic needs and wraparound services to the Hmong community. Some of the services include economic and community development, children and family services, general health and mental health services, workforce development, and political advocacy (Hmong American Partnership, 2020). While other refugee and immigrant organizations exist, only HAP provides Hmong-specific services and programming (Vang, 2021).

While HAP provides impactful and culturally relevant services to the Hmong community, they also partner with Hmong charter schools to market their services. In fact, over the last four years, HAP has partnered with and sub-granted funding to three Hmong charter schools in the Twin Cities in an effort to effectively support Hmong families. While a novel marketing strategy for meeting funders' expectations, the charter schools typically only receive small grants from HAP. These grants hardly fund the overhead costs associated with providing basic needs services. As such, it is critical that financial constituents investigate their funding priorities in order to appropriately subsidize Hmong charter schools. Ideally, funds should be directly allocated to Hmong charter schools to hire the necessary program staff in order to provide these services directly to their Hmong families. Then, HAP would not have to sub-grant smaller funds to charter schools.

In Minnesota, parents choose whether their children attend a traditional public school or a public charter school. Hmong parents of over 6,800 Hmong students have chosen to send their children to Hmong public charter schools. This serves as evidence that the parents trust the charter schools to provide culturally relevant education to their children. Therefore, it is plausible that Hmong charter schools establish culturally relevant basic needs programs and services to support Hmong families, all overseen by the same organization. The ease and convenience of providing a variety of holistic programs and services in one organization surpasses the difficulty of navigating numerous programs and services at different organizations throughout the state. There are three practical reasons for providing a “one-stop shop” setting for families to receive basic needs services and programs at Hmong charter schools: (a) to eliminate the need to seek culturally relevant programs and services elsewhere, (b) to support Hmong parents with fulfilling their basic needs, and c) to fully engage Hmong parents in their children’s academic achievement.

Current National Programs and Initiatives

The Whole Child Approach and Full-Service Community Schools, current national programs and initiatives, are discussed in the following sections.

Whole Child Approach

Hmong charter schools are, now more than ever, positioned to become a “one-stop shop” for providing basic needs programs and services for the community. Additionally, the Hmong community needs to provide well-rounded academic programs to ensure that Hmong students academically excel beyond these wraparound services, and administrators must provide exceptional classroom instruction. To do so, the Whole Child Approach incorporates the entire community in order to support the child’s learning. The Whole Child Approach was initiated in

2007 in an effort to challenge schools by incorporating educators, families, community members, and policymakers into a child's academic achievement (Fleming, 2022). According to Costanza (2019), the five tenets of this initiative include:

- Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices healthy lifestyle.
- Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults.
- Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults.
- Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

It is important to note that even academic programs are structured to include the entire community. The Whole Child Approach aims to ensure that a child socially, emotionally, and physically participates in the learning process. Additionally, the child's family and community should contribute to the child's learning process. This concept further proves that incorporating basic needs and wraparound services into Hmong charter schools would enhance academic programs such as the Whole Child Approach.

Full-Service Community Schools

Incorporating basic needs services into Hmong charter schools would require that the entire school community is engaged. Similar to the Whole Child Approach to instruction, a Full-Service Community School (FSCS) is an effective and proven model. FSCSs mainly exist in

urban and underrepresented communities providing multiple social and economic impacts to those communities. These schools are impactful and innovative in their approach to providing holistic programs and services to their families (Min et al., 2017). These programs include adult education; employment services, including job training and certification; and basic healthcare screenings, including physicals, breast cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Ultimately, the main purpose of FSCSs is to invest in the community and stakeholders of the schools, strengthening families and communities, and eliminating injustices altogether (Heller, 2022). As such, FSCSs promote community engagement for a holistic learning experience for students.

The United States Department of Education has awarded 47 grants up to \$2.5 million to support the FSCS initiative (Holme et al., 2022). The FSCS movement across the United States is gaining momentum (Heller, 2022). The idea that schools should serve as “community hubs” and provide wraparound services is unique and innovative. Among charter schools in the Twin Cities have the potential to become FSCS schools and join a growing national initiative to engage the entire school community.

ARTIFACT II: RESEARCH APPROACH NARRATIVE

Methodology

To better understand the needs of the Hmong community, this research employed a qualitative approach to analyze the potential of Hmong charter schools in supporting the Hmong community's basic needs. The research question explored in this study is as follows:

What basic needs and services are essential for involving and engaging parents in their children's academic journey in Hmong charter schools?

While this research primarily focuses on what these services entail, it is important to consider the history and experiences of these families in order to understand the purpose of these services.

This research study used the narrative method, whereby the researcher conducted interviews with parents and administrators. The interview questions can be seen in Appendix A. The two schools that employed the interviewed administrators consented to this research as seen in Appendix B. The interview participants' answers were analyzed to develop a guide for what services are offered and what services are needed to increase parent engagement in schools. Additionally, the distinct purposes of the services were analyzed in order to understand the relationship between Hmong basic needs and increasing school engagement. Approval to conduct this research was granted by the University of North Dakota's Institutional Review Board as seen in Appendix C, and all participants were asked to read and sign a consent form provided in both the Hmong and English languages as seen in Appendix D.

According to Chesebro and Borisoff (2007), qualitative research explores human communication and interaction. It provides the researcher the opportunity to analyze and contextualize how humans communicate, behave, and interact in their natural environment. The researcher then creates theories and conclusions based on the results of their methods. This particular research study utilized the narrative method of the qualitative approach. This approach allows participants to share details about their lived experiences through a series of questions (Gilbert, 2000).

Historical Context for Interviewing Hmong Parents

It is important to note that during the interviews, the researcher encountered a storytelling phenomenon that reaffirmed, almost triggered, the Hmong diaspora as previously discussed. Historical context is vital to consider, especially while attempting to understand past and current struggles that Hmong families have endured. The ongoing cycle of harm continues to permeate generations, and the Hmong parents in this study were no exception. While the researcher initially planned on conducting a structured narrative interview with the families, their stories warranted the necessity to discuss the concept of parent engagement based on the needs of the Hmong people as immigrants and refugees. Essentially, in the Hmong community, history, culture, traditions, family, language, and education have traditionally been passed down orally for generations. This generational phenomenon and storytelling are ways to reaffirm a person's participation in conversation and contribution. Rather than interviewing the parents in a structured, narrative, and chronological format, the researcher allowed the parents to tell their stories and asked probing questions for more in-depth explanations of their experiences as refugees and parents, as well as their life in America and navigating an educational system that

does not consider their struggles as refugees. These probing questions prompted the storytellers to answer the questions the researcher had prepared for them.

Coding Parents' Interviews

At the time of this study, the researcher worked as the Executive Director for School 1, one of six Hmong charter schools in the Twin Cities. School 1 is located in Brooklyn Center, MN, a suburb of Minneapolis, MN. The school educates 810 students, of which 92% are Hmong. Fifty percent of the Hmong parents entered the United States as refugees. The other 50% are second generation Hmong, born in the United States. Only 30% of the parents obtained a high school diploma or higher. Seventy percent of the students qualify for free and reduced meals, and 65% are ELL students.

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is School 1's parent group. It consists of 40 active parents. The monthly meetings consist of discussions regarding academics, and opportunities are presented to the Executive Director (this study's researcher). The researcher sought support for this research from the PAC Chair. To eliminate researcher bias, the PAC Chair assisted in identifying 10 parents at random from the school community to participate in the interviews. All parents were interviewed individually in a room at School 1. While 10 questions were available to guide the conversation, parents often resorted to telling their stories, which answered one or more of the prepared questions. At opportune times, the researcher asked follow-up questions to garner additional information from the participants. All interviews were conducted in the Hmong language.

Demographic Questions

Questions 1-3 pertained to demographics, background information, and children at School 1. Of the 10 parents interviewed, six parents resettled in Minnesota as refugees by way

of Laos or Thailand, and four parents were born in the United States shortly after their parents arrived. At the time of the study, all but one parent had multiple children at School 1 and had been at School 1 for more than a year. Recording the amount of time the families had been at School 1 was crucial to analyzing what services, if any, they were currently receiving at School 1 versus gaps in potential services they may have needed. Figure 2 shows general demographics of this study’s participants.

Figure 2

General Demographics of Parent Participants

PARENTS	STATUS	CHILDREN AT SCHOOL 1	YEARS @ SCHOOL
Parent 1	Refugee	3 Children	3
Parent 2	Refugee	3 Children	3
Parent 3	Refugee	5 Children	4
Parent 4	2nd Generation	1 Child	1
Parent 5	2nd Generation	2 Children	4
Parent 6	Refugee	4 Children	2
Parent 7	2nd Generation	2 Children	6
Parent 8	2nd Generation	3 Children	8
Parent 9	Refugee	3 Children	3
Parent 10	Refugee	5 Children	4

Employment Status and Household Size

Questions 4 and 5 addressed employment status including type of work, salary, and household information. The researcher aimed to understand the dynamics of each household by knowing the employment status of parents. Furthermore, the participants were asked follow-up questions on whether they speak English. Of the 10 parents interviewed, one parent stated that neither parent was employed (both parents were on public assistance), five participants shared that one parent was working, and four participants said that both parents were working. For parents who spoke limited or no English, those households either were not employed or had one

parent who worked. The average household size for these families was six. Household information can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Additional Household Information About Each Parent

PARENTS	EMPLOYMENT	BOTH OR ONE PARENT WORKING	ENGLISH	HOUSEHOLD
Parent 1	Yes	One	Limited	6
Parent 2	No	N/A	No	5
Parent 3	Yes	One	No	8
Parent 4	Yes	Both	Yes	4
Parent 5	Yes	Both	Limited	6
Parent 6	Yes	One	No	6
Parent 7	Yes	Both	Yes	6
Parent 8	Yes	Both	Yes	5
Parent 9	Yes	One	Limited	6
Parent 10	Yes	One	No	8

Advantages and Disadvantages of School 1

Question 6 asked parents what they like most and least about School 1. In Minnesota, parents can opt to send their children to a charter school or a public school. It is general knowledge that charter schools provide more autonomy in terms of academy and enrichment, as opposed to public schools that encounter district politics while making institutional and systemic decisions. In fact, cultural affirming charter schools protect and preserve cultural identity and build community (Farah & Bowen, 2022). As such, interview participants were asked to share the reason they chose School 1 for their children, as well as what they liked most and least about the school. Unanimously, the parents shared that School 1 was their choice because they wanted to ensure that their children continue to embrace the Hmong language and culture. Parent 1 said, “The only reason why I chose [School 1] is because it is a Hmong school and I feel safe sending

my children here.” Participants praised the different cultural enrichment opportunities provided for students both during and after school. They appreciate that the school leaders reflect the student demographics. Four parents mentioned academic programs and support as advantages they like about School 1. All parents indirectly linked academic outcomes with Hmong language and culture. Through their storytelling, parents believed that effective learning materializes in schools in America. With this belief while choosing a Hmong charter school, their children receive both an education while they learn Hmong language and culture. Although only four parents specifically mentioned academic programs and support, they all shared the idea that obtaining an education is closely linked to immersion in the Hmong language and culture.

Figure 4 portrays common themes that parents liked most about School 1.

Figure 4

Common Themes Parents Indicated They Liked Most About School 1

COMMON THEMES (LIKES)	# PARENTS WHO MENTIONED
Hmong Language and Culture	10
Cultural Enrichment	10
Hmong Leaders	10
Proximity to Home	6
Busing/Transportation	6
Food	6
Support to Families	6
Academic Programs & Instruction	4
Student Support	4
Homework Support	3
IT Support	1

Parents also shared things they liked least about School 1. Common themes that emerged were the lack of community support and culturally appropriate food. Five parents indicated that the academic programs and classroom instruction could improve. Three parents indicated that

the school should highlight the Hmong new year celebration more. Upon dissection, participant responses indicated that parents focused on culturally specific topics during the interviews. While they expressed the importance of academics, the parents heavily addressed strengths and opportunities regarding anything related to culture and language. Figure 5 shows common themes that parents liked least about School 1.

Figure 5

Common Themes Parents Indicated They Liked Least About School 1

COMMON THEMES (DISLIKES)	# PARENTS WHO MENTIONED
Community Support	6
Culturally Appropriate Food	6
Academic Programs & Instruction	5
Student Support	3
Hmong New Year Celebration	3
Building Hours	3
Enrichment (Music & Choir)	1
More Hmong Teachers	1

Parent Engagement

In order to understand the state of parent involvement with their children’s learning, question 7 asked parents to explain their level of participation in their children’s school. Designed as an open-ended question, the researcher aimed to gain knowledge from the participants on what parent engagement truly means to them. Common themes that emerged from this question included parent/teacher conferences, Hmong new year celebrations, and end-of-the-year carnival celebrations. These are activities in which all 10 parents have participated. Five parents indicated that they have attended movie nights held in the parking lot of the school twice a year. School 1 received funding to initiate a tutoring program where parents are paid to tutor their children at home. Four parents indicated that tutoring at home and supporting their

children with learning are forms of parent engagement. Parent 2 added, “I have to believe that what I do with my children at home can also be considered parent engagement. If we both work, and we both do not have the time to be engaged at school, you have to consider what we do at home with our children engagement, right?” Figure 6 portrays a breakdown of the participants’ involvement in school functions and activities.

Figure 6

List of School Functions and Activities In Which Parents Participate

SCHOOL FUNCTIONS & ACTIVITIES	# PARENTS WHO MENTIONED
School Conferences	10
Hmong New Year	10
End of Year Carnival	10
Movie Nights	5
Tutoring Program	4
Classroom Visits	2

While the parents delivered responses in the traditional sense, a significant theme surfaced from their stories. The parents who spoke limited or no English shared stories of supporting their children through encouragement and support. Parent 10 shared:

My husband and I cannot speak English, so I cannot support my children’s learning. What I can do, is support them emotionally and mentally. I need to be a good mother to them as best as I can by encouraging them to do their best in school. I need to make sure they do their homework, have some fun, and go to bed each night so they can wake up the next day to get ready for school.

Although I did not experience the war that my parents did in Laos, I grew up in a refugee camp in Thailand. I know what it is like to not be educated. I do not want that experience for my children.

All parents shared similar stories as Parent 10. Parents who could speak English shared stories about their parents who spoke limited or no English. The participants stated that their parents supported them during their schooling by saying “rau rau siab kawm ntawv,” which translates to “do well in school.” While their parents never participated or engaged in any of their school functions or activities, the constant reminder to “do well in school” and the sacrifices that their parents made to seek opportunities in America were motivation to work hard in school.

Parent Engagement Impact on Learning

The participants shared that they understand emotional and mental support is considered parent engagement. They also shared their involvement in traditional school functions and activities as an example of parent engagement. To further explore how parent engagement, as a concept, further impacts children’s learning, interview participants were asked question 8. If Hmong parents understand the connection between their active participation in schools and academic performance, then parent engagement must increase. To make them aware of this connection, the researcher reiterated their connection between traditional parent engagement and their theoretical concept of “encouragement.” The researcher asked them to consider this connection and its impact on students’ learning.

Eight parents stated that motivation has the most significant impact on parent engagement. Parent 6 stated, “If I can’t tutor them or give them the right answers, I can continue to encourage them. The hope is that this will motivate them to do well in class.” Parent 4 added, “My parents were hardly active in my education, but when they encourage me or attend a parent

conference, it motivated me to do well in school. This is the value I want to teach to my child.” Half of the parents indicated that their children’s level of performance did not matter to them. While performance is important, the parents primarily desired to ensure that their children are motivated to attend school regularly to gain knowledge. This is significant because academic outcomes are crucial to student and school community success. However, in this context, the five parents were all refugees who spoke limited to no English. They also had not received any formal education, and their children’s education at School 1 was their first exposure to any formal education. Their idea of receiving an education revolved around gaining knowledge, not necessarily performing to achieve state or school academic standards. Essentially, the experience outweighs the performance outcomes.

Employment and School Engagement

With the previously discussed understanding of parent engagement, participants were prompted to expound on any barriers that hinder their ability to actively participate in their children’s academic experience. Question 9 addressed the impact of employment/income on parents’ engagement in school. The purpose of this question was to explore the connection between parent engagement and why parents are not actively engaged in Hmong charter schools. In other words, the researcher questioned if basic needs were indeed the barrier hindering parents’ ability to participate. With further analysis, the researcher found that Hmong families experience different socio-economic barriers that limit their participation.

While one parent indicated that she and her husband have always utilized public assistance and disability assistance since arriving in Minnesota as refugees in 2005, nine of the parents disclosed that either they or their spouses had been unemployed at some point in their work history. Three of the parents indicated they had to move in with family members until they

were able to afford another home. Eight parents indicated having to be on public assistance such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP) to pay for food. This included reliance on food pantries to supplement nutritional needs, even though food pantries often provide food that is not culturally appropriate. Once unemployed, eight of the nine parents indicated becoming uninsured because of their inability to afford COBRA coverage from their workplace, which typically takes two to three months to apply and get accepted for public medical assistance.

After further questioning, all 10 parents indicated that if they commit to providing for their families, then they would have to limit their participation in their children's school functions. In fact, eight of the nine parents who indicated being unemployed previously did not participate in any school functions while unemployed. This is a significant finding because, first, it implies that unemployment impacts the ability to acquire basic needs including employment, food access, healthcare access, and housing needs. Secondly, parents implied that they did not have time nor focus to participate in school functions since they spent most of their time providing for their families' basic needs. Lastly, the interview responses show a direct correlation between parent engagement and the need to meet families' fundamental basic needs. Parent 7 discussed why she was still unable to be engaged, even during a time of unemployment:

While I had a job now, I once was unemployed. It was stressful because even with the state's unemployment benefits, you have all these obligations to report to the state your job search activities. This was already stressful enough on top of trying to find ways to pay for rent and bills and apply for all other public support like SNAP and Medicaid.

Programs and Services Needed

If families' basic needs are not met, then parent engagement is limited, which leads to question 10. Question 10 addressed what programs and services Hmong charter schools could implement to support learning. Overwhelmingly, all 10 parents indicated the need to provide income support or supplemental income to support families. While seven parents indicated that schools should offer adult education to learn English, two of the three parents who did speak English indicated that language is a barrier to finding employment or being academically engaged. This illustrates that there is a need to offer English support in general. Additionally, families appreciate the cultural components of a Hmong charter school. All 10 families indicated this as an advantage of School 1. Finally, all 10 parents indicated incorporating more community enrichment programs that include the community, parents, and students learning Hmong language and culture. Essentially, cultural enrichment was the common theme in all the interviews as a driving force for parent engagement in Hmong charter schools. Programs and services needed in Hmong charter schools as indicated by participants can be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Programs and Services Needs in Hmong Charter Schools

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

1. Income Support
2. Adult Education/English Support
3. Cultural & Community Enrichment
4. Employment Services
5. Childcare & Preschool
6. Health Prevention Education
7. Classroom Instruction
8. Curriculum Designing

Coding Administrators' Interviews

To complement the contribution of Hmong parents' stories regarding parent engagement, the researcher sought input from Hmong charter school administrators. Administrators were invited to offer their perspectives on parent engagement and how to address parent engagement in Hmong charter schools. The researcher aimed to analyze the institutional viewpoint, or the schools' perspectives, on the needs of Hmong parents and administrators' experiences with parents and their level of engagement. Leadership personnel in Hmong charter schools truly reflect the demographics, and they understand the struggles of the community they serve. As such, it is essential to understand administrators' knowledge of parent engagement, families' needs, and the gaps that limit the schools' ability to provide such services. After all, the Hmong charter school movement developed as a result of cultural and community needs.

The researcher interviewed four school administrators who worked directly with parents. Two of the administrators were employed by School 1, the same school as the 10 parents interviewed for this research. The other two administrators were employed by School 2. These interviews were conducted in English. Administrators from School 1 were interviewed in person, and the Administrators from School 2 were interviewed on Zoom, an online video-conferencing platform. Figure 8 shows details regarding the four interviewed administrators.

Figure 8

Basic Demographics of Administrator Participants

ADMINISTRATORS	SCHOOL	YEARS @ THE SCHOOL	TITLE
Administrator 1	School 2	10	Program Director
Administrator 2	School 2	9	Operations Manager
Administrator 3	School 1	3	After School and Cultural Enrichment Manager
Administrator 4	School 1	5	Parent Engagement Specialist

Of the six Hmong charter schools in the Twin Cities, School 2 is closest in proximity and partnership with School 1. Located in Brooklyn Park, MN, School 2 educates 789 students, of which 65% are Hmong students. Sixty percent of the parents speak English, and 45% entered the United States as refugees. Seventy percent of School 2's families qualify for free and reduced meals, and 64% qualify for ELL services.

Parent Engagement Defined

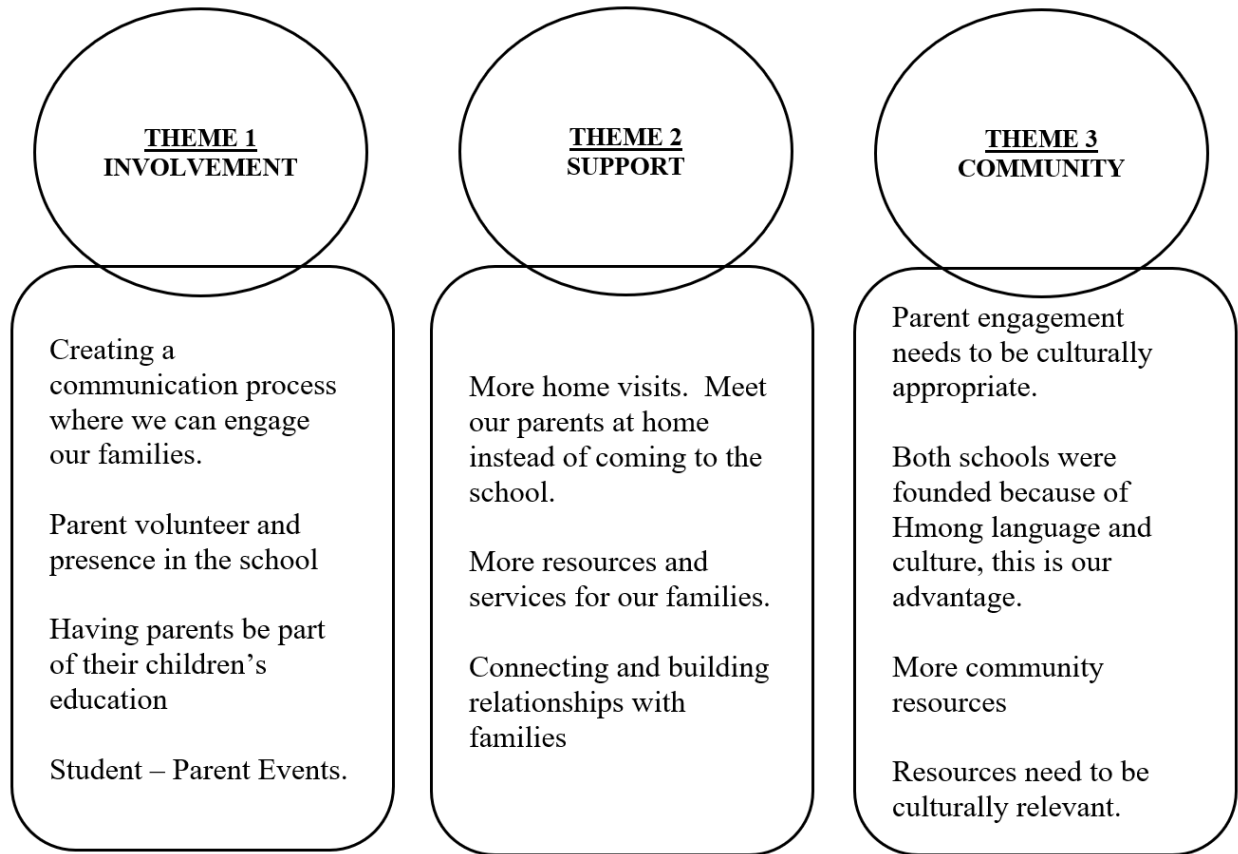
Question 2 asked the administrators to define parent engagement and how it is exhibited at each of their schools. The administrators at both schools described parent engagement similarly. The responses from the administrators resulted in three common themes: involvement, support, and community. One striking similarity among all four administrators was the cultural context, which seems to be extremely significant at both schools. They seem to know their constituents well and want to ensure that necessary systems are implemented in order to cater to the demographics of their families. Figure 9 depicts the three common themes that emerged from administrators' interviews.

Current Parent Engagement Initiatives

In question 4, the administrators were asked to describe current parent engagement initiatives at their schools. While parent engagement, as a definition, appeared to be consistent among the four administrators, their current approaches at the two schools vary widely. Nonetheless, all four administrators agreed that there is room for drastic improvements. While School 2 employs a more traditional route, School 1 engages families by supporting them with other needs beyond academics. Once again, one consistent finding was that both schools'

Figure 9

Themes From Administrators' Definition of Parent Engagement



administrators stressed the significance of incorporating culturally appropriate engagement strategies to support their families' engagement. Current engagement themes of both schools can be seen in Figure 10.

The administrators in School 1, in a somewhat unstructured way, recognized the need to support families with basic needs and stated that they are seeking innovative ways to support them with their needs. They recognized that families are less likely to engage with school activities if their basic needs are not being met. Administrator 3 said:

Figure 10

Current Engagement Activities

SCHOOL	CURRENT ENGAGEMENT THEMES
School 1	Cultural Enrichment Resources Basic Needs Home Visits Mental Health & Healing Income Support School Events
School 2	Culture Family Nights Afterschool Programming Home Visits Parent Teacher Conference Parent Volunteers School Events

[School 1] received a grant and we paid our parents to participate in our afterschool program as tutors. We had a group of parents come on-site and another group participated from home with their children. In total, we had over 100 parents participate in this program and it was a huge success. In fact, we had other parents ask to participate. Unfortunately, we had to turn them down because we were limited in our funds.

On the other hand, the administrators in School 2 shared that they focus their parent engagement on implementing innovative measures in their current practices like parent teacher conferences, cultural enrichment programs, school events, and parent volunteer initiatives. Administrator 1 specifically stated that they need to change their communication strategies with parents if they want parents to volunteer and participate in school functions.

Improving Parent Engagement

Questions 5 and 6 prompted administrators to expand on ways their individual schools could improve parent engagement and to discuss other impactful strategies to engage parents. While School 2 currently does not have any formal or informal programs to support basic needs services, all four administrators agreed that this is an area that requires improvement. They all reiterated that in order to improve parent engagement at their schools, the needs of the families must be met. Beyond attaining funding to support cultural enrichment programs in the schools, it is imperative that Hmong charter schools implement programs and services to support struggling families. Administrator 4 summarized this thought:

My work entails working directly with families and their needs. My line of work includes seeing families struggle through this pandemic. We have families who share the same home that includes multiple households; there may be 15 people living in a three-bedroom home all trying to make ends meet. Some parents have two jobs including other cultural responsibilities in the home, which means that I know their basic needs are not being met. Which means that their priority is not on school and academics but simply to make ends meet.

Both schools currently implement cultural enrichment programs to support learning and all administrators agreed that these programs exist because of funding from external foundations. These additional funds pay for expenses such as salaries, spaces, and programming. For example, Administrator 3 from School 1 indicated that his position as the After School and Cultural Enrichment Manager is 100% funded by a private foundation grant.

Intention for Data

Responses from these interviews clearly show that parent engagement requires significant improvement in Hmong charter schools. While encouragement is a form of parent engagement according to interview participants, Hmong charter schools need to enact a more holistic approach in order to engage Hmong parents and support the needs of the entire family as a whole. The responses from these interviews were analyzed, and the results assisted with creating a school-based framework intended to guide Hmong charter schools to increase parent engagement. Common themes from the responses of both parents and administrators contributed to the framework based on a holistic approach.

The holistic approach defines the various basic needs services necessary in schools to increase parent engagement. It illustrates the specific details of the framework, discusses steps in implementing this model, and suggests necessary resources for successfully implementing the framework. As with any framework, its intention is to provide guidance to Hmong charter schools regarding the flaws and gaps of implementing such a framework in their schools.

ARTIFACT III: IMPLEMENTATION OF SOLUTION

The Holistic Cultural Community Framework to Learning

Parents and administrators confirmed that when their basic and cultural needs are not met, parent participation declines in Hmong charter schools. As such, their responses implied that the Hmong charter schools should be responsible for resolving the parent engagement issue. In Minnesota, parents have the right to choose between traditional public schools or charter schools. Hmong families who live in the Twin Cities often elect to enroll their children in the six Hmong charter schools throughout the Twin Cities. These families anticipate that their children will carry on their cultural traditions while receiving the best academic experience. All the while, their level of participation in school functions is equally important in high academic achievement. While parents elect Hmong charter schools as the academic choice for their children, these schools must proactively create opportunities to increase parent engagement based on the needs identified.

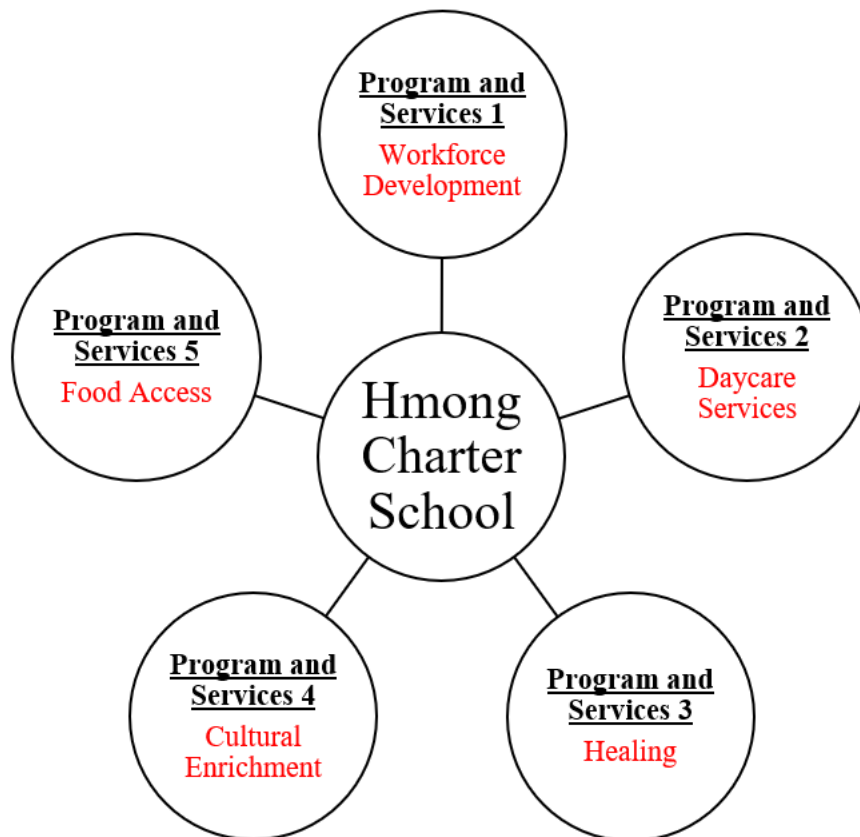
As a result of the interviews of parents and administrators, five basic needs themes became evident through their responses. These include:

- Workforce development
- Daycare services
- Healing (medical, mental, and physical health)
- Cultural enrichment
- Food access

While participants expressed other pressing basic needs issues, these were the most prominent, essentially leading to the creation of the Holistic Cultural Community Framework (HCCF) to increase parent engagement in Hmong charter schools. Figure 11 illustrates the concept of the HCCF in Hmong charter schools.

Figure 11

The Holistic Cultural Community Framework



The HCCF illustrates the need to create a “one-stop shop” in a school community where academics remain at the core of its mission. To do that, the school must operate as a normal school, while balancing world class instruction and fulfilling the needs of the school community. Once basic needs are identified by parents and the school community, the school would then create programs and services to directly support families’ needs in the school building.

Essentially, schools would need to create a community center to provide services beyond academics, thereby developing the “one-stop-shop” HCCF.

According to Blank et al. (2003), the non-profit organization Minnesota Beacons Network utilizes a similar model as HCCF to support academic growth in Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS). Since 1998, Beacons has transformed how MPS responds to academic, social, and developmental needs of youth in low-income communities by engaging parents, families, and the community in the learning process. Since then, the program has not only increased family and community engagement, but it also has contributed to academic growth and a decline in truancy. In fact, at one of MPS’s middle schools, 71% of parents reported spending more time with their children through this community approach.

Hmong Charter School

In the HCCF, the school is the center of the framework. The implementation of academic programs does not change. Similar to the FSCS model, learning is supported by the addition of community programs and services within schools. Hmong charter schools should continue to implement world class instruction, and administrators should continue to support teachers and staff with that task.

Building strong rapport with community partners and developing academic resources to encourage rigorous instruction should remain top priorities. Hmong charter schools should continue to set strong academic expectations according to Minnesota academic standards and ensure that teachers and staff receive ongoing professional development to provide equitable classroom learning for Hmong students. In Minnesota, academic achievement is largely measured by state proficiency standards, while schools also utilize different growth assessments

to measure learning growth. Schools should continue to utilize these data to drive academic decisions.

Hmong parents also demand a strong language and culture curriculum within Hmong schools. According to Leonard et al. (2020), language should be preserved, as this builds identity and inclusion. Wei et al. (2019) added that language builds grit for high academic performance, which shows that creating a robust Hmong language and culture program for Hmong schools is essential. Engaging Hmong parents and elders in creating this curriculum is key. The involvement of these stakeholders would not only support academic growth, but it would also allow families and community members to actively participate in the development of a community-driven language and culture curriculum for students. Whether the curriculum is part of an elective course or embedded as an immersion program in the classroom, this is the sense of belonging that Hmong parents seek when electing schools for their children. Engaging parents and elders from the school community in building this Hmong curriculum would also be an innovative way to increase parent engagement efforts with Hmong charter schools.

Embedding the HCCF into a school building means that Hmong charter schools must create physical space for programming to occur. This also means the schools must hire staff to sustain these programs. Schools with available physical spaces should transform these spaces into community centers to implement these services. Schools with limited spaces may have to expand or alter their physical spaces to create an area for HCCF implementation. According to a charter school builder in the Twin Cities (K. Vang, personal communication, 2022), building expansion for schools may take up to two years, which may include financial and enrollment budgeting, authorizer negotiation, local and state licensing, and operational planning. The HCCF

space could be as small as a classroom or as big as a gymnasium. Nonetheless, creating physical space is the first step to ensuring successful implementation of the HCCF model.

Both School 1 and School 2 currently employ direct staff members within the school or other staff members in an organization assigned to conduct support programs and services. To implement the HCCF, both schools would need additional public and private funding to support the hiring of staff members and implement programming. Additionally, both schools should either employ an internal grant writer or contract a grant writer. It is crucial for schools to hire staff members to manage both the strategic and day to day tasks. The size of school community, as well as the types of needed programs and services, would determine the necessary number of staff members. The HCCF would require the hiring of a development and/or grant-writer to support the financial stability and sustainability of these community services. These various practices are key in sustaining the HCCF.

Workforce Development

According to the parent participants of this research, the leading factor for the lack of parent engagement in Hmong charter schools is income instability. Sixty percent of interviewed parents in this research were either unemployed or underemployed, meaning only one parent was working or the household income did not meet the income stability threshold. The average size of a U.S. household is 3.13 people, while the average for the 10 Hmong families interviewed was six. This number almost doubles the U.S. household average. COVID-19 continues to impact stable employment and income sustainability for Hmong families. As a result, Hmong families (oftentimes extended to include aunts, uncles, and grandparents) are constantly struggling to pay for rent, food, and bills. This perpetual fear of becoming homeless or severe hunger leads to limited parent engagement at school. Therefore, Hmong charter schools must bear the

responsibility of directly supporting Hmong parents, who struggle with unstable household income. Hmong charter schools need to innovatively engage Hmong parents, siblings, and community members in the learning process.

Minnesota continues to experience a decrease in teachers and support staff in schools. The gap between teachers and staff of color compared to students of color in Minnesota continues to widen. According to a review by Carter (2021), schools must create culturally responsive approaches to education, which starts with hiring culturally responsive teachers and staff who look like the student population. As such, Hmong charter schools are already well positioned in that regard. They should capitalize on this opportunity by creating innovative workforce development initiatives to support Hmong parents, siblings, and community members who aspire to pursue a career in the field of education.

There are two ways that Hmong charter schools could engage families through workforce development. The first is to create pathway programs to encourage parents, siblings, relatives, and community members to become tutors and licensed educators in the state of Minnesota. In these pathway programs, the Hmong charter schools could pay for the full tuition or a portion of the tuition, provide classroom experience training, and pair the person with a mentor to guide them through the program. Current pathway programs are two-to-four-year initiatives depending on the teaching program of the college or university. Upon completion, participants are required to take the necessary exams to become licensed teachers in the state of Minnesota. If they are parent or community member participants, they must commit to teaching in their children's school for a certain number of years, which would have a direct impact on their engagement with both their children's learning and school engagement. These pathway programs are intentional

in hiring new teachers of color for the school, but they can also extend to other non-licensed teaching professions, tutors, paraprofessionals, counselors, social workers, etc.

The second way to engage parents through workforce development is to create on-the-job training opportunities for operational support. Hmong charter schools could create six to 12 month paid training programs for positions in food services, bus transportation, office support, IT/data services, and school finances. Upon completion, the school would award the participants with school-level certification of completion and guide them in securing a position with the school or other area schools. While these programs may or may not secure positions within a Hmong charter school, it directly assists parents and family members with additional experiences to seek employment elsewhere, thus, eliminating the income insecurities that would have limited parent engagement in schools. Essentially, these workforce development pathways would lead to lessening stress associated with meeting basic needs, and at the same time, create more opportunities for parents to engage in the learning process at school and home. Figure 12 depicts the process of workforce development using the HCCF.

Figure 12

Summary of Workforce Development Under the HCCF

	Pathway to Classroom	Training Programs
Who can participate?	Parents, Siblings, and Community Members	Parents, Siblings, and Community Members
Program Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pays for college tuition • Provide mentorship. • Classroom experience and/or internship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a six-month on the job training program. • Provide a certification of completion. • Job placement services.
Results of Program	Family members will become licensed practitioners for schools (e.g. teachers, social workers, counselors, bus drivers)	Family members will become certified and experienced in a non-licensed position for schools (e.g. paraprofessionals, tutors, operational staff.)

Daycare Services

Parents and administrators agreed on the need for culturally appropriate daycare services in the Hmong community. They also agreed that having large families, many with young non-school aged children, often leads to their inability to engage in school and find stable employment. Eliminating this gap would effectively increase parent engagement. To do this, Hmong charter schools could implement two strategies: (a) operate a daycare center located inside the school building for children newborn to three years of age and (b) operate a preschool for children between the ages of four and five.

Opening a culturally appropriate daycare service in Hmong charter schools would eliminate the need for Hmong parents to seek daycare service elsewhere. This ideally would streamline their process in finding employment, as well as increase parent engagement in school. While acquiring approval and licensing from the state, the school would need to designate a physical space that passes all required inspections. After the licensure process, the school would hire a licensed director to oversee the daycare services and a Hmong elder to support the children's social and emotional learning. Offering daycare services in the school would support the following:

- Parents could bring their children to the schools' daycare services and participate in the schools' workforce development programs, and/or
- Parents could bring their children to the schools' daycare services and participate in their other children's school activities (e.g., parent conferences, field trips, learning activities, project assignments, etc.)

Opening a preschool center in Hmong charter schools could also benefit parent engagement and learning. The preschool would implement culturally appropriate strategies to

support preschool age students. Upon city and state licensing approval, Hmong charter schools would hire all licensed and required personnel to support the operations. The center would hire licensed Hmong parents who have participated in the school's workforce development programs. The preschool center would serve as a training ground for Hmong parents to be engaged in gainful work experience while participating in their children's learning.

Healing

Language and culture have a direct impact on healing and medicine, as suggested by Franzen-Castle and Smith (2012). As such, Western medicine is often considered taboo in the Hmong community. While hospitals and clinics have transformed their conduct with Hmong patients by providing alternative ways of both communication and treatment, the Hmong are still rather skeptical of Western medical treatment. For preventative health and mental healing, Hmong charter schools must pursue innovative methods for interconnecting cultural healing and Western medicine. This would unite parents and families at the schools for cultural healing while being reintroduced to Western medicine in a culturally appropriate way. Additionally, the schools could serve as a center for students' immunizations and medical records. This further exemplifies the "one-stop shop" model of the HCCF.

To successfully achieve the HCCF model in this capacity, schools could consider two approaches. The first approach is to incorporate a Hmong medical clinic into the school. As mentioned, with the majority of the HCCF programs and services, these approaches need physical spaces. The doctor-owner would be licensed to own a medical clinic in the state of Minnesota and rent spaces from the school's community center to develop the medical healing clinic. All practitioners, doctors, and nurses would be licensed to practice in the state of Minnesota. They would be required to speak, read, and write Hmong. The services would be

available to families, students, and members of the school community and would include traditional Western medical treatment. However, the Hmong practitioners, doctors, and nurses would provide culturally appropriate language to support Hmong families in understanding the science of healing, while infusing cultural practices that Hmong families are comfortable with.

The second approach, either in addition to or in place of the first approach, is to offer ongoing preventative healthcare screenings and resources to the students, families, and community of the school. Once a month, the school could host a medical and healing fair in conjunction with their monthly parent advisory meetings. The screenings and resources would be culturally appropriate for the Hmong community. Screenings could address health concerns such as diabetes, high blood pressure, breast cancer, and dental and vision issues. Additional resources could include tobacco and alcohol education, mental health resources, and other medical and healing resources. These resources could be provided inhouse or by community organizations and clinics. All partners would be able to provide these resources in the Hmong language in order to guarantee access for Hmong school community members.

Cultural Enrichment

Unlike traditional public schools, Hmong charter schools are positioned to create a culturally relevant school environment in which Hmong students are grounded by their culture. This focus would create a school climate centered around their history, language, experiences, and behavior. Ivon and Kuscevic (2013) explain a “cultural-heritage” environment as a school where students help create values and behavior through “interactive, integrative learning.” Essentially, students should not only learn about their history and people through books and stories, but they should also intentionally apply it to their daily lives. Hmong charter schools should make every effort to embed Hmong cultural enrichment activities both inside and outside

the classroom and to ensure a “cultural-heritage” school environment. These efforts could successfully increase parent engagement by allowing them the opportunity to participate in enrichment programs. Hmong parents can participate in two ways: (a) by engaging in designing the cultural enrichment programs with students and staff and (b) by becoming the practitioners in teaching the cultural enrichment activities to the school community.

Regardless of licensure, Hmong parents and elders are essentially the practitioners of their own culture. They not only have the lived experiences, but they practice it on a daily basis. In order for students to learn and experience the authentic Hmong culture, parents and grandparents should participate in helping students design the characteristics of their cultural-heritage environment. In the HCCF, cultural enrichment could include Hmong cooking, dancing, sewing or Paj Ntaub, traditional folk songs or kwv txhiaj and zaj tshoob, and art. Parents’ engagement in designing these programs would not only increase their participation in school programming, but it would also ensure that the experiences presented to the students are both relevant and rigorous.

Finally, Hmong parents actively engaged in teaching these cultural activities to the students would increase parent participation in Hmong schools. As mentioned, there is a severe shortage of culturally responsive teachers who reflect the Hmong student population. Hiring Hmong parents and elders to co-teach and facilitate these cultural enrichment activities in schools would be the most appropriate strategy to create an authentic experience. Hmong parents and elders speak the language, have lived the history, and could culturally teach it to Hmong students, catering to an enriched and genuine experience. This approach is culturally responsive, and ultimately, it would increase parent-student relations and participation.

Food Access

In the Hmong culture, food is a staple that fosters unity. Culturally appropriate food is synonymous with community, and access to it is vital to the physical and cultural health of the Hmong, especially in low income/no income households. Plagued by income instability, Hmong families often experience limited access to culturally appropriate nutrition. Suggested by Levkoe et al. (2018), food sovereignty and accessibility should be “shared democratically and controlled” by its own people. As such, Hmong charter schools that create access to culturally appropriate food nurture an opportunity to strengthen community connection and wellbeing. This environment would directly increase parent and family engagement, as well as build essential community partnerships.

In order to secure access to culturally appropriate nutrition, Hmong charter schools could enact two methods: (a) partner with food pantry organizations in their community and/or (b) create a food pantry within the school. Within a five-mile radius of both Schools 1 and 2, there are three community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve the community as a food pantry organization, or they provide access to food as part of their programs and services. All three organizations provide non-perishable food. Two of the organizations provide fresh fruits and vegetables during the summer and fall seasons. However, while the three organizations provide culturally appropriate food, none of the organizations specifically provide Hmong food. Hmong schools must create intentional and accountable partnerships with CBOs in order to appropriately cater to the Hmong people’s nutritional needs. These partnerships would allow Hmong families and farmers to educate CBOs about specific Hmong food, including fresh fruits and vegetables that are commonly used by Hmong. Intentional relationships would support the CBOs’

understanding of culturally appropriate food of the Hmong and develop inclusive ways to distribute it.

Another way to secure access to culturally appropriate food is by creating a type of food pantry within the schools. In addition to building partnerships with CBOs, schools could pursue funding to sustain their own food pantry program. Schools would partner with CBOs and farmers to either purchase food at a discounted rate or receive donations for the food pantry program. Twice a week, the food pantry would be available only to the immediate school community and their families. Once a month, schools could host an open community event welcoming the entire community to learn about the school and the enrichment programs provided, while encouraging families to gather food from the food pantry. A food pantry program in this capacity would build community and strengthen parent engagement in schools.

Holistic Cultural Community Framework Summary

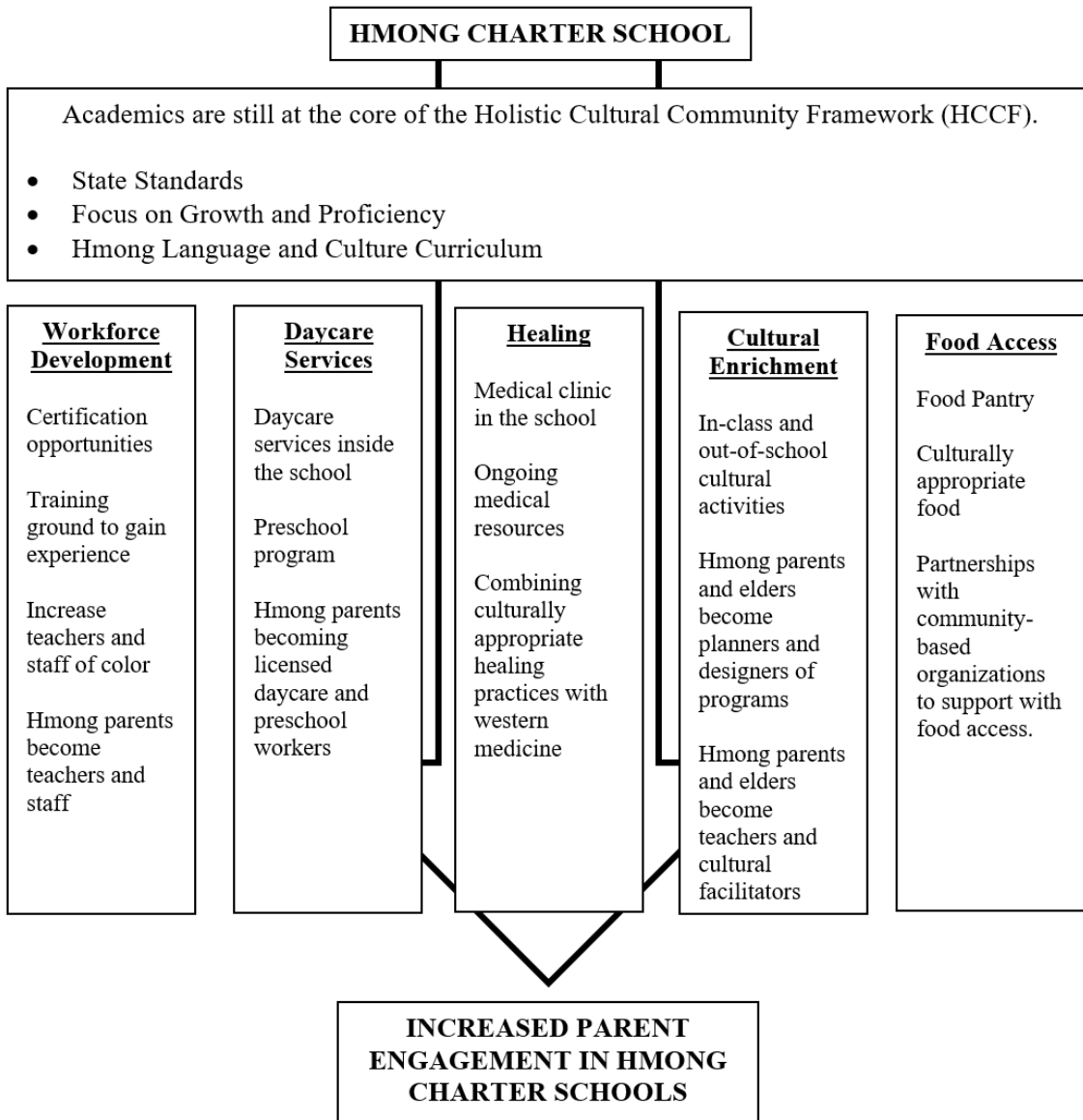
In the HCCF, the entire school community is engaged in the learning process. The HCCF focuses on the basic needs of the family. When the basic needs of the families are fulfilled, parents can be active participants in the learning process and/or practitioners in creating authentic cultural experiences in Hmong charter schools. The diagram in Figure 13 summarizes the HCCF model based on this research.

Holistic Cultural Community Framework Flaws

The HCCF is a complex framework that suggests a drastic change to parent engagement approaches in schools. Implementing this framework would be a difficult and transformative process. Traditional parent engagement models are not effective in Hmong schools. Numerous underlying factors impact Hmong families' ability to fully participate in schools. Most importantly, parent engagement methods must align with the cultural needs of Hmong families.

Figure 13

Detailed Illustration of the HCCF Model



With any implementation of new initiatives in schools, gaps and flaws exist. While the HCCF can support the increase of parent engagement in Hmong schools, there are a number of obstacles that complicate implementation. The most prominent obstacle to successfully effecting the HCCF is the lack of available resources.

Hmong charter schools are public schools; therefore, they receive the same funding as public schools. Limited state funding hinders the progression of developing necessary space and employees for implementing this framework. In order to fund the endeavors of the HCCF framework, Hmong charter schools would be required to seek significant additional funding.

Space

To execute the HCCF framework, Hmong charter schools would need the physical space to create the community centers. The community centers would need to be physically large enough to house a workforce center, daycare services, preschool programming, community cultural activities, enrichment programs, a food pantry, and a medical clinic. Schools lacking this space would need to create spaces from already limited school facilities. Otherwise, schools would have to undergo the complex process of expanding the school building or possibly building a new school. Regardless, the cost would be prohibitive, and schools already struggle with limited financial resources.

People

The HCCF could be implemented over a period of time. However, to fully execute the framework, schools would require several additional employees and the capital to compensate these employees. Due to limited financial resources, schools' budgets would not be capable of supporting the staff required to implement the HCCF at its full potential. In fact, schools may not even be allowed to use public funding for a strategy such as the HCCF. In order to acquire necessary funds, schools would need to hire a development team, including a grant writer, to fundraise for the community and cultural enrichment initiatives.

In an already limited talent capacity, schools struggle to hire staff in general. In Hmong charter schools, it is crucial to hire qualified individuals who are culturally responsive to the

needs of Hmong students and their families. With the shortage of teachers and staff of color, it would be exceptionally difficult to ascertain the appropriate individuals to implement the HCCF in Hmong charter schools.

CONCLUSION

School 1 in Action

During this research study, School 1 received a grant of over \$400,000 in 2021 from the Minnesota Department of Education to explore the Full-Service Community School (FSCS) model. Started in 2021 and implemented again in 2022, School 1 executed cultural enrichment and food access programs, which intended to strengthen the learning process of the school community.

In 2021, School 1 implemented Hmong Paj Ntaub (Hmong sewing/cross-stitching) and Hmong cooking programs, adding Hmong dancing at the end of that school year. In 2022, the school expanded their enrichment programs to include Hmong art and Hmong folksong chanting. These programs alone increased the parent participation by 42% since the fall of 2021. Parents were not only engaged in designing the programs, but they also became instructors and mentors for the students. Additionally, the students who participated in these enrichment programs experienced an increase in academic growth by an average of eight points.

In the summer of 2021, School 1 partnered with two community-based organizations to host a fresh fruits and vegetables drive at the school to serve the school community. This partnership allowed the schools and organizations to intentionally select culturally appropriate fruits and vegetables. The organizations then collaborated with Hmong farmers and vendors to deliver the culturally appropriate produce to the school for community distribution. The same

process ensued in the summer of 2022. In two summers, School 1 recorded a 55% increase in parent participation, an increase of 33% during summer school programming.

The cultural enrichment and food access programs are two prime examples of how the HCCF can increase parent engagement. While designing and implementing these programs and services, it was challenging to obtain space, staff, and resources. Yet School 1 could hire staff due to a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education which led to the success of programs that cater to the needs of the school community. This not only increased academic outcomes, but more importantly, it increased family participation in a Hmong charter school.

Parent Engagement in Hmong Charter Schools from the Researcher's Perspective

As the researcher, this research study has significantly impacted me as a school administrator when considering parent engagement in the Hmong community. Too often, I get frustrated because I wish that Hmong parents would be more engaged in their children's education. This is the Westernized approach! This research study transformed my mindset by allowing me to recollect my cultural reality and roots and the experiences of my people to truly understand what parent engagement means to my people.

First, I am reminded of the historical trauma that my people endured as war refugees. Hmong people have never claimed a land as their own and have constantly fought for inclusion throughout a multi-century historical diaspora. This historical trauma requires healing. Migrating to America offered us a glimmer of hope for healing for our younger generation. This hope and opportunity for healing does not mean that we have forgotten our long journey to America. It is part of who we are and our history as a people. We, as Hmong, understand that in America, education leads to opportunity. Our parents' daily encouragement to do well in school and to become "ib tug neeg tshim txiaj" (an important person) is parent engagement. Our

parents possessed limited or no English-speaking skills, which restricted their ability to directly participate in the learning process. However, their constant encouragement, determined ability to work hard, and solid example were all forms of parent engagement.

Secondly, Hmong people continue to assimilate to American culture. Yet, it is important to understand that assimilation does not equal cancellation. Culture is and will always be an integral characteristic of Hmong families. Whatever the barriers that limit our parents' engagement in academics, Hmong charter schools must commit to effectively introducing cultural enrichment activities into the schools, whether in the classroom, after school, or during summer school. These enrichment programs should include parents both as participants and as teachers. This approach would revolutionize parent engagement, and in the process, transform community engagement. When the entire community is engaged and seeks healing, Hmong students successfully learn. More importantly, understanding the historical experiences of the Hmong will invaluablely shape our children's education paths.

Lastly, the Hmong people's level of school and community involvement is directly affected by the fulfillment of fundamental basic needs. Speaking limited to no English, Hmong parents find it difficult to adapt to American society, one that is culturally different than their homeland's. As a result, unemployment and income instability are underlying issues that limit access to fundamental basic needs, such as culturally appropriate food, sufficient shelter, and adequate healthcare. These are all contributing factors to their limited participation in schools.

While Hmong administrators continue to define parent engagement through a Westernized approach, Hmong parents define it from holistic and culturally appropriate approaches. Any and all forms of parent engagement are neither right nor wrong. In fact, parent engagement should be all encompassing. Schools may continue to urge parents to participate

through the traditional and Westernized approach. Yet, it is equally important for Hmong schools to recognize how basic needs impact parent engagement. Parents should continue to encourage their children to do their best; however – one thing is clear – if Hmong families’ basic needs are not being addressed, parents’ primary focus will be providing for their families’ basic needs. Simply encouraging their children to do well is not enough. Minnesota Hmong charter schools are suitably positioned to implement the HCCF to offer Hmong families an opportunity to support families’ basic needs in order to increase parent engagement. While various resources are necessary, Hmong families deserve the opportunity to holistically participate in their children’s educational journey.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Interview Questions

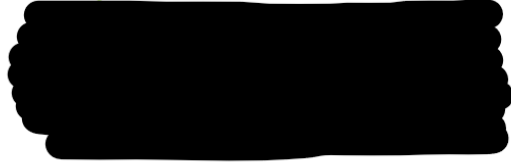
FOR INDIVIDUAL PARENTS

1. Can you state your name?
2. How many children do you have and in what grades are they in? How many attend [school]?
3. How long have your children attended [school]?
4. Are you currently employed? What type of work do you do? What is your annual rate of pay?
5. How many members are in your household?
6. Can you share with me what you like most about [school]? What do you like least about [school]?
7. What are ways that you have participated in school activities while here at [school] or any other schools your children have or are currently attending?
8. How does parent engagement impact children's learning?
9. How has your job (or lack thereof) impacted your ability to engage in your child's learning?
10. What are ways that schools can support parents and families with learning?

FOR ADMINISTRATORS

1. Please state your name and position?
2. Can you please define what parent engagement is to your school?
3. What is your role in terms of parent engagement?
4. Please describe parent engagement at your school.
5. How might parent engagement improve?
6. What are other ways Hmong charter schools can engage Hmong parents?

Appendix B
School 1 and School 2 Letters of Support



January 16, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the board of directors and the Administrators of [redacted] this letter is to confirm our support of Kevin Xiong and his study focusing on Hmong parent engagement. As a Hmong charter school with over 800 Hmong students representing the north Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park, and Brooklyn Center areas, we know his research will benefit not only our charter school but the other six Hmong charter schools here in the Twin Cities.

As [redacted] continues to implement innovative ways to support academic recovery for learning that was lost during virtual learning, we know that our parents need to play a significant role. We need to find innovative and impactful ways to include our parents in the learning process and strongly supports Mr. Xiong in his research to find different opportunities to support families and their engagement. Therefore, [redacted] will be opening our doors for Mr. Xiong to conduct his research at our school, and we will support him in any and all capacities with this assignment.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [redacted]

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[redacted signature]

[Redacted]

January 18, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [Redacted] in Brooklyn Park, MN. I am writing this letter in support of Kevin Xiong who is pursuing his Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks. His study - Hmong Parent Engagement: The Need to Provide Basic Needs Services in Hmong Charter Schools to Increase Parent Engagement – will have a significant impact on [Redacted] community and will greatly support our ongoing effort to increase parent engagement here.

As this COVID-19 lingers on, it continues to have a profound impact on the Hmong community in so many ways. First, Hmong students, who continue to rank behind their peers, will continue to be impacted by learning loss. Secondly, the social, emotional, and mental toll on students and families will continue for years after this pandemic subsides. Third, cultural practices have drastically changed the way our community holds traditional and sacred ceremonies from weddings to funerals. Lastly, the fundamental basic needs of our families continue to jeopardize overall stability.

As such, it is incredibly important that parents play a vital part in academic outcomes. Parent Engagement is extremely important at [Redacted] and that is why it is critical that [Redacted] supports Mr. Xiong in his research in finding ways in which schools can increase parent engagement while supporting their basic needs.

I look forward to partnering with Mr. Xiong on this effort. If you have any questions, please reach out to me at [Redacted]

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]

Appendix C IRB Approval

UND IRB Approval Letter and Stamped Consent Forms

no-reply@erac.und.edu <no-reply@erac.und.edu>

Sun 4/10/2022 11:40 AM

To: Schlenker, Jared <jared.schlenker@und.edu>

Cc: Xiong, Kevin <kevin.xiong@und.edu>

2 attachments (334 KB)

IRB0004300_approved_consent_English.pdf; IRB0004300_approved_consent_Hmong.pdf

Division of Research & Economic Development Office of Research Compliance & Ethics

Principal Investigator: Jared Duane Schlenker

Project Title: Hmong Parent Engagement: The Need to Provide Basic Needs Services in Hmong Charter Schools to Increase Parent Engagement

IRB Project Number: IRB0004300

Project Review Level: Expedited 6, 7

Approval Date: 04/10/2022

Expiration Date: 04/09/2023

Consent Form Approval Date: 04/10/2022

The application form and all included documentation for the above-referenced project have been reviewed and approved via the procedures of the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Attached is your original consent form that has been stamped with the UND IRB approval and expiration dates. Please maintain this original on file. *You must use this original, stamped consent form to make copies for participant enrollment. No other consent form should be used.* The consent form must be signed by each participant prior to initiation of any research procedures. In addition, each participant must be given a copy of the consent form.

Prior to implementation, submit any changes to or departures from the protocol or consent form to the IRB for approval. No changes to approved research may take place without prior IRB approval.

You have approval for this project through the above-listed expiration date. When this research is completed, please submit a termination form to the IRB. If the research will last longer than one year, an annual review and progress report must be submitted to the IRB prior to the submission deadline to ensure adequate time for IRB review.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Bowles, M.P.A., CIP
she/her/hers
Director of Research Assurance & Ethics
Office of Research Compliance & Ethics
Division of Research & Economic Development
University of North Dakota
Technology Accelerator, Suite 2050
4201 James Ray Drive Stop 7134
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7134
O: 701.777.4279
D: 701.777.4079
F: 701.777.2193
Michelle.Bowles@UND.edu
<https://und.edu/research/resources/index.html>

Appendix D
Informed Consent in English and Hmong

INFORMED CONSENT

IC 701-B

01/21/2019

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Project Title: Hmong Parent Engagement: The Need to Provide Basic Needs Services in Hmong Charter Schools to Increase Parent Engagement and Academic Outcomes

Principal Investigator: Kevin Xiong

Phone/Email Address: *kevin.xiong@und.edu*

Department: Education Leadership (Ed.D.)

Research Advisor: Jared Schlenker

Research Advisor

Phone/Email Address: 701-777-3584, *jared.schlenker@und.edu*

What should I know about this research?

- Someone will explain this research to you.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary. Whether you take part is up to you.
- If you don't take part, it won't be held against you.
- You can take part now and later drop out, and it won't be held against you.
- If you don't understand, ask questions.
- Ask all the questions you want before you decide.

How long will I be in this research?

We expect that your taking part in this research will last two hours.

Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this research is to determine what the basic needs services are that Hmong families need so that 1.) Hmong charter schools can bring these services to the schools, which will ultimately lead to 2.) increasing Hmong parent engagement.

What happens to me if I agree to take part in this research?

If you decide to take part in this research study, you will participate in a 1-2 hour interview. I will reach out to you to schedule a time and location that is convenient for you. I will ask you a series of questions to which I may ask follow-up questions to clarify or validate your responses. This interview should take no more than two hours.

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

Could being in this research hurt me?

There is no foreseeable risks to participating in this research.

Will being in this research benefit me?

The most important benefits that you may expect from taking part in this research include supporting Hmong charter schools in the Twin Cities develop parent engagement initiatives specifically for Hmong families.

How many people will participate in this research?

Approximately 14 people will take part in this study at the University of North Dakota. 10 of those people will be parents from New Millennium Academy. The other four are two administrators from New Millennium Academy and two from Prairie Seeds Academy.

What other choices do I have besides taking part in this research?

Instead of being in this research, your choices may include opting out at any time.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

Who is funding this research?

The University of North Dakota and the research team are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study.

What happens to information collected for this research?

Your private information may be shared with individuals and organizations that conduct or watch over this research, including:

- The Institutional Review Board (IRB) that reviewed this research
- My Advisor

We may publish the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential. We protect your information from disclosure to others to the extent required by law. We cannot promise complete secrecy.

Data or specimens collected in this research will not be used or distributed for future research studies, even if identifiers are removed.

You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example the law may require us to show your information

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

I have discussed the above points with the subject or, where appropriate, with the subject's legally authorized representative.

Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

Date

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
DAIM NTAWV RO CAI

Project Title: Niam Txiv Koom Tes: Tsev kawm ntawv Hmoob yuav tsum muab kev pab thiaj li txhawb niam txiv txog kev koom tes nras tsev kawm ntawv.

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Research Advisor: Jared Schlenker

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Yam kuv yuav toobkas paub txog txoj kev tshawb fawb zaum no yog dabtsis?

- Tus neeg tshawb fawb mas li ceebtoom kom meeb rau koj.
- Yog koj tsis kam ua tauj ntiv mus los yeej tau.
- Tsis muaj teeb meem yog koj tsis xav ua tauj mus.
- Yog koj koom siab ua tamsis no es koj loog siab tsis xav ua ntiv lawm, los yeej tau.
- Yog koj tsis nkag siab, los muaj caij noog tau kom nkag siab.
- Yeej meem noog yam es koj tsis paub kom koj tau taub ua nte pib.

Txoj kev tsawb faub zaum no yuav siv sibhawm ntev li cas?

Kev tsawb faub zaum no nrog koj yuav siv sibhawm li ob teem/xaumoog.

Vim li cas ho muaj txoj kev tsawb fawb zaum no?

Peb nreeg tias yog peb paub yam kev pab rau ib pej xeem yog dabtsis and muab tau yam kev pab ntawv rau ib peb xeem, ces niam txiv yuam muaj sishawm thiab kev nreeg tsev kawm ntawv. Taum ntawv ces, 1.) Tsev kawm ntawv loj paj tau niam txiv tsev neeg thiab 2.) Niam txiv los yuav muaj kev koom tes pem tsev kawm ntawv.

Yog kuv ro cai koom tes hauv txog kev tsawb fawb zau no, yuav ua li cas rau kuv?

Yog koj ro caij koom tes ces, koj yuav tau nrog kuv tag li 1-2 teem/xaumoog. Kuv mas li hu rau koj and teem sishawm thiab nchaw tuab sis ntsib. Kuv mas li noog koj quab question thiab noog koj yam kom kuv nkag siab koj. Lub sishawm yua tsis tag ob teem/xaumoog.

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

Pua muaj yam ua yua ua rau kuv tshaus mo?

Tsis muaj.

Pua muaj yam ua yua los txhawb tau kuv thiab?

Yam es yua los txhawb tau koj thiab koj tus menyuam los yog koj tsev neeg yog txoj kev pab los ntawm lub tsev kawm ntawv. Kuv yuav muab koj cov lus los ua kev tshawb fawb coj mu yos nyiaj los paj tsev neeg Hmoob txoj kev es niam txiv pab koom tes txoj kev kawm nyob rau peb cov tsev kawm ntawv hau Twin Cities no.

Muaj peg tshaws leej es yua nrog koom sis tham?

Yuav muaj li 14 leeg. 10 tus yog niam txiv nyob hau New Millennium Academy, ho kuj muaj plaub tus xibfwb – ob tus nyob New Millennium Academy ho ob tus nyob Prairie Seeds Academy. Ze txos 14 leeg yuav nrog kuv thag txos txhov kev tshawb fawb zaum no.

Kuv puas muaj dua ib txoj kev taug txog ntawm txoj kev tshawb fawb no thiab?

Tsis muaj lawm, yog koj tsis poj zoo, ces koj tawm es tsis txhob koom txoj kev tshawb fawb zaum no.

Kuv puas tau teg nyiab?

Tsis tau teg nyiab.

Koj puas teg nyiab rau kuv thiab?

Tsis teg thiab.

Leej twg teg nyiab rau txoj kev tshawb fawb zaum no?

Lub University of North Dakota – Grand Forks yog lub tsev kawm ntawv es sponsor kuv, thiabsis lub tsev kawm ntawv no tsis tau ib qo nyiab li. Ua pub ntawb xwb.

Cov information es kuv muaj rau koj tshawb fawb zaum no, koj yuav muab ua li cas?

Koj cov information no kuv yuav muaj thiv thaiv koj zoo li zoo taub tsis pub leej twg pau. Cov neeg es yua pau txog ces yog:

- The Institutional Review Board (IRB) es yuav los ncuam xyuas txoj kevy tshawb fawb
- Kuv tus thawj xibhwb.

Tej zaum peb yeej yua muaj cov ntshiab lus coj los teev tshes rau hau daim ntawv tshawb fawb. Tiabsis, peb yuav tsis muaj koj npe thiab koj cos information es yua qhia tau koj yog leej twg muaj sau tawm tshaws li txog kev txog cai.

Cov data thiab specimens peb kawg rau txoj kev tshawb fawb zaum no peb yuav tsis kaws cia.

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

Hais rau koj pauj thiab muaj qee zaus peb yeej yua tau muaj koj cov information qhia rau tub ceev xwm yog hais thias peb ntsees thiab koj tau muaj koj tus menyuum ntaus los yog ua pe tsis zoo rau.

Cov lus es wb sis tham yuav muab kaw theev tshes vim thias kuv uas yog tus neeg tshawb fawb yua rov mus saib yos kuv tsis nkas siab dabtsis koj hais lo sis kuv tsis tau taub koj hais lawm.

Yog kuv txaus siab nrog koj tham es kuv ho loov siab lawm nev?

Yog koj txiav txhim thias koj tsis xav nrog kuv tham lawm, koj yeej muaj fai hais rau kuv thias koj tsis xav nrog kuv tham lawm. Kuv mas li mus yog dua ib tus niam los yog txiv tshiab tham.

Yog thias muaj ib cov lus los yog koom es peb tshawb fawb tau es peb qhia rau koj paub es koj ho loov siab xam ntsam qab lo nrog kuv tham lo yeej tau ib yam nkaus.

Who can answer my questions about this research?

Yog thiam koj muaj lus noog dabtsis txawb xeeb txoj xus li txoj kev tshawb fawb zaum no ua tsis zoo, ua rau koj tsis xis neej, koj muaj cai hu tau rau tu xovtoom hau qab no.

Txoj kev tshawb fawb zaum no yog saib xyuas los ntawm Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). IRB yog ib paws neej loj siab tibneej txoj kev tshawb fawb ko muaj kev ncaj ncees. Koj yeej muaj cai nrog lawm tham tau ntawm 701.777.4279 or UND.ibr@UND.edu yog:

- Koj muaj lus noog kev txawb xeeb es cov neeg tshawb fawb tsis tau qhia koj.
- Koj ntshiav tsis tau cov neeg tshawb fawb.
- Koj xav nrog li tus neeg tham txhos txoj keev tshawb fawb zaum no.
- Koj xav noog txhos txoj kev cai koj muaj txos ntawm txoj kev tshawb fawb.
- Koj ho mu nkag rau UND IRB qhov website no los tau ib yam:
<http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.html>

Yog koj xee koj lub npe ces txhais tau thias koj ro cai sis tham rau txoj kev tshawb fawb zaum no. Peb mam li muab ib daim ntawv no luam rau koj thiab.

Ua Nraug

Sau Npe: _____

Xee Npe

Hnub Nyoos

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

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