PORTRAITS OF BLACK EDUCATORS IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SUBURBAN HIGH
SCHOOLS: THE COST OF PURSUING EQUITY FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

There are a litany of studies that examine Black K-12 educators and their positive influence on Black student achievement; however, few studies examine Black high school educators in predominantly White suburban schools. In response to the dearth of research on Black educators in predominantly White schools, this dissertation uses the qualitative methodology of Portraiture to focus on the experiences and reflections of five Black educators who direct or directed after-school programs for Black and Latina/o students in predominantly White suburban high schools located in the Midwest[1] region of The United States of America. The dissertation paints detailed narratives of educators who began their careers in the 1980's and 1990's and explores their identities, pedagogy, experiences, reflections, and professional tensions to understand the larger social context in predominantly White suburban schools. This study examines their collective experiences and the ways that they navigate and negotiate predominantly White spaces as minorities, and the ways they help minority students navigate those same spaces in efforts to help students graduate and pursue post-high school successes— college, armed forces, and/or the work force. With a specific focus on Blacks in predominantly White suburban schools, this dissertation highlights the role of alienation experienced by Blacks in these spaces, as well as emphasizes the kinds of caring relationships, sociopolitical consciousness, and advocacy needed to support educators professionally, and students academically and socially. The shift from urban spaces pushes educators to consider how race continues to shape the experiences and opportunities of Blacks in predominantly White suburban schools. Furthermore, this dissertation adds to the limited discourse surrounding Black

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[1] The city of the region is not identified and the names of the study participants and programs are all pseudonyms throughout this research in order to obfuscate and protect the location of the programs, the programs themselves, and the participants.

experiences and strategies for survival and resistance in suburban areas and offers these educators as overlooked leaders that serve as advocates for students of color. This research concluded that equity must be infused in every aspect of the educational process to help create a safe space for educators and students of color.

Dedicated to my family, Teresa Warren-Gardner, Michael Lee Warren, Tenika Parker, Malachi Parker, Michaela Parker, Malcolm Parker, Jason Young, and Seth Young.

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If God is for me, who can be against me. Romans 8:31

But God…. Ephesians 2:4

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Chapter 1

Introduction

As a result of the increase of minority students in suburban schools and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (U. S. Department of Education, 2003), which emphasizes that the academic achievement gap between White middle and upper class students and that of students of color must be eliminated, emerging work—by scholars such as Thandeka Chapman—is now starting to be done on diversity in suburban school districts. Although research may be new in this area, similar to Black educators working in segregated schools (Anderson, 1988; Walker, 1996; 2000; 2003b), Black educators working in desegregated schools have always given attention to improving the academic success of students of color (Ramsey, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Black educators in predominantly White suburban schools are underrepresented, and many of them face the difficulty of pursuing equity for students of color in isolation. In the 2011-2012 school year, the number of Black principals in public schools was 10% (Bitterman, Goldring, & Gray, 2013), 10% for counselors (Hart Research Associates, 2012), and 6.2% for Black teachers (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013). In suburban schools the statistics are even smaller, considering most educators of color work in predominantly minority schools (Boser, 2011). Despite being a small percentage of the total number of educators, Black educators continue with their commitment to students of color. Specifically, since the 1980's in one Midwestern city, some Black educators have attempted to address the academic achievement of students of color in predominantly White schools by voluntarily starting or joining school

programs targeting Black and Latina/o students. These programs provide a safe space where students of color can develop supportive relationships with caring adults and experience academic, social, emotional, and cultural support. With relative success, these educators acted as program directors, employed culturally relevant pedagogy, and used advocacy techniques to navigate and negotiate the racial academic space on behalf of and for students of color. Student participants, program directors, and educators in their respective districts have informally documented the success of these programs with academic achievement, school involvement, and college attendance. Though these directors did a successful job assisting students, their position was also problematic in three major ways. Directors of these programs:

1. juggled their full-time educator position and their position as program director;
2. experienced the stress of running programs that addressed race and inequities faced by their Black and Latina/o students, in school systems that operated under colorblind ideologies;
3. worked in isolation due to the small number of educators pursuing equity for students of color in their schools and districts.

As described by Sara Ahmed (2012), "diversity work is hard because it involves doing within institutions what would otherwise not be done by them" (p. 25). As a result, the longevity of their roles as directors was problematic because they were stretched for time, support, and resources in performing two full-time roles as educators and directors. Additionally, running programs in schools operating under colorblind ideologies was problematic because these educators were often met with resistance and challenges, while also being over worked. By being some of the only people actively working on issues of race and equity in their schools, they were minoritized

and isolated even further. In light of these complexities, this dissertation seeks to investigate the experiences and reflections of these educators working in desegregated schools.

Key Research Questions: What were the experiences of five Black educators working in predominantly White suburban school districts as program directors for Black and Latina/o students?

1. What were the typical characteristics of these educators?

2. What were the complexities—professionally, politically, and personally—of these educators as school program directors?

3. How can we enhance the sustainability of these educators as program directors?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to paint detailed narratives of five Black educators in predominantly White high schools by exploring their identities, pedagogy, experiences, reflections and tensions—personal, professional, and political—to understand the larger social context in predominantly White suburban schools. To illuminate the complex dimensions of "goodness" (Lawrence-Lightfoote & Davis, 1997) regarding these educators, and witness them holistically as Black educators, I center both their identity and culture. Lawrence-Lightfoote and Davis' (1997) idea of goodness emphasizes that social scientist focus on what works as opposed to documenting failure. While goodness focuses on success, it is not without complexities. The idea is to present holistic pictures for complex understandings versus "facile inquiry" (Lawrence-Lightfoote & Davis, 1997, p. 9). While observing and interviewing each director, I considered their

1. background, upbringing, educational journey,

2. beliefs and practices related to education, the public school system, and working with Black and Latina/o students, and

3. personal and professional navigational practices as educators and directors, and how they managed to keep pushing in the face of racist, covert and overt, attacks on the "race" of their programs and Black and Latina/o students in general at their schools.

Portraiture works well because of its ability to capture the complex nature of people and taking into consideration many different aspects of the lives of participants including their voice, relationships, and context, which enabled me to capture the human experience of a marginalized group through storytelling. The focus is on accurately interpreting and conveying participants' experiences and perspectives. Through this level of complexity, I was also able to listen for their stories, and act as a co-creator in their portraits.

This study counters deficit research approaches on Black and Latina/o student achievement (i.e. looking at the low academic performance of Black students), by examining intermediaries identified as successful in raising Black student academic achievement, while also countering the majoritarian narrative that White educators understand and know best how to teach Black students. Additionally, this study highlights the low Black achievement in suburban schools, normally posited only at inner city schools.

Significance

By using Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2002, 2006) as my theory of analysis, which focuses specifically on academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness, I was able to examine the experiences and pedagogy of these educators, and (a) illuminate the types of caring relationships, sociopolitical

consciousness, and advocacy needed to create a more inclusive environment for students of color, (b) illustrate how race and racism influences educators of color in predominantly White suburban schools, (c) highlight the uneven distribution of equity work to help students of color in these spaces, and the costs associated with the uneven distribution, and (d) amplify the voices of Black educators in these spaces, as well as illustrate how they help students of color in a racist school system. My research suggests the need for districts and schools to move educational equity to the number one item on their agenda, and help faculty and staff develop a deeper sociopolitical consciousness to help better and deepen the relationships among faculty and staff and more evenly distribute the efforts to create more equitable spaces for students and educators.

The data collected reveals the experiences, reflections, and needs of those who work with and are a part of marginalized communities. The common themes found in the portraits illustrate the ways these Black educators advocate for students of color through their relationships, programmatic efforts, and navigational tactics. The themes from across the participants also highlight school practices that lack sociopolitical consciousness and are racist toward Black educators and negligent in their ways to support students of color; thusly, leaving these Black educators as the few pursuers of educational equity for students of color in these schools. The study also reveals the professional and personal complexities Black educators face, such as the lack of support, professional attacks, political navigation, job safety, and stress related to the complications of navigating racist policies and practices. Overall, the study demonstrates that if the schools are not safe, supportive, and equitable for educators of color, the space will not be any of those things for students of color.

By understanding the ways in which educators of color are treated in these spaces, helps schools and policy makers see a direct reflection for the ways in which students of color are treated. Additionally, studying the experiences of these educators will add to the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) by extending the notion of sociopolitical consciousness and adding the dimension of advocacy. Applied contributions highlight the ways in which schools might become healthier work environments for all educators, particularly Black educators, through a more even distribution of equity work. K-12 schools, educational leadership programs, educational training and professional development may gain a better understanding of the importance of extending sociopolitical consciousness throughout the entire school to better serve educators and students of color.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of helping the reader fully understand the study, the following list of words and their definitions are given to contextualize the usage and purpose.

Black/African American is used interchangeably to represent people of African ancestry in the United States.

Equity: The idea of equity for this work is based off of Scott's (2001) definition of systemic equity:

> [T]he transformed ways in which systems and individuals habitually operate to ensure that every learner—in whatever learning environment that learner is found—has the greatest opportunity to learn enhanced by the resources and

supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence,

responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and for life. (p. 6).

Hispanic is the term used by the U. S. census identifying a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto

Rican, South or Central America, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race

Latina/o refers to women and men who identify as Latina/o or Hispanic American, regardless of

immigrant status.

Chapter Overviews

Chapter 1 has given the statement of problem and purpose of the study, which discusses

the complexity—balance, stress, and isolation—of a small group of Black educators pursing

equity for students of color in a desegregated space that operates under colorblind ideologies. In

relation to the literature on Black educators who worked during segregation, participants in this

study continue the legacy of helping to raise the academic achievement of students of color;

however the difference is the desegregation context. Next I have provided the research questions,

followed by the purpose of study, significance, and definition of terms.

Chapter 2 contains the theoretical framework utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy

(CRP), which rests on three criteria: academic achievement, cultural competence, and

sociopolitical consciousness. CRP is described as the tool used in this study to explain and

analyze the experiences of Black educators pursuing educational equity for students of color in

predominantly White schools after schools were desegregated. It is also used to discuss the ways

schools and educational researchers can enrich the dialogue on creating equitable schools. Next,

I review the literature on the history of Black educators and education during segregation. This

section provides the perspectives, values, and pedagogical approaches to education during

segregation. This historical framing traces the conditions of Black educators pursing equity for

Black students. Following the historical perspective, I review the influence of the landmark

Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954) decision on Black educators and

Black students to set the historicized stage for Black educator experiences in suburban schools.

Finally, I discuss Black teachers in desegregated suburban schools and their perspectives, values,

and pedagogical approaches in these spaces. At the end of chapter two, I discuss the gaps in the

literature—which leave out the experiences of many principals and counselors who pursue equity

for students of color. I also explain how this dissertation contributes to what is unknown about

Black educators, by including principals and counselors, in desegregated suburban schools, who

seek specific measures outside of the classroom to advocate for Black and Latina/o students.

Chapter 3 highlights the qualitative research design. In this chapter I review portraiture as

a methodology used to structure, collect, write, and analyze the data about the directors. I

continue to describe the selection and process of working with the five participants from

Midwestern cities teaching in predominantly white suburban public high schools. I also discuss

the data collection process using semi-structured interviews and one focus group, analysis,

limitations, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 provides the portraits of each director's experience. Each section begins with a

brief description of the director followed by a description of the cities where the schools are

located, a description of the school, a description of the program, and a portrait of her or his

experience as related to the achievement of students of color in their respected schools and

programs. Looking at the directors' experiences helps to provide a foundation and descriptive

information for advocates using a holistic approach in the education of Black and Latina/o student achievement.

Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and analysis, demonstrating how directors responded to and navigated the neglect of Black and Latina/o students in the predominantly White suburban public schools. In this chapter, the themes across all five participants illustrate the ways they sought to address the unmet needs of students of color. This chapter highlights specifically the ways they use their after-school program to address unmet needs of students of color, and the challenges they face as a result of racist practices, policies, and traditions, which are in opposition to their programs designed to help Black and Latina/o students.

Chapter 6 offers suggestions from the directors to educational leadership, teacher training and professional development programs, and policy makers. Finally, I have provided my recommendations based off data analyses and provide a call to action for the educational leaders to reconsider structural changes to create an equitable space for educators and students of color.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

We have such a responsibility, either assumed, or perceived, or whatever, for the kids that are on our watch…that has always been in place for African American teachers and educators who are really serious about what they do… We have that assumption of responsibility for our kids….

Angela Davis, program director in this study

Mama Davis statement reflects the "assumed responsibility" that Black educators have historically demonstrated when it comes to Black and other students of color. Her statement provides a guide for this literature review as a way to contextualize Black educators who have been committed to Black and other students of color.

Understanding the experiences, perceptions, and reflections of Black educators who pursue educational equity for students of color in predominantly White suburban high schools requires a lens that values student culture. This chapter is divided into five major sections that frame this conversation on Black educators in suburban high schools: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), historical perspectives on Black educators and education during segregation, the influence of *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (Brown)* (1954), suburban integrated schools, and Black educators in desegregated predominantly White suburban schools.

First I begin with an overview of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), to demonstrate my use of an analysis that values students' culture and challenges educational norms, values, and traditions in predominantly White high schools. CRP is used as a tool to (1) explain and analyze

the experiences of Black educators pursuing educational equity for students of color in predominantly White schools, and (2) discuss the ways schools and educational researchers can enrich the dialogue on creating equitable schools. Second, I discuss Black educators in K-12 schools and the approaches to education in the context of segregation. In this section I also discuss Black educators, their perspectives, values, and pedagogical approaches in a segregated school system to trace the intellectual progression of Black educators pursing equity for Black and other students of color. Third, I discuss the influence of the landmark *Brown* (1954) decision on Black educators and their views (Morris, 2001; 2008) on the decision to set the historicized stage for Black teachers in suburban schools. In this section, I briefly describe suburban schools in the context of integrated schools that have evolved historically from all-White middle class students to a more diverse student body**.** The next section specifically covers Black teachers in desegregated suburban spaces, their perspectives, values, and pedagogical approaches. Discussion of Black teachers in these spaces highlights the racial tension and advocacy role for Black students in suburban school districts. I also review the experiences of Black teachers after integration and in suburban schools. Reminiscent of Black educators of the past (Walker, 2009; Walker, 2005; Walker, 2000; Anderson, 1988; Foster, 1997) these educators directing after-school programs advocate for students of color by utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy, to holistically—academically, culturally, socially, and emotionally—support Black and Latina/o student achievement.

Culturally relevant pedagogy as a Theoretical Frame

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as a theoretical framework posits culture as an invaluable asset to students in their educational process. Educational researchers (Banks, 1991,

2006; Gay, 2000; 2010; Irvine, 1990; 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2002, 2006; Lynn, 1999) suggest using students' culture helps to improve the academic achievement of all students, but especially students of color, whose culture has traditionally been left outside of the academic arena. Instead of stripping students of their cultural being/heritage/traditions, culturally relevant pedagogy uses culture as a vehicle to bridge the divide of home and education. Foster describes Black educators that use this ideology as expressing

> cultural solidarity, affiliation, and connectedness with the African American community. Often reinforced by long-term residence and employment patterns, this solidarity is manifest in the way teachers characterize their relationship to students; the responsibility they take for educating the whole child by teaching values, skills, and knowledge that enable school success and participation in the larger society; and their demonstrated competence in the norms of the African American community. Excellent African American teachers draw on community patterns and norms in structuring their classrooms. They link classroom activities to students' out-of-school experiences and incorporate familiar cultural and communicative patterns in their classroom practices, routines, and activities. (1995)

The characteristics described by Foster, and similar to other leading scholars—Jacqueline Irvine, Geneva Gay, and Gloria Ladson Billings—capture the pedagogy of successful and effective Black educators. Those using CRP teach the whole child socially, emotionally, academically, and enable students to perform well at school and participate in society at large by becoming change agents that examine and challenge inequity. Extending the notion of family,

educators taught students as if they were their own children. They taught students to have pride in themselves, their community, and with a combination of discipline and love requiring all students to meet high academic and behavioral standards. Foster's description directly links to a theory of CRP.

CRP, as articulated by Gloria Ladson-Billings, is based on academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. It is a "theoretical model that addresses student achievement and helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 469). While seeking to capture the pedagogical practices of successful teachers of Black students in urban schools, Ladson-Billings found these teachers taught with the added dimension of "cultural identity" affirmation. This pedagogy pushes back against hegemonic forces by helping students develop critical thinking skills that challenge inequities embedded in and outside of the status quo. With the addition of affirming culture, or cultural competence, and critical perspectives or sociopolitical consciousness, students gained real life knowledge on how to prepare for real life inequities, while cultivating self-dignity in an unjust society.

At a cursory glance, many educators think that CRP is simply about boosting self-confidence (Irvine, 2010); however, that perspective limits the real power of the pedagogy. The pedagogy maximizes student learning by building on students' cultural knowledge. Connecting students' culture with their experiences, and things in which they can relate, assumes students bring valuable knowledge with them and helps them to retain the information better. Irvine (2010) discusses one teachers experience working with students and letter writing. At first the

teacher planned to have students order a game product from a magazine, however, once she realized it was not realistic situation for them, she had students research in their community and write letters to the mayor about how to improve their neighborhood. At the end of the project, the mayor called to meet the students. The teacher used familiar territory and worked with what the students were familiar. She made education personal, connecting content to the individual, community, and a global setting. In another example in the article, Irvine describes a pre-service teacher's attempt to have students identify kale and broccoli. Students could not identify the vegetables and started "acting up." The teacher became upset and stormed out of the room. As the supervisor, Irvine took over the class and had students identify different types of cars. The students were able to identify the cars, and returned the following class furthering the conversation. Irvine used a previous conversation she heard students having about cars as a springboard for the lesson. She took their experiences, connected them with the objectives, and built a solid lesson where students understood, related, and learned.

Through culture, seen as a "vehicle for learning" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p.162), teachers create a bridge between students' home and school lives, to holistically improve student achievement and meet the learning expectations of the district, state, and national standards. Teachers of this pedagogy have caring relationships with their students, know their interests and what information relates to them, and recognize that students are not homogenous groups. Caring for students of color includes (a) helping students develop their sociopolitical consciousness and providing them with an understanding of strategies to survive a racist society, (b) "rejecting negative stereotypes and developing new ways of knowing," (Mullins, 1997, p. 121), and (c) creating equitable spaces for the present and future generations. In these ways, care addresses the whole student, which includes helping them think beyond the text and how class information can

be applied to life outside of the classroom. Teachers of CRP challenge the status quo by encouraging students to succeed and to think critically about the world around them. As Gay (2000) describes,

> I want [students] to be independent, critical, reflective, and quality thinkers and decision makers. … My students are challenged to reconfigure and integrate knowledge segments from several sources to serve new purposes; to be analytical about sources of knowledge; to push boundaries of their present knowledge frames. (pp. 196-197)

In Gay's description, educators using CRP require students to think for themselves, use their critical thinking skills, and create new knowledge as opposed to allowing students to be docile consumers of information. Educators of this pedagogy are "systematic reformers, members of caring communities, reflective practitioners and researchers, pedagogical content specialist, and anti-racists" (Irvine, 2010, p. 61).

While this pedagogy has potential for transformative learning, the pedagogy is often seen as great in theory and one only exceptional teachers can enact. Morrison, Robbins, & Rose (2008), found that because it seems to go against the grain and "clash[es] with the traditional ways in which education is carried out in our society…[it] seem[s] herculean to many teachers" (p. 444). Practitioners generally praise the pedagogy, but many also find it hard to consistently work in the context of standardized tests. Young (2010) revealed that while all of the White educators in her study embraced the pedagogy in theory, they did not fully embrace it in practice. Young argues, their "unspoken preference for the traditional curriculum prevented their conceptualization of how to effectively use the pedagogy in their lesson planning" (Young, 2010,

p. 257). Young's study also revealed the complexities beyond lesson planning with implementing CRP. Findings illustrated the need to

> (a) raise the race consciousness of educators and encourage them to confront their own cultural biases, (b) address systemic roots of racism in school policies and practices, and (c) adequately equip pre-service and in-service teachers with the knowledge of how to implement theories into practice. (p. 257)

In alignment with Young's findings, Brown-Jeffy and Cooper's (2011) overview of conceptual and theoretical literature on CRP, highlighted the need to incorporate the significance of race and racism in the discussion of culture as a way to address systemic racism in policy and practice. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper argued that for some educators claiming to use CRP, "culture does not always take into account the permeating thread of racism in the fabric of American life" (p. 79). They suggested using Critical Race Theory, which centers race and racism, in conjunction with CRP to infuse the significance of race and racism with the discussion of culture. These complexities are, as Ladson-Billings (2006) states, "rooted in how we think—about the social contexts, about the students, about the curriculum, and about instruction" (p. 30). Ladson-Billings suggested the practices of CRP were a way of life, taking place in schools and communities on a continuum of struggle—past, present, and future. This outlook serves as a reminder of their larger purpose—preparing students to be critically conscious in a world of inequity.

Another complexity is that practitioners of color using CRP may face an additional issue besides working in an era of accountability. Those teachers may find themselves in a "double-bind" of remaining true to their cultural/professional commitments of culturally responsive

teaching while working under state and national accountability pressures, and the pressure associated with such (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011). Similar to the complexities of the lack of focus on race and the issue of "double-bind," this study's examination of Black educators working in predominantly White suburban schools has shown the complexities of Black educators using CRP in these spaces. Through the use of CRP as a theoretical framework, this study demonstrates how Black educators in predominantly White high schools pursue equity for students of color through academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness, and the experiences they face as influenced by their approach.

Historical Perspectives on Black educators and Education During Segregation

> The colored people are called today to mark out on the map of life with their own hands their own future course or locality in the great national body politic. Other hands cannot mark for them; other tongues cannot speak for them; other eyes cannot see for them; they must see and speak for themselves, and make their own characters on the map however crooked or illegible (Anderson, 1988, p. 10).

In James Anderson's book, *The education of Blacks in the south: 1860-1935*, he quotes John Mennard, Black civil rights leader, journalist, editor, and poet, discusses how the new freedman understood that the source of their livelihood and education must and would come from within their community. This philosophy was nothing new to Blacks, and even while under the tyranny of slavery, Blacks sought educational attainment. Though some would like to argue that Blacks have never valued education, countless slave narratives discuss the heart-wrenching stories describing the will to be educated and to share their knowledge with other slaves (Douglass, 1995; Jacobs, 1988; Anderson, 1998; 2007; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard III, 2003). Many

slaves' beliefs on education is summed up with Frederick Douglass' (1995) statement, "I now

understood what had been to me a perplexing difficulty—to wit the white man's power to

enslave the Black man" (p. 20). He continues,

> What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated.
>
> That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great
>
> good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly urged,
>
> against my learning to read only served to inspire me with a desire and
>
> determination to learn (pp. 20).

Douglass' desire to learn illustrated his knowledge of the power of education and its capability to

fight oppression. For slaves, education represented the ultimate form of freedom and liberation

(Perry, Steele, & Hilliard III, 2003, p.13), and they understood that they must learn and teach

others. After the emancipation, and in the same vein, free Blacks established their own schools

during and after slavery throughout the entire south, and both ex-slaves and free Blacks carried

over the earnest belief of education for liberation. Both groups sought to form an educational

system "of formal education that prefigured their liberation from peasantry" (Anderson, 1988, p.

3). Desiring "assistance without control" (Anderson, 1988, p. 5), Blacks accepted help from

White benevolence and federal contributions once offered; however, even when federal funding

was cut by the Bureau, and schools were temporarily closed, Blacks signed petitions to "be

assessed for the whole expense" (Anderson, 1988, p. 9). Blacks recognized that the price of

education was invaluable and that they had to take matters in their own hands to sustain their

own communities. Black educators were passionate and persistent about education, and despite

the nearly insurmountable hardships, with or without help, they organized and advocated for educational equity for the Black individual, family, and community (Walker, 2005).

In semi-autonomous organizations, Black schools were fully functional and operational entities, second to the church in Black communities (Irvine R., & Irvine, J., 1983), and built with or without the help of governmental support (Bennett, 1988; Murtadha & Watts, 2005). Black schools were run by professional educators who administered, staffed, and served the Black population. Educators were highly trained, with some holding PhD's, and by 1949-50 in many Southern states, Black teachers exceeded Whites in teacher preparation (Rodgers, 1967; Walker, 2000). Additionally, educators participated in continual professional development by traveling to state and national educational meetings and sharing information with their colleagues and school community, as a part of staff development and/or PTA meetings. Rodgers' (1967) work on Black principals during de jure segregation, described the principal as "the man who ran the school, and in many cases, the Black community" (p. 16). Principals served as

1) role models for professional development,

2) head instructional leaders—hiring those who reflected his philosophies and principles and firing those that did not match,

3) model and leader in the types of services children ought to have—counseling, supplying financial services to those in need, offering leadership in local initiatives such as clubs and credit unions, and finally he served as a

4) liason with the White community advocating for the Black community (Walker, 2000; Walker & Byas, 2003b).

For example, Walker and Byas (2003) provided the story of principal Ulysses Byas in Gainsville, Georgia, who strategically finessed both the community and the superintendent to work on behalf of a Black school and its educational progress. Similar to other principals, he found ways around the White superintendent to gain what the school needed, such as conducting a survey and having the results and demands of the schools published in the local newspaper. Walker and Byas wrote,

> They had to find ways to placate their bosses or they might lose their jobs. The challenge was to think a step or two beyond the superintendent to creatively find ways to deliver to the Black community what they perceived they needed— without the superintendent determining what they were doing (p. 65)

On the other hand, principals understood the nuances of community relations. For example, he may have dressed as community members or used the language of the community, as opposed to using more Standard English, or started a newspaper with a "Principal's Message" to ensure parents and community members knew what was going on in the schools (Walker & Byas, 2003). Principals could and had to gain the trust of, and comfortably relate and communicate with the community in order to effectively address the needs of the schools and students.

Principals' primary jobs were to advocate for students—to parents, communities, and school boards—and to create the best student-learning environment. Under exemplar principal Byas' leadership, the school value increased from $85,000 in 1948 to $1.5 million in 1968 (Walker & Byas, 2003). At the school, he helped to cause an "intellectual revolution," where 400 students graduated, which was over three times as many graduated the previous decade. Black principals such as Byas were major leaders in Black education in segregated schools.

Walker (2000) discussed Black teachers across disciplines and teaching styles (Sowell, 1976) in the segregated south as consistently remembered for their high expectations for student success, for their dedication, and for their demanding teaching style. Educators also fought for rigorous courses (Sowell, 1976). In one example at Dunbar High School in Washington, educators fought and lost for the ability to add calculus to the curriculum (Sowell, 1976). With students, they had a mix of high and demanding expectations, giving students a lot of work and making sure that they completed it, and maintaining high standards, Black teachers pushed their students to perform and excel. Pushing their students also included leadership and development opportunities during the regular school day to "uplift the race" (Morris & Morris, 2002). Some activities included having (a) picture galleries of famous African Americans coupled with class content and special programs to discuss the influence of their achievements, (b) students speak in weekly assemblies, or (c) professional African American visitors.

Black teachers saw "potential in their Black students, considered them to be intelligent, and were committed to their success" (Tillman, 2004, p. 282). Their roles extended in and beyond the confines of their classrooms and extended to the community at large. They saw their roles as "othermothering" (Collins, 2009) or "otherfathering" (Milner, 2005), embracing students as if they were their own children in efforts to holistically reach and teach them. They represented, "surrogate parent figures, acted as disciplinarians, counselors, role models, and overall advocates for their academic, social, cultural, emotional, and moral development" (Milner & Howard, 2004, p. 286). Characterized as "caring, competent, and dedicated" (Morris & Morris, 2002, p. 74), they provided a holistic approach to education by addressing psychological, sociological, and physical needs of students. For example, they provided clothing for the needy, called students "mister" and "miss" (Sowell, 1976), and/or told them that they

could "be somebody" (Walker, 2000) to instill an emotional sense of worth and reinforce student aspirations during a time when Blacks were not respected.

Teachers were seen as extended family members and talked to students before and after class, provided guidance about 'life' responsibilities, transported students home so they could participate in school events, and gave them clothes and college financial assistance (Walker, 2000). They also prepared students for the real world (Milner & Howard, 2004; Walker, 1996), because they knew the grand narratives of Blacks as inferior or culturally deficit (Mutua, 1999; O'Connor, 2006), and tried to educate students on both content and how to navigate a racist society. As products of America, Black educators learned and were simultaneously in the process of navigating and negotiating their space and way in the world; therefore, they understood Black students and desired and pushed them to achieve more than the status quo. In Sowell's (1976) study on successful Black schools during segregation, one former high school woman principal described, they were "pushing for them [students], and dying inside for them, [while letting] them know that they had to produce" (Sowell, 1976, p. 36). As argued by Pang and Gibson (2001), Black educators used their experiences to help students understand the complexities of being Black in America and to exceed expectations of society.

Black educators were extensions of, working for and with, the Black community (Irvine & Irvine, 1983), and in return parental and community involvement enriched the schooling experiences of students and communities (Morris & Morris, 2002). While Black segregated schools did not have all of the tangible resources as White schools, they had the intangibles, such as cultural knowledge and appreciation, strong relationships with students, parents, and community members, high expectations, and dedication to education of Black students. During

segregation, Black educators helped to shape most of the social and political experiences of African Americans (Anderson, 1988; Morris, 2001), and even before the *Brown* decision, dating back to *Sarah Roberts v. The City of Boston, 9 Mass. (1850).*[2] Blacks were debating the most effective educational space, segregated or integrated, for Black children (Morris, 2001; Morris, 2008). On segregated versus desegregated schools, African Americans have always been split over access to resources and culturally supportive and respectful spaces for students, families, and communities. Black educators and Black families realized that their children would not necessarily receive better schooling because of "moderate or covert acts of racism" (Morris, 2001).

Professional Black educators' commitment to the education of Black communities operated from a CRP theoretical frame and created a structure of education that serviced students holistically. Similarly, this dissertation illustrates how participants in this study, post *Brown* marked out on the map the lives for their students with their own hands by creating and directing programs for students of color, because they recognized that others would not mark it for them.

Black educators and the *Brown* decision

After *Brown*, Black schools and teachers were impacted in several ways: 1) Black institutional schools were practically dismantled. 2) "[S]ignificant numbers of Black teachers and principals were dismissed, demoted, or reassigned" (Irvine & Irvine, 1983, p. 417). During 1964-1973, Picott (1976) reported that there was a 90% reduction, 2000 to less than 200, principals in

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[2] *Roberts v. the City of Boston* established "separate but equal" in public schools, which served as the basis for *Plessy v. Ferguson*. In the early 19th century, in Boston, Massachusetts, Black and White children were allowed to both attend Boston schools schools; however, Black parents often refused to send their children because of racist teachers. As a result, the city of Boston created separate schools for Blacks. Some Black parents protested and filed a suit seeking integrated schools.

the south, and most were demoted to assistant principals, teachers, or assigned to conduct special projects for central office. Black teachers were replaced with the least qualified White teachers to work in Black schools. The "better" Black teachers were transferred into the White schools. Black principals were placed in charge of discipline for Black males. 3) Black teachers lost a voice, power, and integrity, in educating Black students. According to Foster (1997), approximately one third, 38,000, of the number of Black teachers and administration lost their position. In the former Black schools, educators were respected in high esteem, because they did what was in the best interest of Black children. However, in integrated schools, White educators, parents, and students, disrespected Black educators and limited their voice and on the education of Black students.

With integration, White educators were now in charge of instructing Black students, with whom they had no cultural knowledge, and generally worked off the grand narratives, and operating off the "rescue" analogy. Interviewee, Peggy, in Milner and Howard (2004) described,

> ...desegregation happened primarily from the rescue model. Basically everything these poor little [Black] children had was bad, and so we need to go rescue them. And so we're going to rescue children and then bring them into desegregated schools so we can *save* them [emphasis added]. Well, the model rests upon certain assumptions. One of the assumptions is that the [Black] teachers are bad, the curriculum was bad, the parents were bad. Everything was bad. ...[T]he resources were bad, (p. 292)

However, Peggy continued,

the commitment of the [Black] people, their level of professionalism, the kinds of

things they tried to do for children, the way in which they cared about children,

the networks that they had, *those* [emphasis added] things were not necessarily

bad. (p. 292)

This rescue analogy was not how Black educators and leaders approached education, nor was it

what they envisioned for integration. They valued the student, family, and community, so their

desires for *Brown* were to attain access to equal resources and the option to go to their desired

school without restrictions; *Brown's* failed "rescue" attempt did not achieve the sought after

integration, instead it created "outer-gration" of "Black educators, their ideas, and their

organizations" (Walker, 2009, p. 271). Scholars Bell (1987) and Ladson-Billings (2004) might

suggest that there was no "rescue attempt" to begin; instead it was an allusion of good faith and

fair dealing to integrate schools. Bell (2004) called this allusion, "interest convergence," where

the Supreme Court supported *Brown* because it was in the best interest of the nation and depicted

the United States of America as a human rights supporter. With no direct instructions or

timetable on implementing *Brown,* the ruling of 1954 left Blacks without access. Brown II also

offered no direct guidelines and was slow to change, and in some cases took 15 years to change

(Morris, 2008).

With *Brown*, there was no direction on how schools should carry out the policies and as a

result *Brown* was perhaps more of a moral reminder and symbol for what America hopes to be in

the future (Ladson-Billings, 2007). While moving Black bodies became the remedy to

desegregate, schools continued to operate under the old mentality of segregation in the form of

tracking. One interviewee, Barbara, from Milner and Howard (2004), states,

And so tracking really started...we're going to have to have them [Black students] in the school by legal mandate, [so] what we'll do is we'll create two schools within one building, a Black school and a White school. And actually that's what we still have, and that legacy continues where tracking was used as a so-called device-although they were in the same building, they were going to keep it as separate as they possibly could. (p. 293).

Brown continued to carry out the old narrative of Blacks as inferior (O'Connor, 2006) and being second-class students in a second-class integration (Walker, 2009).

One such example of a second-class integration is in Morris' (2001) discussion of St. Louis' desegregation plan, a voluntary transfer program[3]. Morris gave voice to Black educators who were excluded from the conversation of the education of Black students. He examined the intersection of race with the plan, by investigating the perspectives of 21 African American educators. His findings discussed how Black parents were misinformed by a bombardment of advertisements promising a better educational environment, and the realities of what really happened to children in suburban schools—isolation, disrespect, low expectations, and racism. The participants in his study discussed the perception of Black inferiority, the "creaming effect" of taking the most talented Black students from the inner city schools and placing them in suburban schools, and the skepticism of suburban schools benefitting Black students. The educators for this project also discussed how suburban districts benefitted by way of significant

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[3] The desegregation plan included voluntary busing from city schools, predominantly Black schools, to county schools, predominantly White schools. A majority of the busing was Black students to White schools; however, White students were encouraged to attend magnet schools in the city.

monetary gain. For example, Ms. Mitchell's[4] unidentified school received $68 million by participating in the transfer program. Overall, most of the educators in the study believed that if given the monetary support, Black students could achieve in predominantly Black spaces, while others believed there was merit in maintaining racial balance in schools.

The full impact of Brown is currently unknown; however, both good and bad consequences occurred as a result. One benefit is that students have "access" and the ability to sit in physically "better looking" or newer schools; however, the full cost that both Black educators and students incurred is one that leaves some educators and scholars (Bell, 1987; Ladson-Billings, 2007; Morris, 2001) wondering if it was worth it. Sonya Horsford's (2010) study of eight Black superintendents who attended all-Black segregated schools revealed the mixed emotions that participants had about integration. The study countered the notions that (a) all-Black schools were inferior, (b) equal education, provided access, and opportunity, and (c) integration equaled inclusion.

Similarly, Ramsey's (2008) study revealed the mixed emotions of desegregation. In her study, she examined the experiences of African American women teachers who desegregated the Nashville, TN school system teaching staff during 1964-1971. Findings illustrated that the women were role models for their students and families, racial and class mediators, and protectors of Black children. The mixed emotions came from the issues that they faced. They had to help Black students deal with racism in the schools, protect Black students from White faculty and staff, struggle with issues of respect and sometimes overt hostility from their White colleagues and community, and combat negative stereotypes of Blacks.

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[4] Pseudonyms were used for the names of the participants and schools, or the schools were left unidentified.

The findings from aforementioned studies make the mixed emotions of desegregated schools clear. The studies also reminds educators and policy makers that they must understand how race, racism, and racial politics operate in the field of education in order to advance socially just education in desegregated suburban schools. Similarly, my study illustrates the mixed emotions of desegregated predominantly White suburban schools and the continued work that Black educators perform to help students of color.

Black educators and suburban schools

In the past, suburban schools were typically depicted as highly homogenized with generally middle-class White populations, interspersed with smaller pockets or students of color. Teachers were predominantly White and tend to have higher educational credentials, students tend to come from more two-parent homes and higher socio-economic statuses, and resources tend to be available (Tillman, 2004). These schools were typically seen as the "good" schools in comparison to urban or rural schools which tended to have teachers with lower teaching credentials, higher percentages of single-parent families, more students living in poverty, and the fewer school resources. Urban schools also had greater ethnic and cultural diversity and higher student transient rate.

According to Evans (2007), demographic changes, or a "darkening" of "good" White suburban schools, signaled a decline in the participant school's status and professional status. Her study presents three suburban school responses to an increase in the African American students population. Schools attempted to address the changes in demographics by seeking to "control" the situation, by incorporating strict or stricter policies related to discipline, tardiness, attendance, and dress code. Another approach was to restructure the schedule by introducing

block scheduling to decrease the amount of socialization in the halls. One of the schools in the study, now a predominantly Black school as a result of a Black middle class influx, worked to increase the number of Black faculty by situating a minority hiring initiative, a district wide racial balance initiative, and multicultural training for faculty. Findings in Evans (2007) study revealed that teachers changed what they taught by dumbing down the curriculum, lowering expectations and standards, and not working as hard. Evans suggested two of the three schools lacked a real will to make changes, and the changes made were negatively related to Black students. Structural barriers, like colorblind mentalities and a refusal to "give up their traditions" (p. 339), limited productivity to provide an inclusive environment. One of the most significant findings was that "faculty agency emerged from a local, historical, and organizational context, which was affected by the racial history, racial meanings, and interpretations" (p. 345). Evans findings illustrated the importance of local, historical, and organizational context and how race is ultimately constructed and played out in suburban schools. Additionally, the schools perception of their efficacy and responsibility influenced their will to change.

Related, Lipman (1997) also discussed one school's attempt to address structural change. In this study, three schools sought to raise the educational experiences of low achieving Black students; however, the schools most successful teachers of Black students were left out of the conversation and/or had little influence in the restructuring process. Isolated and disempowered during the process, White colleagues, parents, and school board members dismissed the participants through a lack of support, denial of leadership, and/or viewed them as unique and pedagogically could not be replicated. Prevailing ideologies, power, and privilege suggested where the real power lie, and for real change, schools must look at real issues of race and racism, and include the voices of those effective teachers of students of color.

Similarly, participants of this study had little power in making systematic change in the schools; however, one participant, Mama Davis, demonstrated how she made strides with increasing the number of Black students in honors classes. Her conscientious effort to work with teachers in identifying Black students that had potential, and supporting the students and the teachers once Black students were in the classes created an atmosphere where it is typical for a few Black students to take the courses. Although Black enrollment is not large for any one honors class, there were several students in some of the courses, which was an improvement. Related to aforementioned literature, this study illustrates the need for schools to include the voices of Black educators to make real structural change. The participants of this study were making some gains, but for sustained progress, change and equity efforts must take place systematically.

Experiences of Black educators in suburban schools

Researchers have written quite a bit on Black teachers; however, few studies (Mabokela & Madson 2003a; Madson & Mabokela, 2000; 2003b; 2007; Milner, 2005; Milner & Hoy, 2003) focus specifically on Black teachers in suburban schools. The studies on Blacks teachers in suburban schools generally focused on the complexities of working as one of the few Black teachers in predominantly White school districts examining the experiences and perceptions, complex social dynamics, organizational culture, and intergroup differences within these schools.

Madson and Mabokela (2000) and Mabokela and Madson (2003a; 2003b; 2007) conducted four qualitative studies examining the experiences of Black teachers in suburban

schools. With few Blacks in those schools, these studies yielded three major findings: boundary heightening, role entrapment, and performance pressure.

Boundary heightening (Mabokela & Madsen 2003a; 2003b; 2007; Madsen & Mabokela, 2000) referred to heightened awareness of differences between majority and minority groups in the work place. The heightened awareness of the racial identity amongst Black teachers created a bond where they shared similar perceptions, experiences, and practices. Boundary heightening occurred in the form of pedagogical differences, dual insider/outsider role, and role entrapment. Participants believed that the school culture was not supportive of their use of culturally relevant practices and created tension in their relationships with their White colleagues using ineffective pedagogical practices for children of color. The participants also believed the pedagogical mismatch and management styles of their White colleagues created negative classroom management issues and influenced Black student low achievement due to their lack of cultural awareness and lowered academic expectations for students of color. Teachers also reported their White colleagues held negative beliefs, had low expectations, and used unfair grading practices regarding Black students. In some cases, the Black teachers spoke up and in other cases they refrained to avoid more problems for themselves and the students.

Another form of boundary heightening occurred through their experience with a dual insider/outsider role. They were insiders regarding Black culture and seen as having insight on students of color, and outsiders with White educators because they were seen as *only* having knowledge related to students of color. Though males embraced their role and felt their knowledge was valued, this function as "resident African American expert" (Mabokela & Madson 2003a, p. 102) heightened the boundary, and like the women, they disliked the

pigeonholed leadership on only "Black" issues. Additionally, one male teacher noted the need for schools to hire more Black teachers, so that White students can have positive experiences with Blacks, and to hire White teachers who can form good relationships with Black students. He stated,

> They are letting (White) teachers off the hook by not expecting them to have positive relationships with the minority kids. They just dump them on some Black teachers that they hire. As a Black teacher I have a responsibility to every child who comes into my room. I can't be the teacher for the Black children mainly. It does not work out that way (Mabokela & Madson, 2003a, p. 103).

The teacher's comments illustrated the heightened boundary in that Whites are left "off the hook." Women experienced this insider/outsider role differently because they felt the role was a "reminder" that they were only hired because they were Black and felt like they were being used. Often times, as described by one of the participants, the Black teachers and students, alike, experienced a type of "culture shock" (Mabokela & Madsen, 2003a, p. 101) to the negative and stereotypical comments about Black people. Consequently, experiencing culture shock influenced Black teachers to fight against the lowered expectations, unfair grading practices, and placement of students of color in low achieving classes.

The second theme of Mabokela & Madson (2003a; 2003b; 2007) studies was the discussion of performance pressures experienced by Black teachers in schools. Due to the small number of Black educators, their performance was constantly on automatic notice, or under review, by teachers, parents, and principals, and as highly visible "tokens," they felt overly dissected. Both females and males experienced the pressures; however, they experienced it

differently. Black women expressed feelings of being overwhelmed at times and a strong reliance on cultural identity and connection to their communities as a way to cope. The youngest woman was troubled with having to balance her cultural identity and schools expectation of her, while feeling uncomfortable being herself (Mabokela & Madsen, 2007). In sharp contrast, men reacted from a competitive nature and felt less negative, therefore pushing them competitively. The more experienced Black male teachers believed that over time the automatic notice meant higher expectations and they did not let their "tokenism" bother them, whereas the less experienced male teachers felt the need to gain control of their scrutiny and how they were perceived. The males idea of control meant "self-discipline, remain positive, and dismiss their intolerant colleagues" (Mabokela & Madsen, 2007, p. 1184).

The most conflicting expectation for both men and women was the idea that participants did not think their White colleagues viewed them as being "real" African Americans because they did not represent the stereotype. The teachers reached an elevated minority status of being "different," or not being "like the rest of them," and participants struggled with the constant battle of remaining true to their race, without appearing to "compromise their cultural identity" (Mabokela & Madsen, 2007, p. 1188). They also fought discrepant stereotypes in efforts to validate their skills and worth as professionals, and female participants experienced their White colleagues trying to sabotage their efforts if both African American and White students performed well (Mabokela & Madsen, 2007). As a result of, but not limited to, these types of interactions, Black teachers had to expend a considerable amount of energy to maintain good working relationships with White teachers. When the subject of teaching Black students arose, Black teachers often felt an "unspoken rule" was to agree with Whites about how to teach Black students, because if Black teachers did not agree, they would face social isolation. The veterans

practiced isolation to maintain their sanity and they learned to "pick their battles;" whereas the young teachers were optimistic about their role, and wanted to be approachable to White colleagues to help them understand the problematic influence of negative stereotypes and view. Teachers walked the tightrope in deciding how to respond to racial issues and dispel myths, so that they did not jeopardize their ability to improve the environment for students of color. As one teacher described her experience, "[A] lot of times…I had to grit my teeth, grin and bear it, and just go on. But I felt like…if I didn't stay then I couldn't make way for someone else…" (Mabokela & Madsen, 2007, p.1191). These issues created tension in the relationships with their White colleagues. Due to their beliefs and desire to align themselves with practices that were not aligned with traditional White ones, "they isolated themselves as a preservation strategy" (Mabokela & Madsen, 2007, p. 1192). The longer they stayed at the school, the more isolated they became in the school.

Similar to Madsen and Mabokela (2000) and Mabokela and Madsen's (2003a, 2003b, 2007) studies discussing how these teachers persisted in the face of the aforementioned challenges, Milner and Hoy's (2003) and Milner's (2005) studies connected efficacy, persistence, and the consequences of being one of a few Blacks in these suburban schools. In Milner and Hoy's (2003) study, Dr. Wilson, one of three African American teachers in the high school, experienced social and collegial isolation from the beginning of her teaching experience, and almost 10 years later, she still felt unwelcomed. The isolation and avoidance negatively influenced her self-efficacy because of the lack of positive communication and social atmosphere from her colleagues. Additionally, Dr. Wilson at times felt overwhelmed with the responsibility of working to change White teachers and students perceptions of Black students. Milner's study suggested that Dr. Wilson experienced stereotype threat, or "the pressure an individual faces

when he or she may be at risk of confirming negative self-relevant stereotypes" (Wheeler & Petty, 2001, p. 804). Milner suggested her stereotype threat may have intensified her desire to refute stereotypes and educate students and colleagues about Black culture.

Milner's (2005) study discussed one African American female teacher's experience developing and implementing multicultural curriculum for students and colleagues about racial and cultural matters. As a result of teaching students to think and engage critically about other cultures and self in relation to others, economic and ethnic privilege, their individual experiences of marginalization, this teacher was isolated (Milner, 2005). Similar to Mabokela and Madsen studies and others (Buendia et al, 2003; Milner & Hoy, 2003; Walker, 2000), Milner's studies highlight how "teachers must be prepared to negotiate, balance, and combat pervasive discourses and practices that already exist in a context" (Milner, 2005, p. 415), and for Black educators in predominantly White suburban schools this process is even more complex as they must simultaneously use the same negotiation, balancing, and combatting process for their own individual survival in the work place, while working on behalf of students of color.

Buendia et al (2003), discusses an aspect of complexity in examining how one school's assimilation culture influenced one Senegalese immigrant, Mr. Doumbia's, teaching practices. While his desires and practices—the use of culturally relevant pedagogy—went against the Eurocentric structure of working with immigrant students, his practices also reflected assimilationist elements such as rote memorization, or moments of "English first" discourse. Authors called this practice a borderland pedagogy, an attempt to move beyond dominant discourses and comprised of elements of both culturally relevant pedagogy and assimilationist pedagogy.

The Buendia et al's (2003) study revealed the complexities of educating students in a heteronormative, racist, and patriarchal society with contextual structures such as class size and lack of curriculum material. Buendia et al, argued,

> [P]ractices are not immune from the pressures of these dominant discourses. As a consequence, his practice mixes and matches aspects of seemingly contradictory orientations—language acquisition and efficiency on the one hand, and culturally relevant pedagogy and cultural politics on the other (Buendia et al., 2003, p. 307).

Similarly to the other studies, this study illustrated the challenges in going against the dominant discourse, requiring extra work in addition to the other school activities and home life.

The studies on Black teachers in predominantly White suburban schools suggested that Black teachers have challenging experiences navigating and negotiating the school culture while seeking opportunity and equity for themselves and students of color. White culture defines the instructional and management practices of the school, thereby regulating minority perspectives and practices to subsidiary positions. Black educators have been isolated, and/or walked a fine line of balancing both cultures. The cultural incongruence has created a shared intergroup culture where minority teachers experience the boundaries, pressures, limits and entrapments (Mabokela & Madsen 2003a; 2003b; 2007; Madsen & Mabokela 2000) and stereotype threat (Milner & Hoy, 2003) in such environments. Findings suggested school leaders scrutinize the school culture and seek to create more supportive environments for Black and other minority groups, and increase the number of educators of color.

These studies have offered insightful findings on Black teachers in suburban spaces; however, the studies often exclude the complexities of Black principals, counselors, or other educator experiences in these schools. While the studies do look at Black educators in suburban districts, the studies lack a focus on Black educators specifically advocating for students of color holistically—academically, socially, and culturally— and outside of the classroom. As studies by Mabokela and Madsen (2003a; 2003b; 2007) indicate, one male participant did not seek to especially be an advocate for students of color, whereas the other participants in way sought to serve all students in a culturally responsive way. My study extends the literature on Black teachers in suburban schools by looking at educators, including principals and counselors, who seek specific measures of influencing academic achievement through their after-school program. I look at the experiences of Black educators who stepped beyond the role of their paid positions as teacher, counselor, or principal, and created programs designed to advocate for and enhance the experiences and achievement of Black and Latina/o students. This study illustrates how these educators continue the legacy of raising the academic achievement of students of color in predominantly White suburban contexts.

Chapter 3

Methodological Framework

As I kept sitting here, Gil Scott Heron was in the back of my head, 'when the revolution comes.'

Ida Jane, program director in this study

This statement from Ida, during the focus group, was about being a part of the struggle as opposed to watching it from the sidelines. Her statement also highlights my position in conducting this research, which is to stand in solidarity with participants and work in the struggle with them towards liberation from misrepresentation of Black educators, who have often been framed as incompetent and inadequate (Tillman, 2004). In this chapter I unveil my efforts to work with my participants to paint full portraits of them as educators. As Annette Henry (1998) writes,

> I am a Black woman educator committed to conducting research that re/constructs
> Black realities and social science categories reflecting Anglo/Euro-centered,
> patriarchal discourses. (No easy task!) I envision my research as a part of a
> liberation struggle against the misrepresentations of Black people in social science
> research. …We need a new paradigm for understanding teaching and learning in
> multilingual, multiracial urban contexts. My research and writing are a political
> project. (p. 9)

Similarly, my methodological approach is a political project. I, too, am a Black woman educator, former teacher and administrator in predominantly White suburban schools, conducting research to "re/construct" the lives of Black educators and students of color. I, too, work with

those in a struggle for liberation from misrepresentation of Black educators being inferior (Milner & Howard, 2004), and in doing so, like Henry, and my participants, my work is in helping people of color. Like Henry's use of her subjectivity to ground her ethnographic research, my subjectivity also grounds my work in the lives of these Black educators. I share common characteristics with my participants including race, racial politics, professional background, concern for students of color, and I, too, ran a program for students of color as a high school administer. With my commonalities and promise of anonymity, I gained their trust and had access to privy information that may have otherwise been left out of discussions. Similar to Henry (1998) and Foster (1995), I use my position, multiple consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2000), and cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998), as a way to foreground my understanding of educators and students of color, to let the reader know exactly where I am coming from and how I am "colored," or my interpretations and understanding are influenced, by my "personal and professional beliefs and experiences" (Dixson, 2002, p. 29).

Portraiture

I used Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot's (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) qualitative approach portraiture that would allow me to share the stories of a marginalized group, acknowledge my own subjectivity, and participate in the liberation struggle (Henry's, 1998). Sharing goals with ethnography in describing complexities of the human experience, portraiture is a qualitative research methodology that combines art and science. Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoote (Lawrence-Lightfoote & Davis, 1997) introduces social science portraiture as

> …a method of qualitative research that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and
> empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of

> human experience and organizational life. Portraitists seek to record and interpret
>
> the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting
>
> their voices and their visions—their authority, knowledge, and wisdom. (p. xv)

I used portraiture through a culturally relevant pedagogy lens, which emphasizes sociopolitical consciousness, to interrogate the experiences and reflections of five Black educators in predominantly White suburban schools. With the aesthetic of storytelling blended with the rigor of science, portraiture allowed me to "document and illuminate the complexity and detail of a unique experience or place" (Lawrence-Lightfoote, 2005, p. 13), and capture the voices, relationships, and meaning making of the participants. With portraiture and culturally relevant pedagogy lens, I was able to co-construct their portraits and move the reader toward social justice by exploring the racial aspects in the suburban context.

Portraiture supports the use of counter stories (Yosso, 2006), the testimonies (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001), and "elements of goodness" (Chapman, 2005) in "response to the marginalization and sterilization of the experiences of teachers, administrators, and students in schools" (Chapman, 2005, p. 27). Several others have used portraiture to present more holistic stories of educators. Dixson (2005) presented challenges Black female teachers faced in diverse classrooms through a metaphor of a jazz aesthetic, and Hill (2005) used poetry to look at the experiences of Black women in higher education. Newton (2005) used poetry and collage to examine the experiences of Arab American pre-service teachers after 9/11. Chapman (2005) and Harding (2005) examined White teacher practices. Chapman (2007) explored Critical Race Theory and Portraiture to evaluate success and failure in urban classrooms.

My work continued this holistic portrayal of educators. Portraiture worked best for this study because of its

- search for "goodness";

- "voice to those who rarely get the chance to enter public conversations about schools" (Lawrence-Lightfoote, 1986, p. 26) by offering counter stories/testimonies to counter deficit approaches to research;

- thin and thick description to paint the directors experiences;

- narrative and analysis to speak to a broader audience outside of the academy linking the theoretical with the practical, academic with the public discourse;

- research to inform and inspire a deepening of the conversation (Geertz, 1973); and

- the researcher as an instrument of inquiry (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p.2) to share in and through the process.

As a Black educator for educational equity researching Black educators also for educational equity, I wanted to amplify the voices that are often left out of the spaces and places of conversation concerning the educational welfare of Blacks, and other students of color (Edwards, 1996; Foster, 1991; Lomotey, 1989; Morris, 2001). It was my hope to stand in solidarity by using portraiture to re-tell their stories and search for "what is good" (Lawrence-Lightfoote & Davis, 1997, p. 9), as opposed to solely documenting failure. The search for goodness highlights the positives and exposes the vulnerabilities (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005), seeking to capture how directors navigated and negotiated those extremes in an effort to establish something greater and/or beneficial in spite of the challenges. Through portraiture, a scholarship where "scientific facts gathered in the field give voice to a people's experience" (Featherstone,

1989, p. 376), and using my voice, I aimed to paint the educational complexities for these directors and "deepen the conversation" (Geertz, 1973) on educational equity in predominantly White suburban schools.

To further create a more comprehensive perspective of research on these Black educators, I used thin and thick description to contextualize the educators in these suburban high schools located in a highly racial and class stratified Midwestern city. I created the portraits using inductive reasoning and merging the science of ethnographical data collecting with the art of constructing other people's constructions (Geertz, 1973), or stories. This description helped to "reveal the essence" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 4) of each participant, and I wanted the participants to "experience the portraits as both familiar and exotic, so that in reading them they would be introduced to a perspective that they had not considered before" (p. 4-5). I wanted them to "feel *seen*…fully attended to, recognized, appreciated, respected, scrutinized" (p. 5). For example, I mentioned to one participant, Ida Jane, that in some way or another, she had been counseling all of her life. After stating this to Ida she said, "Ya know. I never really payed much attention to it, but I guess I have." I sought to identify everyday nuances that bore significant meaning, but may have gone unnoticed. Additionally, I provided detailed description so that readers might be able to connect their own experiences and "determine how closely their situations match and can be generalized to their research situation[s]" (Hill-Brisbane, 2008, p. 645).

As all of the participants, including myself, are Black, portraiture is also befitting because of its use of storytelling, which is an important tradition within the Black culture (Gates, 1989). I captured their "voices" (Chapman, 2005) and was able to connect both academics and the

general public to the theoretical and practical nuances of this research on directors in suburban

schools. Banks-Wallace (2002) describes storytelling as a unifying cultural act

> supporting the development of intimate relationships among tellers and listeners
>
> by serving as touchstones. Touchstones are things that remind people of a shared
>
> heritage and/or past. Certain stories bring forth a whole series of deep-seated
>
> memories about experiences that either cannot be or are not easily articulated. (p.
>
> 411)

As directors discussed different memories, deep feelings of what it meant to be a Black

educator in a predominantly White space were evoked. These served as touchstones that

resonated with both the directors and myself. As I sat listening to their narratives, I felt the

cultural connection. It felt like a family reunion—like cousins meeting for the first time—with a

fellow sense of connectedness regarding educating students of color. We all sat in the living

room as Ida, the griot, the "historian and educator," and also the eldest director told her story

first, followed by each educator "family member." As a researcher, insider, and the youngest

member of this educator family, I had to be more vigilant about identifying challenges and

balancing personal predispositions with disciplined skepticism, critique, self-reflection, and note-

taking (Lawrence-Lightfoote, 2005).

Through using portraiture, my position as researcher allowed me to extend beyond the

academic walls and invite a dialogue with people in the "real world." Like a novelist, using their

stories, I used my creative license to purposefully select and create the details I shared about

each director to uphold the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved protection of anonymity

consent forms signed by each participant. Painting their portraits "from the inside out"

(Lawrence-Lightfoote, 1983, p. 7), I listened *for* their stories as opposed to only listening *to* their

stories (Lawrence-Lightfoote, 1997), paying attention to all of the nuances—body language,

gestures, emphasis. For example, during the interviews with Jack, a very mild-mannered, soft

spoken, and seemingly "politically correct" man on handling racial issues, I often had to lean in

to hear some of the answers to questions I posed; however, during the focus group, though not

the loudest in the room, his volume and agreement with the acts of racism and prejudice in his

position were much more present and clear. As the only Black principal in his school, and one of

the few Black educators in the district, he was very confident within his role as a program

director and advocate for Black students; however, it was almost as if he did not want to draw

any more attention than necessary to his job in that role. This idea of listening for participant

stories connects to English's (2000) critique of portraiture. English argues that the portraitist is

claiming "infinite and totalizing power in presenting an authentic view of reality" (p. 23). I argue

that while the portraitist looks *for* their stories by noting subtle, yet, significant nuances, and

shares one or more of them, it is to create a fuller picture. Revealing the subtle nuances is similar

to arts-based educational research, in that highlighting the nuances opens the door for new

questions and illustrates the complexity of the researched (Barone & Eisner, 2006).

To illustrate the importance of storytelling as a central element in portraiture,

Featherstone (1989) writes,

> There is much more to this business of creating portraits and telling stories.
> …[W]e hear the sound of a human voice making sense of other voices, especially
> those not often heard; voices of women and of people of color. We trace the line
> of a story set in a historical context, placing the actors in a long-running moral

and political drama. The text itself enacts the writer's deepest moral and political

values, the eclecticism of method and material. … What are the implications of a

kind of scholarship in education that combines the distancing power of analysis

with another kind of power—the deep gesture of solidarity…. (pp. 375-376).

I wanted to place the directors in a "long-running moral and political drama" and

contextualize them in their fullness. In this way, as Featherstone describes, the "text itself"

represents me standing in solidarity with a method of presenting a fuller and human experience

(Chapman, 2007; Dixson, Chapman, & Hill, 2005). Their stories unified us, linking them with

myself and hopefully to the reader. As suggested by Parker and Lynn (2002), "the interviewing

process can be pulled together to create narratives that can be used to build a case against racially

biased officials or discriminatory practices" (p. 11).

Through portraiture, I aimed to contextualize and give voice to these educators by

forming a working relationship that extended beyond the research. I wanted to present them and

the themes that stretched crossed all of the directors as a way to illustrate the aesthetic whole of

their goodness both individually and collectively.

Research Design

Location/Setting. This study took place in a Midwestern city where most of the

population is separated by very few degrees. It was an area with the qualities of a big city with a

small town feel, because everyone seemed to know just about everyone, while still being in the

top 25 for largest metropolitan areas in the United States of America. Furthermore, this small-big

city idea is also germane in the educational realm, especially when discussing issues of race,

equity, and achievement. As race is a salient issue in this area, racial ties are strong and affect every aspect of life. As Black educators interested in specifically helping students of color, they had all been a part The Black School Educators Coalition (BSEC). Interestingly enough, although all of the directors were affiliated with the same organization, and were all doing the same type of work, they never worked together nor had even networked.

Selection of Participants and Site. The five directors were all from Midwestern predominantly White suburban public high schools. The directors were all past and/or current directors of these particular types of high school programs—aimed to help raise Black and Latina/o academic achievement through a holistic—academically, culturally, socially, and emotionally—approach. There were five total participants: two current directors, Angela Davis (Mama Davis) and Jack Hammer, and three former directors, Ida Jane, Coretta Davis, and Malcolm King (MK). All were Black and ranged from 40-60 years of age.

I first learned of two of the directors, Coretta Davis and Malcolm King (MK), and their program from another BSEC member, who told me of how Coretta and MK took 30 of their students to the 2009 Presidential Inaugural Address (Inaugural Address). I was immediately intrigued and wanted to know more about this program. I contacted both Coretta and MK and set up a meeting to discuss how they were able to take students to the Inaugural Address. During this meeting, I found out that through their program they helped students of color academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally, and that their program had three major components, tutoring, life-workshops, cultural and college fieldtrips, and there was a push for community service; however, they then stated that they had to discontinue the program in 2009. I was disappointed to learn that after only five years, their program ended, and I wondered if other

programs like theirs existed. I also wondered why theirs ended, and if they were helping students of color in these ways, how they could be sustained. MK told me that they'd heard of a similar program in his wife's school district, which they used as a template when creating their own. Afterwards, I decided to find out if there were more and whether or not they were still being maintained.

The basic criteria for the sample were that they directed programs targeting students of color and operated in a holistic way, addressing the academics, social, and cultural aspects of school. It was important for me that the directors addressed issues of race and culture in their approaches to student achievement. In my search, there were only five programs that targeted all aspects. I chose against including programs that consisted of only tutoring or cultural awareness groups as those approaches failed to consider the way race and culture influence academic achievement. I also chose to stay focused on the directors of high school programs as opposed to also including middle school programs

In starting my systematic review, I searched all over the city for programs geared to holistically supporting students of color raise their academic achievement. After calling all 50 public high schools in the area, I found only nine high schools that have had specific programs seeking to raise the academic achievement level of students of color. Four of the programs had some type of tutoring assistance. Other school programs were either strictly helping to bring cultural awareness to the school. Five programs had all components. These five programs identified operated in a grassroots fashion, addressing an identified need to comprehensively help students of color, as opposed to starting from a district and/or national level with district

and/or federal funding. Due to their similar approaches, the five known directors of these programs became the focus of study.

In initially meeting with each participant, I listened to their basic principles and philosophy on education and specifically educating students of color. Although not a requirement for this study, I listened for themes of social justice and seeking equity for students of color. All of the directors started and/or operated the program on a voluntary basis, and sacrificed their own time and money to run the program. Directors centered the student of color experience, employed culturally relevant teaching pedagogy, and held a spirit of determination.

The qualifications for the programs for this research included:

1. Holistic approach to education—academically, socially, and culturally;

2. Cultural and college fieldtrips—the programs took one or more fieldtrips throughout the year to assist in student development; and

3. Community service—the programs were not required to participate in community service activities, but considered it a valuable component.

Interestingly enough, with only five programs in the metropolitan area, they had all heard of at least one other participant and their program. After meeting with Coretta and MK, they told me about Ida Jane's program, who they fashioned their program after. Then after speaking with Angela Davis, she told me about her former co-director Jack Hammer, who had started the other two programs after leaving the school where Angela worked. Davis also indicated that there'd been a man who directed the program before her, Frederick Daniels, but he could not be located during the data collection of this study. The chart below indicates the time each participant directed or co-directed their program.
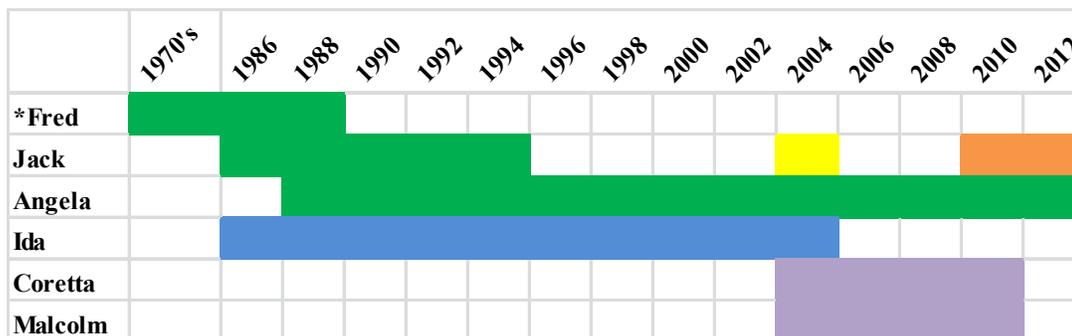
Working with these directors showed different perspectives of program stages, and depicted a full range of the past and current directors. Three programs were no longer being run: *Central, East*, and *North*. *Meadow* has continued for over 30 years and *Far West* started in 2010 and has remained in existence. Additionally, although these directors have been identified, it must be acknowledged that there may be other unknown or forgotten directors of these types of programs.

Phase One: Pilot Study. I utilized data from an evaluation pilot study (Warren-Grice, 2010) I conducted on *North* during the 2008-2009 academic school year to help formulate my

Chart 1

Program directors and the times they served as directors

Meadow started in the early 1970's and was directed by *Fred until 1986. He co-directed the program with Jack from 1986-1988. Jack and Angela co-directed the program 1988-1994. Angela has directed the program to date.	**East** was started by Jack in 2004 after transferring schools. The program lasted one year and ended when he transferred.	**Far West** was started by Jack in 2010 after transferring schools. Jack has remained directing the program.
Central was started by Ida in 1986 and ended when she retired in 2004.	**North** was started by Coretta and Malcolm in 2004, and modeled after Ida's program 2. The program ended in 2010.	

	1970's	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
*Fred															
Jack															
Angela															
Ida															
Coretta															
Malcolm															

*Frederick could not be located during the data collection process for this research.

research questions. In the pilot study, I interviewed 19 student program participants to determine if the program was meeting its stated goals to help close the academic achievement gap and help academic, social, cultural, and emotional development, as well as help students become productive citizens who would give back to the community. In this study, I shared data and analysis from the study to demonstrate the suggested indicators for Black student achievement. Results from the pilot study indicated two things: (1) through programs guided by directors,

participant academic grades and grade point averages increased from Spring 2008 to the Spring 2009 semester; (2) strong relationships built with directors in connection with academic services contributed to helping students develop academically, socially, culturally, emotionally, and become productive citizens to the extent that students self-identified as being better students and better people since being in the program. Results also suggested that (1) strong relationships with the program directors, staff, and peers, (2) structured and supervised study sessions, (3) and anticipated fieldtrips helped to facilitate academic achievement, college admission eligibility, and positive attitudes toward school.

In the second part of Phase One, I created interview questions. Interview questions were developed thematically to provide information on each director's background, the role they played in influencing Black student achievement, their experiences as they helped program participants, their insight on sustaining program directors, and suggestions for educational leaders and educators of Black students.

Phase Two: Interviews and the Focus Group. This phase employed individual interviews and a focus group. To conduct these, I provided each director with an Institutional Review Board approved consent form (see Appendix A) to articulate their willingness to participate and state their ability to opt out of the interview and/or focus group at any time. For each director, I conducted three taped in-depth semi-structured interviews and one follow-up interview for clarifications and follow-up questions. Interviews lasted approximately two hours each, the follow-up last approximately one hour, and the focus group lasted two hours.

At the beginning of each interview, I began with casual conversation and jokes to spark laughter to put them at ease, followed by a reminder of the purpose of the study and the

interview objective for the day. I intentionally began each meeting in a light-hearted manner to create a comfortable, relaxed, and productive environment for conversation (Hermanns, 2004). Additionally, this opening enhanced the overall relationships and helped to establish trust. In the first interviews, I obtained background information regarding their family history, personal K-22 educational experiences, positions in the schools, and roles as directors of their programs. I then moved into questions regarding how directors helped student achievement through the program. The second interview asked them to discuss their experiences as a director, dealing with their roles, challenges, tensions, and life-balance. In the third interview, they shared insights they had gained, a wish list to make their life easier to sustain them, and information on what it would take to keep them going strong as directors.

The three interviews were held in their places of preference, such as their classroom, office, or home. Interviews were held during the 2011 academic spring semester. The focus group was held during the fall of the 2011 with all five participants. The focus group lasted approximately two hours and was held in the home of one the directors. The focus group explored issues that came up during the individual interviews to create a group conversation for clarification and/or to gain further insight. I inquired about their fondest and most challenging moments, the ways in which they navigated and negotiated the high school spaces on behalf of students of color, and suggestions for educational leaders. Both participation and the use of a tape recorder were voluntary, and the directors would not be identified in the final report. Additionally, throughout the interviews and focus group process, I begin to identify emerging themes, such as the family mentality, push for academic excellence, and constant navigation and negation for themselves and on behalf of the students in dealing with race and racism.

Throughout both phases I took notes, both handwritten and typed, on but not limited to, the physical location of the interview, body language, clothing, styles, mannerisms, gestures, and verbal and nonverbal cues. Further, I wrote in my own reflective journal and recorded my thoughts about the process and experience researching directors. Consistent with portraiture, I was sure to discuss my thoughts, connections, assumptions, biases, and general experiences in the recordings. Recording my impressions throughout the process helped me to plan my next interview of follow-up (Lawrence-Lightfoote & Davis, 1997). As both the researcher and researched, just as I took note on the inflection changes, body language, and demeanor of the directors, I was constantly aware of my own behaviors throughout the experience. As a portraitist, my aim was to provide the space and framework to share the directors' experiences, through a combined effort of the way they shared it, and the way I interpreted it; however, I understand that my behavior, movement, growth, knowledge, influences, personhood, and other details may in/unintentionally influence the research. As posited by Guba and Lincoln (1981), I, the researcher, am the instrument. The

> inquirer is himself the instrument, changes resulting from fatigue, shifts in knowledge, and cooptation, as well as variations resulting from differences in training, skill, and experience among different 'instruments,' easily occur. But this loss in rigor is more than offset by the flexibility, insight, and ability to build on tacit knowledge that is the peculiar province of the human instrument. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 113)

My own behaviors and nuances influenced every aspect of the research and were monitored, acknowledged, and systematically documented as best as possible. I, as the instrument, added

value to the research in that I could recognize the dimensions of culture and society and the ways in which participants and/or different aspects of the research may have been influenced. My ability to be responsive, flexible, and see the project holistically added value. For instance, when Malcolm overbooked his appointments by scheduling an interview with me while knowing he needed to pick up his daughter after school, I worked with him to reschedule for a date when he would have a longer, uninterrupted time. Additionally, my own bias must be acknowledged as also having impact over the work. For instance, while at Jack's school, and while students and staff members were present, an administrative assistant yelled condescendingly at me while I attempted to leave the office to use the restroom. Due to my research and focus on navigating and negotiating the racial high school space, I immediately thought, "if she could treat me, a visiting adult this way, how might she treat students of color?" When she did not offer an apology upon my return from the restroom, I reported her to her supervisor and concluded that this was perhaps an unsafe space for students and people of color.

Phase Three: Data Analysis. In the final phase, I used portraiture's *emergent themes* to bring order to the analysis and interpretation of the data. To construct emergent themes:

> First, we listen for repetitive refrains that are spoken (or appear) frequently and persistently, forming a collective expression of commonly held views. Second, we listen for resonant metaphors, poetic and symbolic expressions that reveal the ways actors illuminate and experience their realities. Third, we listen for the themes expressed through cultural and coherence. Fourth, we use triangulation to weave together the threads of data converging from a variety of sources. And finally, we construct themes and reveal patterns among perspectives that are often

experienced as contrasting and dissonant by the actors. (Lawrence-Lightfoote &

Davis, 1997, p. 193)

From the data sources, transcripts, observations, and written material, the themes were used to

develop and create the portraits. Initially, my voice as preoccupation and autobiography, helped

to construct the original frame for the portraits. This frame, or point of reference, was then

shaped and adopted to fit the context of the people. I transcribed all of the interviews, maintained

ongoing coding to identify emerging themes. This process drove the data collection as a form of

early and continual analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). I coded and sorted in an outline-like

format that anticipated the format of the narrative, searching for patterns. I also used Miles and

Huberman's (1994) three types of codes: descriptive, interpretive, and pattern.

I fleshed out the data thematically and made some conclusions about each research

question. The major themes regarding the experiences of program directors are as follows:

What are the typical characteristics of these program directors?

The number one characteristic of the program directors was that they had a practiced racial

uplift[5], meaning they assumed responsibility for the welfare of Black and Latina/o students,

which could be seen through their sense of communal responsibility and influence on academic

achievement. They cared and connected, affirmed, and advocated for students of color in these

spaces. Additionally, they influenced academic achievement through mentoring, tutoring

programs, life workshops, college visits, and cultural field trips.

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[5] My usage of racial uplift has roots in both Booker T. Washington's and W. E. B. Du Bois idea. Participants in my study believed in both economic independence and social and political equality to achieve racial uplift. (Moore, 2003)

What are the complexities—professionally, politically, and personally—of these educators as school program directors?

The professional complexities that they faced in their efforts to help students of color find academic successes included: (a) lack of support, (b) professional attacks (c) political navigation, (d) and job safety. The personal complexity that they faced was stress—physical, mental, emotional, and financial.

How can we enhance the sustainability of these educators as program directors?

Enhancing the sustainability of these directors required: (a) making equity a top agenda item for districts and schools, (b) creating school and district wide structural change, and (c) providing continuous professional development around race and equity and culturally responsive pedagogy.

As I am a Black former teacher and administrator, I protected each director by using my creative license to present the information so that they would not be identified. Additionally, each director chose her or his own pseudonym. I used the portraiture method of drawing out themes using "five modes of synthesis, convergence, and contrast" (Lawrence-Lightfoote & Davis, 1997, p. 193) to develop story outline. The modes are listening for repetitive refrains, metaphors, cultural and institutional rituals, the use of triangulation, and the construction of themes and patterns among perspectives that were often experienced as contrasting.

Using direct quotes and observations from the interviews and focus group, and field notes, I sought to portray accurate representations of conversations, scenarios, situations, feelings, and practices of directors. I painted an artistic narrative, based on actual directors,

events, and places that embodied their experiences in efforts to address their experiences in school programs.

      Phase Four: The final portrait. The *aesthetic whole* is the final product—the narrative portrait bringing together the "art and science, analysis and narrative, description and interpretation, structure and texture" … "speaking to the head and the heart" (Lawrence-Lightfoote & Davis, 1997, p. 243). The portrait has four dimensions: conception—the development of the story, structure—the layered and placement of the themes, form—emotion throughout the piece, and coherence—the unity. "The aesthetic whole is the "actual portrait that evokes context, voice, relationship, and emergent themes of the research" (Hill-Brisbane, 2008, p. 646).

      Throughout this portraiture process, I wanted to "capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences" (Lawrence-Lightfoote & Davis, 1997, p. 3). I wanted to capture the dual perspective, from both directors and myself as the portraitist, of the participants defining for themselves their reality in their respective programs. My hope was to convey accurate depictions of each director, not in mirror-like fashion, but rather a complete depiction of their fundamental natures. This depiction was one that the subjects could recognize and agree as truth and that the readers could identify with their experiences.

Limitations of the Study

      This study was limited to program directors running programs that utilizing a holistic approach to education: academic, social, cultural, and took cultural and college fieldtrips.

Although intentional, it left out voices of those directors running other types of programs for

students of color. Additionally, this study was limited to the Midwest and left out voices in other

areas.

Summary of the Methodology

This chapter has presented the design of the study, highlighting the qualitative approach

using information from a pilot study (Warren-Grice, 2010), student transcripts, interviews, focus

group, and past and current district information about the achievement gap, and other relevant

document analysis to address the key research questions presented. The next chapter presents the

portraits of each director.

Chapter 4

Participant Portraits

The purpose of the study was to explore the ideas of Black educators in suburban schools who have directed programs for Black and Latina/o students. The study used Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, portraiture methodology, and asked the following question for this segment: Who are these educators?

In this chapter devoted to portraits of the five educators, I have painted an amalgamation of the stories they each shared and observations I have made during three 2-hour interviews. The words of the educators, in quotes, are presented as they were spoken. The educators represented here include one English teacher, three assistant principals, and one retired counselor. The first two educators, Coretta Davis and Malcolm King, have worked together for ten years at North High School (NHS). The second two educators, Angela Davis and Jack Hammer, have worked together for nine years at Meadow High School (MHS). Jack Hammer has since relocated to Far West High School (FWHS). The last educator, Ida Jane, has retired from Central High School (CHS). For each portrait, I have provided a snapshot of each educator, including, but not limited to: (a) their values and pedagogical insights; (b) a description of their work environment and how they work with students, and (c) bits of their familial and educational history. Lastly, I have concluded with a summary of the chapter.

North High School (NHS)

Within Mercy County, the North High School (NHS) district was a direct reflection of the broader metropolitan area. The NHS school district was housed in the midst of a local chapter of the Klu Klux Klan, and nestled in between two highly segregated neighborhoods, one predominantly Black neighborhood and the other predominantly White neighborhood. To local residents, NHS has been considered diverse, but to outsiders, like the rest of the metropolitan area, it has been perceived differently. To communities in the east, NHS has been considered a "White" school, and to communities in the west, NHS has been considered a "Black" school. Factually, the district was located on the urban and suburban border, in a predominantly White neighborhood, with pockets of Black and Latina/o residents.

Two highways sat on the east and west sides of Mercy County. Heading east, beyond the county, on the main street called St. Mercy Avenue, the street name eventually turned into Civil Rights Avenue, and what appeared to have once been a vibrant street looked more like a ghost town—long-forgotten brick buildings lay vacant, homes were worn down, stores were skeletons, and old newspapers, empty soda cans, and empty McDonald's bags were strewn about on the sidewalk and streets. Small businesses, barber shops, convenient stores, and an occasional gas station were scattered throughout the area. People could usually be found crowded around the local fried fish take-out spot, burger joint, or waiting at the bus stop near an abandoned building. The residents in the east of NHS were considered low-income and predominantly Black. Drugs, crime, unemployment, and high school dropouts were all associated with this neighborhood.

Passing Mercy County on the west side, the street became lined with activity from some of America's favorite retail stores and restaurants, like Target, Best Buy, Home Depot, Olive Garden, Red Lobster, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, and more. The streets were clean and locals walked

to and fro with shopping bags, while little to no one stood on the bus stops. In contrast to the east of the city, this area was middle-class and predominantly White. Safe neighborhoods, seemingly free of crime and drugs, employment opportunities, and college graduates, were frequently associated with this neighborhood.

In the center of Mercy County, gas stations welcomed you into the blue collar community, followed by a few auto shops, local restaurants, a bank, a drugstore, a grocery store, fast food chains, the Mercy County Police Department, the public library, and housing complexes. The streets were fairly clean and clear of trash. A number of people—Black, White, and Latina/o—walk the streets to and fro, and the bus stops had a few occupants.

While this area was predominantly White, it had been steadily increasing with Black and Latina/o populations and there had been a decrease in White residents. The neighborhood racial make-up of the city was 80% White/Non-Hispanic, 14% Black, 2.4% Hispanic, 2% two or more races, .8% American Indian, .08% other races. The city had a median household income of $37,159, an estimated per capita income of $19,179, and a median house or condo value of $91,365 and the estimated mean prices for all units is $102,107.

Similar to district patterns, enrollment at NHS High School has continued to increase, yet while the number of students of color had been increasing, the number of White students had been decreasing. At the time, "Hispanics" compromised 7.8% of the population. This figure was more than twice the percentage of "Hispanics" in 2005, which was reported at 3.7%. The Black student population had increased by a significant 9%, and the Asian and Indian populations moderately increased. The most pronounced changes were visible in the decrease of White

students by 14%, and the number of students receiving Free/Reduced Lunch had increased by 16%.

North High School was located along the busy main street of Mercy County. The school sat in front of a predominantly White neighborhood, and in between Applebee's, a chain restaurant and Dairy Queen, a chain ice cream and fast food joint. The school was gated along the main street side and along the drive up to the building. In front of the school sat the track and football field with a giant N, for North, embossed along the side of the field. The parking lot sat directly adjacent to the school.

Walking into the main entrance of the school, visitors were greeted by a large contemporary reception desk operated by one staff person. The main hallway consisted of school awards, student of the month photos, announcements, and school board information. Hallways were relatively clear, with teaching assistants walking the hallways, walkie-talkies in hand, engaging in conversations with students and/or checking for hall passes. Classrooms were equipped with desktop computers, class phones, public address systems, and some had SMART Board Interactive White Boards. The school was most proud of its recent 85,000 square foot auditorium, seating 800—575 on the lower level, and 225 in the upper balcony, moveable full-stage "orchestra shell," environmental rain gardens reducing the amount of runoff, and the green vegetated roof providing summer evaporative cooling and winter insulation. The state of the art auditorium had been one of the most talked about features of the school.

The tone of the school was reflective of the suburban/urban border in which the district and school sat. The suburban feel came from the multitude of resources available and the administrators walking around in suits. The large, centralized reception desk also gave the school

an air of trying to centralize and suburbanize student bodies. The school was definitely trying to imitate other suburban schools to look the part. Academically, the school has had a general push to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the state's academic measuring system for schools, and some years have been successful, and others have not. The average ACT score for this school has been 18.9.

The urban tone has come from the different races and working class style, where students walked around in everything from grunge/skater, nerdy, preppy, and urban fashions. There are three main student populations in this school: White, Black, and Latina/o, and students seemed to walk and hang out with students who looked like them and were seemingly in the same socio-economic class—people that dressed in similar styles and brands. White and Latina/o students could be identified by socio-economic class, whereas Black students may have been more distinguished by the school's bussing patterns. There were groups that were intermixed with White and Black students and divided again by class lines. Students were open to talking with members of and outside of their groups, as well as talking with outsiders like myself; however, for the most part, they stuck to their groups and didn't hang with other groups.

North After-School Program

The program directors at North High School were Coretta and Malcolm and they had been co-directing a program with Black and Latina/o students. The program ran from 2004-2009. The program held a meeting twice a month. When the school was on a block schedule, the organization met during the school day on Wednesdays. Passes were sent to the student at the beginning of the class for them to be excused. Additionally, a list of program participants was emailed to each teacher a few days before the meeting day, and again the day of the meeting.

When the school switched to an alternative schedule, they were unable to meet during the school day and had to meet after school. Meeting topics were generally picked by the program directors or were based off of current events. Program directors had a binder of activities that was geared toward college and job preparation covering such topics as how to create a resume, or how to build better study habits. Sometimes speakers were brought in to share their stories. The tutoring component met Monday-Thursday after school for minimum of 45 minutes. Students were required to attend tutoring twice a week in order to be eligible to participate in fieldtrips. The program directors served as tutors or students used peer tutors. If students could not make the afternoon tutoring sessions, they attend a morning session. Originally, tutoring was held in the library; however, after two years, the school implemented a school wide tutoring session and wanted to use the library. The program directors moved their students to their classroom for a quieter space. Every academic school year the program goes on at least one college visit and one cultural visit. The program had approximately 80 students. On average 35 students showed up for meetings due to schedule conflicts such as work or extra-curricular activities.

Coretta, North High School English Teacher

 Coretta's House. The gender neutral brown face with frosted honey blond locs on the cover of a book immediately caught my eye. White letters spelling, "D-R-E-A-D-S," were etched across the bottom of the book, which sat among several stacks of mail, papers, and a printer on Coretta's dining room table. As I looked at the book, it seemed to be a unique accent in her "for looks only" Victorian-style living room. Her living room would make her mother, and any Black "middle-class" mother, proud. It seemed to be filled with values of responsibility— clean, orderly, and classic. Her home was located in a well-to-do, gated community with other

professionals, with a well-manicured lawn, flowers in the garden, fresh flowers in the house, and walls decorated with her own abstract mixed-media artwork.

Like her house, she seemed to represent everything a "successful" Black woman was supposed to be: polished and stylish. In her 40's, you could usually find her with her shoulder-length locs[6] in a classy up-do, wearing a chic business suit from Saks Fifth Avenue, with a touch of handmade jewelry that she designed and crafted herself for some down-to-earth artistic panache.

Everything and nothing all at the same time, hair symbolizes many different things to all kinds of people. For Coretta, her locs symbolized her coming into her self, and embracing her culture. Connecting to her roots, *D.R.E.A.D.S.* was more than just a book on the table. She had literally and figuratively begun the process of freeing herself from the assimilation of Western European fashions of chemically straightened hair, to letting her naturally kinky hair grow into locs.

Between the *D.R.E.A.D.S.* book on her table, classic Victorian style house, artwork on the walls, mid-length locs on her head, polished clothes, and uniquely crafted jewelry, it had seemed like she was an artist trapped in the body and lifestyle of a so-called "Black middle-class professional." Although inclined to be a free-spirited artist, she had played it safe and got a well-paid, stable job as a high school English teacher.

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[6] Locs are a natural hairstyle where sectioned hair is gathered together and palm-rolled to create individual coils of hair. The hair that would typically be combed is matted with other hair, creating ropelike strands. Loc'd hair is not combed during the locking process which causes the strands to interlock and fuse together. Locs are looser, and less rigid and demanding on the head.

Like a good daughter, she made her mother proud. Now, in her 22nd year of teaching, coming straight from her local co-ed Catholic undergraduate university in 1990, she was a veteran teacher. She was the English teacher with the most seniority and was well-respected by faculty and students alike.

Coretta's classroom. There was something about Coretta's classroom that gave the feeling of safety. Perhaps it was because this is where the four Black English teachers gathered, the largest number of Blacks in any one department. Coretta also had a microwave in her classroom. It was a "two-for-one" deal—the ability for the Black English teachers to heat their food quickly and engage in good conversation without the feeling of being the "other" among the predominantly White faculty and staff. Coretta decided long ago to bring her own microwave to avoid conversations in the teacher's lounge that often belittled students and became venting sessions for teachers who "couldn't wait until a student turned 15 so that he/she could drop out." Generally, she would be cordial to White teachers and politely decline their lunch invitations and say, "I just have a lot of papers to grade, so I am going to eat in my classroom and get some work accomplished." The excuse worked and eventually people just stopped asking her to go to lunch. Mission accomplished.

Her peers and students considered her a no-nonsense English teacher. Despite her tough demeanor and claim to "not even like kids," students learned a lot, and really liked her. It was probably because it was obvious that she loved and cared deeply for them. She engaged her students by demanding that they meet her high expectations and would not settle for less than their best. Kids hated to admit that they loved it, because they knew that it was for their own good. She was what James Vasquez (1988) and Jacqueline Jordan-Irvine (1998) called, a warm

demander. She would politely tell a student, "I'm sorry that you were unable to complete your assignment, but I guess next time you won't wait until the night before to start it." Or she would tell parents, "It's unfortunate that Johnny earned a zero for the assignment because he did not complete it, but he can still do the work for feedback, because the important thing is for him to learn the material, right?" There was also the time when one student was en route to the hospital and made her mom call and promise that she would turn her research paper in by the 3pm deadline. Coretta recalled stating to her class at the beginning of major projects that she assigned, "Unless you are dying, in the hospital, at a funeral, or unconscious, I don't want to hear about it." And though this seemed harsh, her students knew the drill. Though many tried making excuses, they knew their procrastination would not be acceptable. You couldn't deny that she was helping her students become better readers, writers, and overall better people.

Coretta's demanding style and high expectations perhaps came from her determined, strong-minded mother and Catholic school background. Despite her mother being a few credits short of a high school diploma, and her father having only a fifth-grade education, mom "served at White folks parties and dad worked at the Chrysler plant" to send Coretta to one of the best schools in the area—an all girls private Catholic school. Growing up, her only options were to follow the house rules, or move out. Coretta kept a GPA of 3.2 or better, because she knew her mother's written and unwritten rules: go to school, get good grades and "all of the information White folks had to offer, to use it to show those White folks that you are just as smart." Ironically, Coretta's mother "didn't even like White people," but she also wouldn't allow her children to play with the only other Black children in the neighborhood. Coretta's mother believed that Whites had an insight to White culture and success to offer her children, whereas Blacks represented the polar opposite of White culture and success; therefore, limited interaction

with Blacks was the decree. Similar to author and activist James Baldwin's[7] (Miles & Thorsen, 1990) description of his father, Coretta's mother "wanted power. [S]he wanted Negroes to do, in effect, what [s]he imagined White people did—that is to…own the houses, to own the U.S. deal…." However, as Baldwin continued, "there was something in h[er] which [s]he could not bend," or take away, and that was her Blackness. The messages Coretta received were complex, and consequently manifested in her teaching approach.

Coretta's strict upbringing coupled with her Catholic school background shaped the way she interacted, taught, and worked with students of color. She used the private school philosophy of "one bar for all" high expectations, her mother's no-nonsense devotion to education—for all students, and her own lack of cultural connection while growing up influenced the way she worked with students of color. Further, as she learned more about her cultural identity, she connected more of herself with students. For example, at age 36 she went from wearing a synthetic hair weave to putting her natural hair into locs as her style of choice. Although not a deliberate choice to connect with her literal and figurative roots, as many people of African descent decide to do as an example of everyday resistance to White hegemony (Kuumba and Ajanaku, 1998), the move from synthetic to natural hair coincided with her shift to learn more about her cultural identity. The more she learned about her culture, the more she wanted to help students of color reach both academic success and gain a sense of their own cultural self-awareness. She desired to help students of color feel welcome and empowered. Perhaps this came because, as a high school student herself, she consistently searched for acceptance. She was the light skinned, long hair, "White talkin," smart, Black girl, and was often told by Black

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[7] James Baldwin (1924-1987) is a celebrated African American author and activist who is known for his works that often focus on racial identity.

students, "You talk funny," or asked by White students, "Are you all Black?" Typical of teenagers, she wanted to belong. She hung out with mostly, if not all, White students at school, because they accepted her for being smart. The few Black girls did not think that she was "Black enough," and because she did not hang out with any of them or grow up with Black friends, she felt more comfortable with White kids. She recalls, she didn't really learn about other Black history, aside from Martin Luther King Jr., until she got into college and a White professor introduced her to a few Black authors.

As Coretta began to talk about her educational racial experience, she stated reluctantly, "She [her mother] really believed that White was right." Coretta's mother thought that "an education in a predominantly White school was the better education." According to her mother, being Black was a given, and her siblings did not need to be around Black kids their age, but they did need to be taught how to survive and be successful in the White world—and Coretta did, down to the Gucci bags and right leather shoes. And God forbid her hair sweat, because "we don't do nappy hair, because White girls don't have nappy hair."

Laughing and making tonal sounds, she tilted her head and gave me the "I'm serious" face, as she expressed that this was a sad and ironic matter, and I shook my head and laughed along with her, because I understood. I understood how Black people have been taught to consider Black culture as less than White culture. We laughed, not because it was funny, but because it was sad that we have "digested inferiority" (Warren-Grice, 2000), and not accepting our own kinky hair was one small example of a larger issue of racism and hegemonic practices that marginalize "others." My cultural intuition in this instance brought us closer together, because we shared a common understanding and world view (Pillow, 2003).

During that portion of Coretta's interview, I pursed my lips as I felt my body get tense. The reminder that everyone was affected by racism dug into the core of my being and brought a sense of pain into my chest. Black people are taught to hate themselves and therefore hate each other, and White people are taught that they are superior to, and to hate, Black people. It hurt to listen to her talk about her mother and her own schooling experiences. The sadness that resided in her voice as she reflected on her mother's complex means of helping her and her siblings reach success added an even thicker layer. All I could think, and imagine that Coretta had shared similar sentiments, was, "Damn. Cold world." It was a cold world that her mother thought it necessary to inculcate her daughter in a world that she did not even like, but as complex as it may be, I understood it. Most Black parents teach their children about race and generally create strategies in their child-rearing practices to address and buffer racism for their children (Peters, 2002; McAdoo, 2002). Coretta's mother wanted her children to attain a better life, and these were her strategies and tools to buffer racism. The strategies did give Coretta an outward appearance of success—job, house, car, college degree, etc.; however, the teachings of her mother left Coretta ignorant of her own culture, devoid of cultural pride and/or appreciation, and longing for a sense of acceptance.

Despite Coretta's sarcastic sense of humor in regards to negative memories of being caught in between a Black and White world, she searched for the bright side of what she learned from her background. Undecided on whether it was intentional or out of necessity, her optimism prevailed and gave her reason and validation for helping Black and Latina/o kids. She saw her educational experiences as an "inside track to White folks." From her lived experience, she helped students of color understand the ways of the White world, or the culture of power (Delpit, 1988), and the way people of color experience and navigate it.

Malcolm King, North High School Assistant Principal

Hip means to know, it's a form of intelligence
To be hip is to be update and relevant
Hop is a form of movement
You can't just observe a hop, you gotta hop up and do it

Hip and hop is more than music
Hip is the knowledge, hop is the movement
Hip and Hop is intelligent movement
Or relevant movement we sellin the music

So write this down on your Black books and journals
Hip hop culture is eternal
Run and tell all your friends
An ancient civilization has been born again, it's a fact

...

Hip hop, her infinite power
Helpin' oppressed people, we are unique and unequaled
Hip hop, holy integrated people
Havin' omnipresent power, the watchman's in the tower of

Hip hop, hydrogen iodine phosphorous
Hydrogen oxygen phosphorous, that's called
Hip hop, the response of cosmic consciousness
To our condition as hip hop

We gotta think about the children we bringin' up
When hip and hop means intelligence springin' up
We singin' what? Sickness, hatred, ignorance and poverty
Or health, love, awareness and health, follow me

I come back, every year I get newer
I'm the dust on the moon, I'm the trash in the sewer, that's right
I come back, every year I get brighter
If you think hip hop is alive hold up your lighter, let's go

Let's go, I come back, every year I'm expandin'
Talkin' to developers about this city we plannin', c'mon

I come back through any endeavor
This is hip hop, we gon last forever

...

KRS-One and Marley Marl

Like hip hop, as described by KRS-One and Marley Marl, Malcolm King (MK) seemed to come back every school year newer. Like hip hop, MK was alive, expanding, and always planning new lessons. He was up-to-date and relevant, educating students about sickness, hatred, ignorance, poverty, love, awareness, health, and oppression, and helping to raise the consciousness of his students and colleagues.

MK stood approximately 5'8, with a boyish smile and the style of a conscious rapper from the '90s. MK was cool— he knows the latest songs and the history of hip hop, and has been confident enough to use both in his professional life. For MK, hip hop was more than music (Dimitriadis, 2009); it crossed age groups (Kitwana, 2002) and was his way of being, seeing, and living (KRS-One), and was, as described by Westbrook (2002), "an artistic response to oppression" for local needs and concerns. Although, MK did not literally rap, he used the platform, method, and style of hip hop, like Kitwana (2002), to "jump start the dialogue necessary to" invoke critical thinking about a 21st century perspective of oppression which lent itself to issues of, but not limited to, race, class, gender, sexuality, and age. Like a hip hop DJ, MK has successfully mixed and blended a lens of pop culture, music, and movies to engage students in deeper levels of analysis to push them to a more collegiate and interdisciplinary level. MK connected students to traditional texts by weaving everything from literature, history, philosophy, psychology, math and science, to the hip hop culture. Similar to Stoval (2006) or Emdin (2010), MK has used hip hop and other platforms to help students discuss broad topics of

oppression and marginalization. Despite the unofficial PhD, he was the high school's hip hop professor.

MK's office. In his office, there was a small, round conference table with two chairs. Behind the table was a waist-level bookcase stuffed full of novels, which I imagined were left over from his English teaching career, and district binders. With pictures of his children proudly displayed on top of the shelves, it was clear that he was a family man. Next to the picture of his children is a picture of his wife, who is also African American, with whom he has been married to for 16 years. She is a counselor in another predominantly White suburban school district. One photo of him and his young teenage daughters was in a frame, spelling D-A-D, and there was another picture of his two daughters and his son who had recently joined the United States Navy. The walls behind his desk and to the side were decorated with the school's regalia—the flag, mascot tiger symbol, and the Tiger Paw Award—recognizing outstanding teachers in the district, and the school's Code of Ethics. His L shaped desk held a large desk calendar, a few papers and district binders. MK's style of dress was generally a suit and tie, as prescribed by the head principal. On days that were more casual, he might dress in his preferred style: something like an olive and black striped shirt, gray cargo pants, black Lugz athletic shoes, a stylish watch, and his school name badge around his neck.

MK was a friendly, helpful man, yet busy and constantly trying to balance his time between family and work. Before we started the first of two interviews, he reminded me that we only had twenty minutes, because he needed to pick up his daughter, assuring me that we could finish the first section of the interview in that time. I laughed at the idea of a former English teacher wrapping up in such a short amount of time, and asked incredulously, "You really think

so?" He seemed confident, saying, "Well, at least this first part about my background." I laughed and said, "O.K. Let's go." The busy assistant principal then attempted to hurry me through the interview, jumping to what he thought the focus of my dissertation was about: the after-school program. As a graduate student in an Educational Leadership PhD program himself, he thought he could help me by speeding up the process, and hurry over to his daughter. I chuckled again at his eagerness, recognizing that he was also overbooked. Refocusing, I asked him basic questions about his personal educational history and childhood. He smiled, nodded, and said, "Awe yeah, yeah, yeah, that's good. That connects to it. I got you." Seeing the connection of my interview questions about his background in relation to the after-school program, he laughed too, and I said, jokingly, "You're trying to do your own research." We both laughed again, and he proceeded to tell me about his childhood educational experiences. Our relationship felt very sibling-esque, as if I were interviewing an older brother. He was down-to-earth and personable, and had a lot of knowledge that he wanted to share, as only an older brother or mentor could. He related by using analogies, similes, and/or metaphors to make his points, and, as a good English teacher would, he explained and summarized his points. Needless to say, he was unable to complete that particular interview section in twenty minutes.

MK as a teacher. After successfully teaching eight years of middle school and six years of high school, he had become one of the most well-known teachers at North High School (NHS). At the middle school, often times a rebel teacher, he taught his students an advanced curriculum: Frederick Douglass, Othello, and other classics that were deemed high school material. While some high school teachers complained that he was teaching their material, the students loved his extremely demanding class. He was passionate and excited about the material, and he used pop culture to help students connect with it. While at the middle school, he also

created a drama program, and used it as more of a mentoring/drama program where he formed caring relationships with students. While teaching at the high school level, his lesson plans used hip hop artists such as TuPac, Eminem, and the Black Eyed Peas, controversial movies such as *Crash* and *Bamboozled*, and philosophical pieces such as *Allegory of the Cave*. He always went beyond the text, and brought in supplemental and side-by-side companions by diverse authors to whatever the school's curriculum had to offer. He wanted kids to think critically, so he set the bar high and they rose to the occasion because not only was he demanding, but he formed significant relationships with them. Students worked hard for him even when they did not want to, and, because he related to them, many stayed connected with him well after graduating high school. With 15 years of teaching experience, and three years of administration at the high school under his belt, he was one of the most respected, and coolest, educators in the district.

MK's personal educational process. After going to college, he majored in business with an emphasis in marketing; however, it was not what he loved. Growing up, he had always wanted to give back to students because of the influential teachers that had given so much to him. Mentoring, tutoring, and advising a younger cousin also played a major factor in his decision to become an educator. He enjoyed language and literature and decided that the best way to give back and do what he loved for the rest of his life was to teach. These factors, along with his own K-8 and high school experiences may have influenced the way he operated as an educator and in the after-school program.

As a child with sickle cell anemia, his world-renowned medical doctor, a Black woman known for her work with Black children, recommended to his mother that MK attend a small, private, and predominantly Black K-8 school. The school had all Black students and all White

teachers, located in the heart of a "bad" all-Black neighborhood, and it reached out to minority kids by offering scholarships. With the help of scholarships from the school and the entire family's investment in MK's education, he was enrolled. His teenage brother worked as a custodian, his teenage sister worked as a clerk, and his grandmother worked as a cook. He really enjoyed school and developed a tight network of friends, of which he remained in contact. His English teacher, especially, stood out to him. In fact, he "hated her" for making him, and the rest of the students, write a different essay every Friday, followed by a conference about the paper. As MK said, he was forced to "put his nose to the grind and enhance his writing skills."

MK took a different route in high school. There, he skipped his classes three to four days a week, yet aced his tests. Although MK was obviously a smart kid, he hated the high school he attended. Because his family moved around a lot, he'd been unable to attend the same high school with the rest of his friends. The new school had a majority of Black teachers, and a majority of Black students, but few teachers pushed and challenged him academically. In his reflection, MK realized that he did not really hate his school, but he simply didn't feel challenged enough there. A few English teachers were an exception. His ninth grade English teacher was "brilliant at teaching literature," but it was his senior English teacher who "saw something in him," and inspired him to write. She had encouraged him to enter a statewide Martin Luther King Jr. essay contest, which he then won. Years later, as an English teacher himself, he described how he came in second place for writing about her in a nationwide contest about an inspirational teacher. Unfortunately, those teachers had been few and far between for him.

As an administrator, his method of reaching students had yet to change from his previous teaching methods. His laidback approach put students at ease and gave them a level of comfort

that provided a gentle father/big brother style of dealing with situations. It was not scary for students to go to MK with their issues, and even if they were in trouble, because they knew that they would be treated fairly and with respect.

Self-described as a "mix of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr." seeking to educate all students, particularly Black and other students of color, he understood that to be effective he could not be too militant, nor could he be too passive in his approach. Instead, he used a combination of both to strategically challenge current policies and practices, while educating educators in ways to help better teach students of color. For example, while running the after-school program, he was careful in choosing which educators could partner with the program. Staff members that had opposition with the administrators and staff, and/or those that operated from a colorblind approach were not chosen, because he considered the negative attention that an oppositional person might bring, and a person operating from a colorblind standpoint might be unable to relate to the students of color. MK did not want to jeopardize the program's reputation or credibility, and as these were "his kids" and his "family," he had to trust that they would be protected and respected.

MK wanted to help all students succeed. He believed in reaching and educating students through relationships and relevancy. Describing himself as the father of the program, he spent a lot of time listening, advising, and encouraging his kids. He nurtured and developed strong relationships with all of his students, serving as a hip hop warrior fighting opposition against his family.

Meadow High School (MHS) and Central High School (CHS)

Both Meadow High School (MHS) and Central High School (CHS) sat comfortably in a predominantly White area, with a historic, yet small community of African Americans. Commonly known as Twin Cities, MHS was located in Meadow Park, and CHS was located about three miles away in Groveland, both nestled in semi-wooded areas and tucked away from major metropolitan traffic. The two districts were similar in the nature, both recognized as affluent communities. MHS was known nationally for its historic connection to the Pacific Railroad and those honors were proudly displayed, while CHS was known nationally for being located in one of the top cities to raise a family. Both were academic powerhouses and annually produced multiple National Merit Scholars, which recognized and honored academically talented students in the United States through the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. MHS' city also held the state's largest community college, while CHS' city held a private liberal arts university and seminary.

Physically, the communities resembled each other with clean, tree-lined sidewalks, providing shaded paths for joggers and dog walkers. Most houses sat far away from the street, with lush green lawns and long driveways met with three-car garages. Both areas were considered ideal neighborhoods—safe communities and good school districts. The comfortable middle-class communities were surrounded by other affluent suburbs and located approximately 15 minutes away from the larger metropolitan city. The quaint, historic areas of these cities were enhanced with unique shopping and dining experiences, such as, but not limited to, baby clothing shops, frozen yogurt bars, jazz bistros, Starbucks, farmers' markets, restaurants with organic food, and specialty gourmet grocery stores. They also held several Montessori schools, outdoor

hiking and camping stores, eclectic books and gift stores, vintage boutiques, home décor shops, and art studios where people could create pottery and paintings alongside instructors in a swanky ambiance. Both had retirement communities, health facilities, medical specialists, investment firms, computer specialists, veterinarians, multi-million dollar football fields and aquatic centers. In a nutshell, each community was all-encompassing, and, if a person wanted, they could function entirely without ever leaving the bounds of the cities.

While predominantly White with small historic Black communities, the racial issues between the White and Black communities matched the rest of the metropolitan area, and was often rife with spoken and unspoken racial tension. For the most part, White residents in the district stayed out of the areas with a majority of Black residents, with the exception of city developers for commercial purposes. Also like most of the metropolitan area, the Black communities were over-policed.

The neighborhood make-up of the city of Meadow was 88.2% White/Non-Hispanic, 7% African American, 0.1% Native American, 1.4% Asian, 0.4% Other races, 1.6% Two or more races, 1.8% Hispanic. The city had a median household income of $69,286, an estimated per capita income $45,050, and a median house or condo value of $225,866 and the estimated mean prices for all units $285,833.

The neighborhood make-up of the city of Groveland was 90.87% White/Non-Hispanic, 6.38% African American, 0.17% Native American, 1.21% Asian, 0.4% .01 Pacific Islanders, .31% Other races, 1.05% Two or more races, 1.25% Hispanic. The city had a median household income of $73,693, an estimated per capita income $43,587, and a median house or condo value of $236,534, and the estimated mean prices for all units $300,324.

Meadow High School Profile. Meadow High School had seven separate buildings, creating a college-like campus; one for the original, main school with most classrooms, the auditorium, orchestra chamber, and main offices. The other buildings held additional classrooms, offices, a performing arts center, a fine arts complex, and a field house with a gymnasium, weight room, and sports team locker rooms. The school was surrounded by the million-dollar football field, track and parking lot. Directly in front, an American flag stood amongst a round sitting garden with three benches, a fountain, and a large, embossed "M."

Walking into the main building, the mascot stood out on the entry wall, with descriptors defining the characteristics of the Lions—"Leaders, valuing diversity, pursing excellence, demonstrating honesty and integrity, and developing life long leaders." This portrait and definition was displayed in every hall, along with inspirational themed posters. Also featured were honors of the school's top 3% achievers, students with 3.5 grade point averages and above, and a wall of fame for leaders and humanitarians. Flat screen televisions with scrolling announcements were commonly placed, and halls were themed by subject and color coordinated by grade level. Display cases exhibiting awards, projects, and/or performances covering recent and past highlights dated back to the 1940's. The science department appeared to be newly renovated. The cafeteria was a large open space with several flat screens, vending machines, round tables, and multiple food options.

The tone of the school was reflected in a long tradition of academic excellence. Similar to its location nestled in a wooded area, the school had a comfortable feeling of stability. AYP was met every year, and the average ACT score for MHS was a high 23.6. Walking through the building were counselors and grade-level principals with walkie talkies. There were two main

student populations in this school: White and Black, and students seem to hang out with students that looked like them and were in the same socio-economic class. White students could be identified by socio-economic class, or by the style of dress, and Black students could be more distinguished by bussing patterns. A new bussing pattern, due to an urban school losing its accreditation, had really divided the Black population as well; the "old" Black students were not as welcoming to the "new" Black students, thus leaving the "new" kids feeling isolated. There were mixed White and Black students that were also divided by class lines. Students here were open to talking with members outside of their groups; however, for the most part, they seemed to stick to their groups.

MHS' district patterns indicated that enrollment was increasing after several years of decrease. In 2005, enrollment was 1,745 students and in 2010 was 1,628. During my visit in 2012, the number of students had grown to 1,728. The number of Black students had seen a steady decline from 23.60% in 2005 to 18.80% in 2012, while the number of "Hispanic" students rose from .80% in 2005 to 2.30% of the population. Additionally, the number of students receiving Free/Reduced lunch increased from 14.4% in 2005 to 16.0% in 2012.

Meadow After-School Program

Angela Davis was the director of the after-school program at Meadow High School that was made up of Black students. The program started in the early 1970's and has remained in existence to date. Every summer, students and the program directors get together one week and plan the entire year's calendar, picking themes, community involvement opportunities, speakers, and possible discussion topics and fieldtrips. During the summer the program goes on their annual college tour, visiting two Historically Black Colleges and University and a predominantly

White institution. During the school year, the organization meets twice a month after school. During meetings a speaker may come in to talk about their career or it is a planned topic. Some sessions are also designed to prepare for other events, such as their annual Custodian Appreciation Day, where they provide dinner for the custodians and present them with gifts as a form of appreciation. Tutoring sessions occur every Wednesday and are in conjunction with another school organization. Some tutors are college students that volunteer and others are peer tutors. There is also a homework help session in one of the neighborhoods, where many of the students live, from 6:30-8:00pm on Thursday nights. Students can get help with homework or use the computers. There is no required time that they have to stay at the session. Originally, the homework help session was in a building owned by the school, but the school needed it back, so the program moved to the Baptist church across the street. The program also hosts cultural events for the school and host a Black History program every year. A new addition to the club is the achievement celebration, recognizing and honoring Black students in the school with a 3.0 grade point average or higher. The program had approximately 60 students, and on average 35 students show up for meetings due to schedule conflicts such as work or extra-curricular activities.

Below is a portrait of Angela Davis, followed by a portrait of Central High School (CHS) and Ida, the retired counselor who worked in the neighboring twin city.

Angela Davis, Assistant Principal at Meadow High School

On the first night of her undergraduate year at Spelman College, a Historically Black Women's College, Angela Davis remembered being awakened at 2am with the rest of the women, to be given a speech on who they were as Spelmen women, and as Black women. The speech touched on their greatness, the intellectual gifts the women had to offer, and self-reliance.

I came to believe that Angela Davis wanted to pass on this same message to her own Black students.

As a daughter of active parents in the Civil Rights movement, Spelman's message only supported her foundational ideology of Black empowerment. These positive affirmations of Black culture and Black people gave her a type of self-love and inner strength that enabled her to know who she was as a Black woman and pass that same message on to her students. This nurturing allowed her to remain a pillar, standing strong in her ideas surrounding Black achievement, because to her, it was the norm. As opposed to seeing Black achievement as a foreign and mystical event educators were trying to reach, Angela Davis knew what it looked and felt like, because she had lived it in her neighborhood full of successful Black professionals. This was the place that she was trying to get back. This was the place she hoped to give her kids—the indomitable belief that they were enough, meaning that they did not have to compare themselves to anyone, because they were great just as they were, and that they could have whatever they wanted if they believed in themselves and worked hard, and that they were powerful individuals with great contributions to offer the world.

Standing 5'6 with smooth golden complexion, a short "Halle Berry" haircut, Angela Davis was known as "Mama Davis" to many Black students at her school. Her style of dress was simplistic—light makeup, bits of gold or silver jewelry and her wedding ring, and slightly conservative with a blouse, skirt or slacks, and low heels or comfortable flats. She was straightforward as a solid fixture in a school that represented home to many.

At the High School. Mama Davis had never expected to be an assistant principal at Middle High School; however, throughout her undergrad years, her mother would encourage her,

"Ya know, you should take an education class." Davis would snap her neck, purse her lips and ask, "For what? I'd rather stick a hot poker in my eye. That's not going to happen." As Davis reflected on her response to her mother, she laughed at her initial resistance, as she had been in her twentieth year as an educator and sixth year as a high school assistant principal.

Prior to becoming an educator, Davis had been planning to become a doctor of medicine. At Spelman College, Davis was a pre-med biology major with a concentration in vertebrate zoology. After college, her plan was to take a year off, and then pursue a medical degree at Meharry Medical School, like her father, a retired dentist. Upon graduating, she tested and received high scores on the MCAT, and as planned, she took the year off and began working at Federal Express; however, once she began making "good" money with FedEx, she decided that she would continue working in corporate America. Medical school quickly became a distant thought.

After relocating to major Midwestern city, Davis worked for a prominent real estate investment company, and began further climbing the corporate ladder. While pregnant with her first child she determined, "she didn't want to be on anybody's clock like that,"—having to show a property on demand and working late hours. It was then that her mother's words revisited her. She decided to use her biology degree and go back to school for her Master's in science education and pick up teacher certification along the way. Later, she would get her specialist degree in administration. Although she initially went into education as a way to spend more time at home to raise her son, she soon realized that not only was she good at it, but it was her passion and her calling.

As a former teacher and then principal, "Mama Davis," as the kids called her, seemed to embody the type of Black teacher that historians (Anderson, 1988; Foster, 1997; Jones, 1981; Morris & Morris, 2002; Walker, 1996) write about and educators read about—the teacher who invoked the importance of "interpersonal caring" (Walker, 1996), lived in the Black community and she was well respected. She loved students to life—correcting them when they were wrong and going to bat for them when they were wronged. When she spoke, students listened, inside or outside of school.

Almost seamlessly, she wove school and work into her home and family life. Dragging her three kids and husband to many of the high school events, college tours, and programs she helped orchestrate, her kids learned about high school long before they could even spell "school." They became a part of the school and her students became a part of her family. For example, when four Black students needed help preparing to retake the ACT, a national college admissions examination, not only did she volunteer to assist, but also she opened her house to them. For weeks every night, she provided them with meals and personal computers in her home, where they took practice exams and discussed test-taking strategies. She was a live version of the Kaplan Review[8], more accessible because she was free of charge, and relatable for the students. Additionally, the lines of school and home were so blurred that neighbors felt comfortable calling Mama Davis after midnight to re-enforce discipline at a party they had thrown for their teenaged son. Mama Davis walked over to the neighbor's house, stood on the balcony and called out students by name, telling them "turn the music down," "give me that alcohol," and "behave." Needless to say, order was restored.

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[8] Kaplan Review is a test preparation company that helps students prepare to take standardized tests, including college entrance examinations.

At school, Mama Davis was not afraid to break up fights, or pull students aside and have what she called a "come to Jesus meeting," where she would confront students about their negative behavior and firmly offer guidance. As she described, "it's better that I put my hands on you in love, than a [police] officer who doesn't know you." The exchanges she has had with students has helped them to understand that she was acting with their best interest in mind; therefore, they were more inclined to show her respect and follow her instructions unlike other educators who may not have had that type of relationship with the students.

She and her students would state in a heartbeat that she was "crazy" because of her willingness to have those "hard conversations" with them, and because she would go the extra mile for students when no one else would. For instance, she was called in as a character witness for a former student who had been accused of murder. While most educators in her district are afraid to speak on behalf of certain students, Mama Davis did not hesitate to stand in her truth. In this incident, Mama Davis simply told the court, "the student did not have a discipline issue while in school," and that she believed, "he just snapped, and [reaching our breaking point] happens to all of us." Mama Davis cared about her students, and believed that with the proper support, enough encouragement, and some tough love, she could help her students find success.

Mama Davis passion for helping kids. Mama Davis' passion for the kids was likely shaped by her own childhood experiences, watching her mother. Her mother, Harriet, also an educator, had worked in predominantly Black schools and loved teaching her students. She would give hugs, deodorant, shampoo, and clothing if students needed it. She felt so connected to the families, that if parents could not make it to student/teacher conferences, she would walk over to the housing projects and conference with Mom and/or Dad at their place. Harriet worked

one semester at a suburban school during the start of integration, and at the end of the semester she asked to be transferred back to her old predominantly Black school, where she felt needed. Similarly, Mama Davis provided those types of services for her students in her suburban school. She would go to student homes, the neighborhood park, and/or Amateur Athletic Union basketball games to address issues. She would get to the students whenever opportunities presented themselves or she saw fit.

Like her mother Harriet, Mama Davis found her place where she was needed. She worked with and for all students, and had a special passion for Black students in her predominantly White school district. She understood the challenges of being Black and having to "prove who they were," "that they belonged," and "were just as capable," no matter their socio-economic status and/or academic achievements. She wanted to help "our [Black] kids" learn to advocate for themselves and navigate school as well as society so that they could be successful. As she saw it, they were her future, and she was there to support them.

Perhaps, she was in the suburbs as opposed to an inner-city school because growing up, she too was the Black student in a predominantly White environment during her middle and high school years. Her schools had been was comprised of approximately 20% Black students, and she was in all of the honors classes where the number of Black students had been even smaller. The rest of the school was predominantly White and middle to upper-class students. Of the 20% Black students, about half of them came from the housing projects across the street from the school, and the other half, like herself, were from a middle-class Black professional neighborhood and bussed to the school as a part of an optional program. Her presence there gave her firsthand knowledge of the minority experience in a suburban school. In a way, she was

educating at a school very similar to the one she had attended as a teenager, therefore, she was familiar with the culture. She felt that she needed to be there to ensure that Black students not only survived, but thrived, because these were not just anybody's kids, these were as her kids.

Central High School Profile. Central High School was located in a neighborhood with a church on one corner, and the district's administrative building on another, with its soccer field and tennis courts directly across the street from the school. Black lampposts with the school emblem and flags announcing "Central High School: Distinction in Performance" lined the streets. The word "Central" was etched in off-white on the front wall of the building. The school had three main wings, and the football field and track were located at another site within the school district.

Walking into the main entrance of the school, visitors were greeted with a glass case with a list of that year's district awards. A teacher's assistant awaited, behind a small rolling desk, who would give out guest badges and direct visitors to their destination. Behind, sat the entrance to the centrally located auditorium.

The oldest part of the building sat to the left of the auditorium, with the main office, classes, library, and cafeteria. Also included in the old building is a new state of the arts fitness center with a weight room and cardio room, and two new gymnasiums with State Champion pictures proudly on display. The Wall of Fame sat outside the main office, listing numerous famous alums from writers to scientists to athletes. Toward the cafeteria and student common areas, walls were artistically decorated in graffiti-style, with the word "CENTRAL" and values like, "responsibility" and "respect." Each hallway in the building had a flat screen television with

scrolling announcements, hanging posters that displayed the Central values, and engraved plaques that proclaimed, "We are Central."

The newest wing sat to the right of the auditorium, which held the counseling department, assistant principals' offices, as well as the fine arts, architecture, engineering, social studies and science departments. The walls looked fresh and clean, a cream color with exposed red brick as décor. Each hallway displayed exhibits from that department. Located on the bottom floor was a state of the art engineering department, which featured a full-service mechanic shop, where community members were welcomed and encouraged to get oil changes, proceeds of which would go to the school's parent-teacher organization. The new fine arts wing held ten private practice rooms, an orchestra room, a band room, choir room, and a music theory room. The science area featured an atrium on the roof, where students could conduct research and experiments. At the end of the hallways of the third and fourth floor, there were ornamental arched ceilings that created echo chambers, allowing even the slightest whisper to be heard.

The tone of the school was confidence, which was also a reflection of their city. These new, advanced additions to their building had them in the lead of other schools. Academically, they made AYP, had an average ACT score of 23.8, had several national merit scholars, and athletically, they won both team and individuals' state competitions. Their two main student populations were Black and White. Both groups intermingled, but for the most part, students tended to hang out with others that looked like them and/or share the same socioeconomic status. Although bussing patterns may have influenced which students spent time together, the Black student population was more unified. There were some mixed groups of Black and White students, and overall students were open to talking with others outside of their groups.

District patterns indicated that enrollment had been steady. The number of Black students had been decreasing, from 28.00% in 2005 to 25.60% in 2012, while the number of "Hispanic" students had been increasing, from .90% in 2005 to 1.80% in 2012. The number of Asian students had also increased from 1.50% in 2005 to 2.20% in 2012. Additionally, students who received Free/Reduced lunch increased from 17.8% in 2005 to 21.4% in 2012.

Central After-School Program

Ida Jane, who retired in 2006, was the program director at Central High School. The program ran from 1986-2006 and consisted of Black students. The program met twice a month during the school day. The meeting days and times varied so as not to interrupt one class too many times. Passes were sent to the student at the beginning of the class for students to be excused. Additionally, a list of program participants was emailed to each teacher a few days before the meeting day, and again the day of the meeting. Meeting topics were picked by Ida and based off of a schedule she created to coincide with college preparation times, such as preparing a resume, applying for scholarships, completing FAFSA forms, and etc. Other times, topics included how to create a resume, or how to build better study habits. Speakers were also brought in to talk about potential careers. The tutoring component was on a case-by-case basis and an as-needed referral system. Ida would talk to the student and the teacher and help arrange tutoring sessions. Every academic school year the program went on at least one college visit and one cultural visit. The program had approximately 80 students, twenty per grade level. Ida met with each class separately.

Ida Jane at Central High School

Ida's home life. We sat at the dining table, polished cherry wood, accented with crystal glasses and a decorative green bowl as the centerpiece. Above the table hung a large chandelier, and to the left was a large picture window, overlooking a newly completed patio. Nearby, a small cabinet with candles and wine glasses stood, under a large painting of a winter holiday scene filled with Black characters. There was smooth jazz playing in the background.

Adjacent to the dining room was the large, open kitchen. A big white oven with black trim stood out next to the tarragon-colored countertops. On the opposite end was a black side-by-side refrigerator. A glass kitchen table was already neatly set, next to a full china cabinet with Black dolls decorating the top, and a mounted flat screen television on the corner wall.

The rest of her home was as equally tidy, spacious, and contemporary. Proudly mounted on the entrance to her finished basement were two jackets, one representing Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated (Delta) and the other representing Kappa Alpha Psi, Fraternity, Incorporated. Family pictures covered one wall, and bookshelves covered another entire wall. Very proud of her house, she beamed, "This is blessing, and nothing my husband John or I could have ever imagined."

Ida Jane was a retired counselor, president of her church choir, active member and past president of an alumnae chapter of Delta. She was also a mother of two, wife of an ordained minister, and daughter of a mother who was a real estate agent and certified substitute teacher and father who worked as a waiter and parlor attendant on the railroad. Her short platinum blonde Afro and deep brown skin were great accents to her rich voice that seemed to ooze knowledge. Her approach was strong, yet soothing, and her way with words seemed to envelope listeners in a blanket of reflection. Like an elder griot of an African village, she spoke

thoughtfully, with intentionality, providing examples in her responses, along with her own theoretical framework which was always grounded in an assortment of Biblical truths, her own Black experience, or post-modern theories like Critical Race Theory.

In one story, she discussed how she and her husband got married after dating for less than two months. "We started dating November 3, 1973; engaged by Thanksgiving, and married Christmas 1973." My jaw dropped in shock and she laughed and smiled broadly, gently shaking her head as she reminisced. "It doesn't take all that time. You know when you know, and John and I have been married for 38 years this Christmas." Throughout the interview, he would enter the room to go to the kitchen, and I noticed the dance in their voices as they conversed. Whenever he left the house, they exchanged 'I love you's' or, if he called during an interview, it always started with, "Hi Dear," and ended with, "I love you." She reminded me, a single woman, to listen to my inner voice, take my hands off things and "let God do it." She promised, I would know when it was time and understand that previous relationships were lessons to learn and would provide greater appreciation for the present. As her husband John told her while they were dating, "If you can't be better together, then you don't need to be together."

Ida's educational and professional background. She discussed how her life had been "woven like a tapestry," and though it sometimes looked haphazard, "it all comes together." In looking back, she believed that everything purposefully led to the next stage in her life. She described her journey in education as an example of the twists and turns she had never imagined. When she was a recent high school graduate, she swore she would never attend the school her mother recommended, a small historically Black teacher's college, Harris-Stowe State College, later University, stating, "that would be the last place [she] would ever attend," and she instead

went across the country to attend Hampton College, later University, on a "full ride scholarship." But when her mother became ill, she returned to be closer to her and transferred to receive her undergraduate degree from Harris-Stowe State. Although she had been more interested in becoming a member of the Delta than she was in education as a career, she completed her Bachelors of Arts degree in Elementary Education, and following earned a Master's of Arts degree in Education, secondary counseling. After retiring from counseling, she later earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

While working on her undergraduate degree, she had started out as a resident advisor, counseling young women, many older than she was, ages 18-24 in a national women's job corporation. She later took a job as a fourth grade teacher at a predominantly Black inner city public elementary school. Once she acquired her Master's degree in counseling, she became a counselor at a junior high school for nine years.

Following her passion, and quitting her tenured counseling position, she began working for a consulting firm, which still, in her words, "was nothing more than counseling." A year later, and with no assets, she and a good buddy of hers, a former Black English teacher, started their own consulting firm. They trained and facilitated staff development in local businesses, churches, and schools, and in her words, "It was exciting." Although it seemed crazy at the time to her extended family, she reflected, "it was all a part of the plan." With the support of her husband, she "had a ball" as a consultant. After her partner decided to get out of the business, she went to back to education and worked as a counselor for the next 22 years. Even as a recent PhD graduate, she worked part time as a PhD coach, counseling, or helping graduate students navigate the Masters or PhD degree process. She was a counselor, and as she says, "every step

taken has been a part of the plan for something greater." Her education degree gave her entry to the schools; counseling at the junior high allowed her the opportunity to work specifically with a program for Black boys, which prepared her to later create the program at the high school specifically for Black students. Those experiences gave her insight to social justice planning without the title, and allowed her to be a leader within the district. The training and directing became a platform for her PhD. Finally, as a university professor and PhD, she was back to teaching and consulting. Things all worked out, and "as Jeremiah 29:11 says, 'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (New International Version). Ida Jane was a woman of strong faith.

Often, after delivering a wealth of information, she would toss her head back, give a gentle laugh and say, "I hope I am not boring you, and I know that was a long answer to a short question. I don't know if any of that was helpful, but if it was, feel free to use it." With a smile, I would shake my head and say, emphatically, "Yes; it all relates!" Then, I would take a deep breath, making an effort to take it all in and remain conscious of my purpose as we moved to the next questions. At times it felt like less like an interview, and more like she was sharing her spirit with me. She was a counselor, indeed. In her conversational storytelling fashion, she explained, "I always said I'd only go back for my PhD if there was a something I wanted to do, but couldn't." She remembered clearly, sitting at the card table with the cohort of Black social justice advocates from her district, when she felt a punch to her gut and she heard those very words that she had said years ago. She looked around the room and asked the other card players if they had heard that, but no one knew what she was talking about. She said that she "realized it was the Holy Spirit." After discussing it with her family, and earning a National Counseling Award, she retired from counseling. That same year, she enrolled in her doctoral program and

graduated with a PhD in Education in three years. She laughed as she looked at me and said, "Be careful what you say. Watch your words. I'm telling you, watch your words!"

As Ida Jane had put so much of her time into the educational system, she felt free to express her criticism of that system, especially after retirement. She was free from the political nature of the schools, and, as a recent graduate, she could theoretically, substantially, and conceptually articulate her experiences as a former counselor. She considered her activity as a counselor to be a thread woven by God to help all students, and particularly Black students, see that there were opportunities for them after high school. Like a menu at a buffet, she wanted her students to know that many choices and resources were available for their futures and they could choose whichever they liked. She saw that there were so many students that were unaware of their options, and she passionate about creating and revealing those options for students. In one example, there was a prestigious scholarship that was allotted to Black students who had received a score of 32 or above on their ACT within the metropolitan area. When one young man qualified, she made sure to call the student from class to tell him about the scholarship. She went to work, making calls to his mother to have her fax information to the school, as he completed the application. He was then able to submit the application, which was due the very next day. After the hustle and bustle, he was awarded the scholarship. She helped her students gain access to these sometimes seemingly mythical concepts of college and/or scholarships, by walking them through the completion process.

Some called her militant, with a negative connotation, meaning that she was always causing issues, but I saw her as a disciplined and peaceful warrior who was determined to stay on course to help Black students. An illustration of this was when an administrator wanted to end

the high school program because, in the words of the administrator, "[it] was creating a White

backlash." As opposed to giving up or giving in, Ida strategically made the program activities

more public and even honored that same administrator at one of the events. Another instance was

when some administrators began claiming that she was incompetent and trying to get rid of her,

because, she believes, she had been learning and asking for too much. She had learned how

much the district was getting for its participation in the desegregation program, as well as what

the district was actually using for those students, and she asked for 1% of the money to help her

program participants. When her job was threatened, knowing that schools do not like negative

publicity, she warned the administrators that she would use her voice and go to the local

newspapers. Like magic, the threats stopped. I would not call her militant; I would call her a

strategist.

Far West High School (FWHS)

Far West High School (FHS) was located in Stone Ridge Valley, in a spacious

predominantly White area. Compared to the location of the other schools, FHS was in a much

more remote area, the name itself illustrating its proximity to the metropolitan city at a little over

30 minutes away. To local and outside residents, this community was considered to be a White

district, with an extremely small population of minorities.

Alongside the stretches of highway sat large commercial buildings with tinted glass

windows, hotel corporations such as Hyatt Place and Drury Plaza, an IMAX theater, Institute for

the Deaf, Vision Institute, and other major businesses. Large outdoor water fountains in

manmade ponds could be found in front of buildings. Looking over the highway were shopping

plazas with stores such as Jared Jewelry, Trader Joe's[9], Home Theater and Tech, Massage Envy, PetCo, and chain restaurants like Cheesecake Factory, specialty restaurants, and classic fast food spots like McDonalds. Like the other two affluent areas, this area also had its unique set of specialty shops, restaurants, and Montessori schools. A large American flag proudly stood in a well-manicured grassy area behind one of the plazas and was visible from the highway.

Historically, the area had been known as an ancient site where Native Americans once lived for thousands of years. The area held Native American artwork dating back to 4,000AD, as well as the remains of a ceremonial site dating back as early as 1,000AD. Modern features included an amphitheater, where in-state and out-of-state residents would visit to attend music and entertainment events. The abundant landscape, designed terraces, and state of the art acoustic systems added valuable entertainment to each show. The city was committed to preserving nature, and had a variety of outdoor recreation sites, trails, parks, and community gathering spaces. In addition to the upscale shopping mall, the area had been experiencing a major construction boom, with the building of two outlet malls, one having a Saks Fifth Avenue outlet store.

Stone Ridge was the second largest suburb near the metropolitan area and was made up of five smaller historical neighborhoods. The city had many small subdivisions in white-gated communities. Entrance signs carved in stone, symbolizing stability and integrity, welcomed residents into each subdivision. Large stone and brick houses with three and four-car garages were commonplace. The manicured lawns, picture windows, clean streets, dog walkers, and joggers, all showed signs of a good neighborhood.

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[9] A specialty retail grocery store with stores in nine states.

The neighborhood make-up of the city of Stone Ridge was 92.3% White/Non-Hispanic, 0.86% African American, 0.12% Native American, 5.56% Asian, 0.01% Pacific Islanders, .39% Other races, .74% Two or more races, 1.55% Hispanic. The city had a median household income of $88,848, an estimated per capita income of $50,663, a median house or condo value of $328,956, and estimated mean prices for all units at $375,607.

Far West High School (FHS) was seated along the stretch of a four lane, tree-lined highway, the building itself located in a very spacious green area, surrounded by wood with a nearby creek. A large, brick archway with "Far West High School: Home of the Trojans" written at the top stood at the entrance to the building. The parking lot was to the right, with the track and football field at the rear of the building. An embossed brick sign with the name of the school sat in the middle of a manicured front lawn.

Walking into the front doors of the school, visitors were greeted by a large sign signaling them to sign in at the main office. The walls along the main entrance held names of school board members, as well as awards and recognitions the school has won, such as a *Newsweek Magazine* mention as a top high school in the nation. A display case also included student work and trophies for speech and debate.

The hallways were extremely tall and wide, compared to the other schools. The lockers were also larger in size than the average high school. Motivational posters, such as "Success is 99% attitude and 1% aptitude!" could be found on the walls. Different halls held displays of student projects and flat screen televisions presented scrolling announcements. Additionally, the school had a student-run news station where they would create weekly news shows, hosted by

junior and senior students, as well as other video productions. Every Friday, they were broadcast to the entire school and local community on a local cable channel.

Aside from the six flat screen TVs, the extremely high ceilings in the cafeteria hung long banners listing the variety of colleges of which students had been accepted. Other banners reflected the school's values of responsibility, creativity, integrity, as well as the attendance percentages. The Trojan mascot also appeared on several walls in the cafeteria and throughout the school. Student signs and posters advertising for club events and activities, along with college announcements, reminders, and deadlines could also be found along the walls and stairwells.

The tone of the school was impersonal and uninviting. Although the school was academically strong, consistently making AYP, several National Merit Scholars, with an average ACT score of 24, like the community and high ceilings, the school appeared to be a little too spacious to really get to know people on an intimate level. Although people would say 'hello,' it was in a very disconnected way. The one time that I visited the counseling office to schedule a tour of the building, the administrative assistant yelled at me as I had attempted to leave the office to use the restroom. I, along with the entire office full of students and staff members, froze. As I explained where I was going, along with the student who had given me the directions to the restroom, she snapped, "Well, just make sure you come directly back." I felt embarrassed and angry, and I began to ask myself, "What kind of school is this!?" Upon my return, I asked her if she had been having a bad day, just hoping that this was not her regular tone with people, and I wanted to give her the opportunity to apologize. She dismissed my question and asked for my information. I was in disbelief. After scheduling with her, I asked for her name and her

supervisor. As I went to wait for the supervisor, a Black male assistant principal, I asked myself, "If she could treat me, a guest and an adult visitor like this, how did she treat other students of color?" After talking with the principal, he assured me he would discuss this with the other principals, as well as the administrative assistant.

The two main student populations in the school were White and Black, and students tended to hang out with others that looked like them. The small Black population of students seemed to be more united; however, there was still a divide from the Black students from the area and those bussed in from more urban areas. The White students were also broken into groups by socioeconomic class. Overall, students tended to stick to their own groups, but were open to talking to members outside of their groups.

FHS district patterns indicated that enrollment had been increasing, from 2,110 students in 2010 to 2,200 in 2012. While the number of Asian and Hispanic students increased, the number of Black students had been decreasing. The percentage of Black students had decreased from 11.9% in 2005 to 9.90% in 2012. The percentage of Asians has risen from 4.70% in 2005 to 7.60% of the population, and the percentage of Hispanics had risen from 1.60% in 2005 to 3.00%. Additionally, the number of students receiving Free/Reduced lunch had increased from 10.00% in 2005 to 14.4% in 2012.

Far West High School After-School Program

Jack, was the director of the after-school program at Far West High School that was made up of Black, White, and Indian students. The program started in 2010 and is still in operation. In collaboration with Mama Davis at Meadow High School, during the summer the program goes

on their annual college tour, visiting two Historically Black Colleges and University and a predominantly White institution. During the school year, the organization meets twice a month after school. During meetings a speaker may come in to talk about their career or it is a planned topic. Tutoring sessions occur every Wednesday and are in conjunction with another school organization. The program has approximately 30 students, and on average 15 students show up for meetings due to schedule conflicts such as work or extra-curricular activities.

Jack Hammer, Assistant Principal at Far West High School

The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects, and throwing them into the ocean. When asked what he was doing, he paused, looked up, and replied, "Throwing starfish into the ocean."
The somewhat startled wise man, asked "Why?"
To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."
Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"
At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said, "It made a difference for that one."
Adapted from Star Thrower, by Loren C. Eiseley

Jack as a person. When given the opportunity to describe himself, Jack Hammer referred to the story of the star thrower, saying, "That's me. I can't reach every kid at this school. Some kids I don't even speak to, but it's all right; I am going to touch the ones I can." He was a soft spoken and even-tempered man. While in his office, he often spoke so low that I had to lean in to hear him. His skin was a rich, dark hazelnut, and he has a noticeable space in between his two front teeth. I was reminded that some African tribes believed a gap in the teeth to be a symbol of wisdom, which was very fitting of Hammer as he often spoke in proverbs.

Hammer was a settled man who was secure in who he was, as a person of humble beginnings who had essentially obtained the "American dream." He was the ninth child born to a

single mother with a sixth-grade education, and had a limited relationship with his biological father. Growing up, the family lived in a low-income area, and received government assistance. He had been diagnosed with a reading deficiency, had aggressive behavior, and was sometimes disruptive in class. His discipline record had numerous entries, and he had been suspended twice. As an adult, Hammer was the first person in his family to attend and graduate from college, where he obtained a master's degree in education and a specialist degree in educational leadership.

At the age of 44, he was a husband, step-father, associate minister, assistant principal, and program director. In his time an educator, he taught social studies for three years, was an assistant principal for 11 years at two separate predominantly White high schools, head principal for five years at a predominantly Black high school, and one year at a predominantly Black elementary school. In his 21st year as an educator, he was an assistant principal at the predominantly White high school, FHS. His educational experience in leading schools was vast and he worked well with students, parents, and other educators, but his personal joy came from the ability to touch the lives of students and challenging them to be better than he was as a student and professional.

Jack as a principal. He had a very standard principal's office—two chairs in front of a large desk, a bookcase with educational books and binders and school regalia. The walls and bookshelves were lined with photos of current and former students, like a picture of a group of students celebrating victory over a rival basketball team advancing them to the Final Four. Coffee mugs from various universities sat in different areas of the office, from students who went on college tours and brought them back to him as gifts. And just so that Hammer would not forget, each mug had the name of the student written on the bottom.

Behind his desk sat an off-white brick paperweight with the words, "Attitude is everything." This was a quote he often had students read aloud while sitting in his office. Emma Washington was a student that Hammer remembers vividly. Shaking his head, Hammer spoke a little more firmly, and said, scrunching his face, "Horrible attitude. Horrible attitude!" He had once taken the brick, and put in a bag with ten dollars, and gave it to her as a graduation gift. Smiling and laughing, Hammer emphasized that these were the lessons that he wanted to impart on students, so that they would understand that little things made a big difference. In another memory, he recalled seeing a set of twins who had graduated five years prior at a wedding he attended. They walked up to him and one said, "Mr. Hammer, we treated you like shit some days, and I want to apologize. I always remember you talking to me about that brick. When I have kids, I plan on getting them a brick like that one." As Hammer described this event, he leaned back, smiled and said, "When those girls told me that, I could have shouted!"

The off-white brick represented more to Hammer than a message to give to students; it represented a message that that he also made it a point to embody. It was a spiritual attitude, recognizing the importance of connectivity and relationship. Hammer built relationships with students by committing every student name to memory, making personal connections with students, and engaging with them as if they mattered and as if their issues were important. For example, on the first day of school one year, he saw a student that he did not recognize. He walked up to her and introduced himself. The next day, he said hello to her and called her by name. After that day, the student came to his office every day to talk with him during third period. There was also the student who overheard Mr. Hammer calling another student by a nickname, and asked Hammer why he did not have a nickname. That day, they came up with one, and every day afterwards, the student visited Hammer's office. He took the job of building

relationships with students seriously. For him, it was like his own educational "ministry," where he would deposit positive energy into their lives.

Ministry was also an avenue used for connecting with his students. One student approached him in the cafeteria during lunch and asked, "Mr. Hammer, I heard that you were a minister. Is this true?" When Hammer responded, "yes," the student asked, "Would you pray with me?" Pleasantly surprised, while being conscious of school policies on separation of church and state, Hammer agreed, and prayed with the young lady during a morning prayer led by an organized student group. The mother of the student later told Mr. Hammer how impressed she was and how much that experience had meant to the student. For Hammer, if his actual role as a minister could help someone, he was happy to use it as a method to connect with students, families, faculty, and staff. Interestingly enough, during the interview process for his current principal position, Hammer had been asked, "Would your duties as an associate minister prohibit you from performing your job as a principal?" In a sure and confident manner, Hammer responded, "I have been able to counsel kids when they had tragedies in their lives, inform staff members of a death in their family, and provide comfort to others in their time of need," which was exactly what he did for the student that asked for prayer. Hammer's job as a principal was an extension of his work as a minister, providing another opportunity to help people.

Describing his students as his clients, he sought to serve them in the ways that would enrich their lives for the moment and a lifetime, both individually and as a student body. When a Black male student, who had formerly been considered "out of control" during his first few years of high school, received a 24 on his ACT, Hammer stopped him in the middle of the hall and asked him about it. "I heard you got a 24 on your ACT? Know that I, your principal, only got a

21. Don't tell me what you can't do. Congratulations!" He told the student about his own score because he wanted the student to know that he was proud of him and that he knew that the student had the ability, and the "academic maturity." His mission was to share good news and let students know that they, too, had access to the world. Another prime instance of his service to his students was during his role as head principal, when it became common knowledge at the school and in the city that a senior student in his building had contracted a rare sexually transmitted disease. During a faculty and staff meeting, Hammer expressed to the staff, "We will be judged by how we handle and treat these students during this situation." A mere week later, Hammer received an e-mail from a woman complimenting the school on how well they had handled the situation. She ended the e-mail, saying, "'Everything you've done has benefited the kids. I've seen it on the news,' signed xxxx, San Diego, California." After reading, he disclosed it with his staff and said, "I told you we were going to be judged. Here is a lady who doesn't know me and doesn't know you but she wrote about us to say how we handled the situation with these kids, and she admires us for what we've done." His foresight to handle such a delicate matter with grace and compassion and desire for his faculty and staff to do the same with the whole student body had crossed state lines and been made visible to the world. He wanted this student to be treated with love and kindness and to feel safe and welcomed. He led from the front and by example.

As an administrator and in handling school business, Hammer was very logical, straightforward, and solution-oriented toward maximizing effectiveness in day-to-day operations. When his principal suggested that all principals exit the building for "bus duty," Hammer focused on a holistic picture of the situation and asked, "What if something happens [inside]

while all of us are outside?" He was in service on a building operations level and on a personal level, and in all ways focusing on what was in the best interests of students.

Hammer's ability to manage and connect appeared to come easily and effortlessly, and perhaps that was from his combination of experiences, working in so many different settings, as well as his ability to see himself in students. In his own K-12 experience, Jack Hammer had been the best kind of 'jerk' that teachers often complained about: the smart aleck with perfect attendance. He had perfect attendance his entire K-12 schooling with the exception of getting suspended in high school for literally eating the test twice, when the teacher gave it to him. He was the squirrely kid that pushed the limit right before the phone call home to his mother would be made. Despite his behavior, Hammer had been a good student, who happened to be a handful. In the third grade, he was placed in a special education reading course, but he knew that he had been wrongly placed. By fifth grade, he had become the top reader in all of his grade at the school. He knew he was smart and if given the opportunity, he would demonstrate it, which was the same belief he held about all students.

Because Hammer himself had been the smart, mischievous student, this was probably how he knew to tell his staff, "Kids have a 15-minute crap detector, and after 15 minutes, they will be able to tell if you are full of crap or if you are serious and sincere." Hammer believed in and encouraged honest and genuine relationships with students and wanted his staff to understand the value in forming relationships, because, as he said, "these are our clients, and we don't have a job without them."

Chapter 5

Themes Across Five Black Educators in Suburban High Schools

"When they speak about those kids, they speak about us."

-Jack Hammer, program director in this study

Jack's statement demonstrates an underlying theme found in this chapter in that the pursuit of equity for their students is also the pursuit of equity for themselves.

In this chapter, I paint a group portrait illustrating the ways five Black educators in predominantly White suburban high schools worked to "release the genius" (Hilliard III, 1991 p. 34), in Black students by acting as advocates for students of color. First, I describe the common characteristics of these educators, which stemmed from a sense of racial uplift, or an idea of responsibility for students of color. This racial uplift manifested in two themes: communal responsibility, and academic achievement. The three subthemes for the communal responsibility included: (a) care and connection, (b) affirmation, and (c) advocacy. Influencing academic achievement was seen through mentoring, tutoring programs, life workshops, college visits, and cultural fieldtrips. Additionally, this chapter describes the challenges and complexities, professionally and personally, they faced in their efforts to help students of color find academic successes. The subthemes for professional costs included: (a) lack of support, (b) professional attacks (c) political navigation, (d) and job safety. The subtheme for their personal costs was stress—physical, mental, and emotional. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the racial uplift, the challenges and complexities, and highlights the systematic issue of equity for students of color in predominantly White schools.

Common Characteristics

In researching the lives and practices of these educators, the overarching theme was their racial uplift for students of color. They held a commitment of communal responsibility to students of color, where each Black and Latina/o student was a part of the collective group in which these educators shared an extra special connection and felt a sense of responsibility. Communal responsibility can best be summarized by Mama Davis' statement,

I have a strong passion for kids, but I think I have a stronger passion for our students, being African American students. Because I know that despite where they are academically, socioeconomically, wherever, I know they still are always having to prove who they are. It doesn't matter who they are. And a lot of our kids aren't equipped to do that. They're not equipped to advocate for themselves a lot of times. A lot of their situations they just don't know how to navigate. So I really see that that's my responsibility to help make sure that they're successful, because I mean, that's my future. And if I'm not in the trenches helping make sure that the children who represent me are successful, then I don't know why I would be here, to make sure somebody else's kids make it. So I feel very strongly about, you know, pulling my kids along. I mean, I have African American kids of my own. And I want to make sure that they're successful and somebody's watching out for them. So that is what keeps me doing this.

In this excerpt Mama Davis expressed a commitment or "passion" to and for the Black student population because she understood the experiences they would face as a person of color, such as "having to prove who they are." She also understood that they were "not equipped to do that," or

"advocate for themselves." According to her, along with the other educators in this study, students of color often may not know how to articulate their racialized experiences, their needs as a result of those experiences, or how to navigate the racialized academic space. Mama Davis also expressed a sense of group connectedness and communal responsibility to the Black students because she had kids of her own and wanted to make sure somebody's "watching out for them." She expressed a commitment to the kids with the hope and desire that someone would help her kids. This idea connected to what some scholars called other-mothering or other-fathering (Collins, 2009; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Milner, 2006)—caring for kids that are not biologically their own as a means of communal care—because these students were her future. According to Mama Davis, in addition to acting as a principal, it was her job to help Black students. She said, "And if I'm not in the trenches helping make sure that the children who represent me are successful, then I don't know why I would be here, to make sure somebody else's kids make it." Similar to Beauboeuf-Lafontant's (2002) idea of working with a collective commitment, these educators operated with the idea that success was interconnected to the entire group. Mama Davis was passionate about Black students because she saw them inextricably linked to her future; therefore, she was committed to and strived for Black student uplift.

As she described her passion for Black students, I felt myself getting excited, because I also feel very strongly about helping students of color. In fact, I have been a frequent user of fictive kin terminology and generally called my students of color, my little sisters and brothers. It felt good to hear the passion in her voice, because I knew that those students were well cared for in her school.

All of the educators shared a sentiment of racial uplift and communal care as they were known to address issues of concern with Black and Latina/o students regardless of if they knew the student or not. As educators it was their professional responsibility, and as Black educators it was their communal responsibility. Through care and connection, affirmation, and advocacy, these educators served as communal leaders for students of color at their schools.

Care and connection via relationships. For these educators, care and connection for these educators resembled what some scholars call "other mothering" (Collins, 2009) and "other fathering" (Milner, 2006), or Yosso's (2006) familial capital. These notions were identified through relationships that resembled familial structures. Educators "adopted" these students of color as their own children, and often referred to them as "our" children. They described their roles as though they were members of an extended family (Ladson-Billings, 1990), where the older adults took on a more parental role, and served as a support for Black students. They provided a safe place where students felt comfortable to share information about their lived experiences, which fostered a sense of emotional support and care. With these educators, students were able to go to a safe and validating space for physical or emotional wellbeing. These educators established a caring relationship with students, so that the students could use them as a resource for advice, encouragement, support, counseling, and mentorship.

In the most extreme examples, Mama Davis and Ida both did what many educators have often thought about doing, but not actually acomplished. They took students into their homes and adopted them, in the sense that the students stayed in their homes as if they were their biological children. Another example of care was a time when Jack Hammer established a relationship so close to one of his students, that the student knew Jack's bank account number and on occasion

would pick Jack's mother up to run errands. While listening to the educators talk about their relationships with their students, I reflected on my experiences as an educator. I thought about the one student that I wanted to adopt, and I realized, that maybe perhaps I should have just adopted the student instead of being scared of the system. I admired these educators for their commitment to the students.

MK and Coretta, who directed a program together, also shared examples of care via relationships. MK stated,

> …with us, we [the other program directors] were all really close, then we got close to the kids, and the outlook was that they had people that they could trust to the highest degree here. [We were] people they could come tell stories to, talk about their problems, [and] help just like a family would. I was like a dad. [I would ask questions like] "What are you doing here?" "What about your life?" [Those] conversations help them with forward thinking, [and] encouraging them [to] move on. I was always talking to at least one of them….about something.

Coretta added,

> It felt like parenting…the bond. It was more than just meeting. It was kids stopping by my planning period, my lunch, saying, this is the issue I'm having with this teacher in class. [Or], they would bring problems with each other, within the group, so you try to play referee, but referee the way parents play referee. Not an impersonal way…not only in an I'm-trying-to-get-you-to-stop way, but, I wanted you to see what's wrong in what you are doing. Instead of hearing a

lesson, you want them to learn from the lesson. And when they got our cell phone

numbers, it never stopped!

Participants offered paternal/maternal roles to support students physically, academically, socially, and emotionally. Similar to the African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a child," MK described, the educators "got close first," which suggested a meeting of the village "elders," or family members, to connect and figure out how best to bridge the gaps between the students home, culture, and school expectations. The relationships that the educators established with these students illustrated care because they did not have to do any of these extra duties, but instead, they chose to for the wellness of the students, just like a parent. According to participants, forming significant relationships connected and engaged students with the school and helped set up students for academic success.

Affirming via cultural connection. These educators aimed to build students confidence in who they were individually and culturally to help provide them with a positive sense of identity, and an enlarged horizon of self-envisioned possibilities (Miller and Goodnow, 1995). Some of the affirming activities included, but were not limited to, (a) providing cultural opportunities and programs, (b) providing awards celebrations for program participants, and (c) discussing accomplishments and the beauty of their cultural heritage, as well as validating student experiences as persons of color.

All of the educators provided cultural programming and opportunities through their after-school program. These educators emphasized racial cultural capital as a strength and source of knowledge (Yosso, 2006). Participants believed it was imperative for students of color to learn about their cultural histories, struggles and achievements, and value their racial cultural capital.

Many of the opportunities included finding activities that spoke to the Black and/or Latina/o culture through, but not limited to, local events on university campuses or at museums, speakers, movies, and conversations. For example, Ida highlighted one experience that she had with a guest speaker. She, along with the other participants of the study, would invite Black professionals to speak to students and share the story of how they "made it." Ida described how one student connected with a guest speaker who worked as an architect. After graduating high school, the student stayed in contact with the architect while in college and was able to intern with the architect's firm every summer. With the help of that relationship, the student was able to then launch a fruitful career as an architect. This illustrated cultural affirmation allowing students to see and talk with successful professionals who shared the same racial make-up and came from similar backgrounds, so students could consider possible careers in a variety of fields.

Two more examples of cultural affirmation involved Jack, MK, and Coretta. In Jack's program, he would often give Black history quizzes, and for students that knew the answer, he would give out prizes. He did this so regularly, that when he did not give the quizzes, students would request them. This example revealed that when provided with the opportunity to learn about their racial history, students were interested and ready. Another example was when Coretta and MK facilitated a discussion with students on the intragroup race relations between Latina/os and Puerto Ricans. The discussion was very rich and carried over weeks later. When educators provided the space to discuss racial and cultural issues, it affirmed students because those topics were often marginalized or not even considered during the regular school day. The directors provided a form of affirmation to students by recognizing their heritage and acknowledging their presence and participation in society. Additionally, it also allowed both Black and Latina/o students in the program to see that the intra-cultural issues were similar to issues faced in the

both Black and Latina/o communities. The communal responsibility for those educators was to create racially affirming moments due to students' limited opportunities in schools to learn about their own racial group histories.

While listening to the story of the intra-cultural conversation, it made me think of how little educators, self-included, gave students the opportunity to lead healthy conversations about culture. It also made me question: why don't educators trust their students and provide more space for them to have these conversations? I also questioned if students felt safe enough to have these types of conversations in a classroom, or was this conversation healthy only because they felt safe in this program? I concluded with the latter. This program provided the safe space that schools do not always afford students of color, and I assumed offered good facilitation.

Advocacy. Participants of this study protected students of color from various forms of mistreatment, neglect, and macro and micro forms of racism by way of advocacy. MK suggested that often times, students could feel the racism and inequity, but did not know how to articulate the frustration, which was where the directors came into play. In alignment with the communal responsibility, MK gave an overarching description of the advocacy services these educators provided. He explained that students had parents at home and a "parent" at school, which gave the biological parents "peace of mind that there was somebody in the building that would watch out for their kids just as much as they would." He went on to illustrate the protection aspect.

> Those teachers realized that they [students] had somebody here that was watching
> out for those kids. It was kind of like, [I'm] not going to say we showed those
> kids favor, but it's like they [teachers] were very careful with how they interacted

with those students because they realized that they had people here in the

building.

These educators also advocated for academic, social, emotional, and cultural opportunities by

navigating the racial academic space for and on behalf of students of color, as well as taught

students how to manage those same spaces.

Advocacy: Navigating and negotiating the racial space.

These educators navigated and negotiated the racial space to challenge cultural deficit

beliefs and traditional White middle class ideologies that informed teaching practices and

policies. Navigating and negotiating the racial space took on two forms; one was through

working with faculty and staff, and the other was with working with students. As Mama Davis

described her role, "a lot times [I was] a go-between when there were race issues here at the high

school. So parents would call me, and I would be that mediator between things that happened

here, with my role as working with the program…." Mama Davis' description of herself as a

mediator illustrated the role of working with and supporting students and families, while also

making sure that the school handled issues in a fair and equitable manner.

One example of navigating and negotiating the racial space with faculty was through

Mama Davis' experience with the increasing the number of Black students in Advanced

Placement (AP) courses. She described the process of sitting down with teachers who were

apprehensive about placing Black students in honors courses. She stated,

> [It was me] actually sitting down with teachers, the teachers who would be likely
>
> to take charge and really talking about how we were going to support these kids

once we put them in this class, and what needs to be there for them. Me making

sure that she [the teacher] was supportive as she did this, and as that continued to

grow, to make sure she was supportive in what she was doing. You know, the

initial thought [by many of her colleagues] was that the AP scores were going to

come down. And the contrary took place. Because we made sure the supports

were in place. [W]e had many more kids taking [the AP test], and it didn't affect

the scores at all.

Mama Davis advocated for students by working with teachers step by step through the process of

enrolling Black students in the courses. She discussed with them how to support the needs of the

students, while also making sure that the teacher was supported to lead the initiative. She made

advocated for students by making advanced preparation for students to be in those courses in the

future. Mama Davis continued the conversation by explaining the beginning process. She stated,

Seven years ago is when we started off with that initiative, and it was more or less

that year we basically picked seven girls who we knew had potential. We said,

you'll be taking English. And they said, oh no I won't. And we said, oh yes you

will. I've already changed it on your schedule. So I'll see you there. And with

those seven, I mean, the numbers have grown. I think right now the last count, I

think we have probably 50 or so kids that have taken one or more AP [course].

That went from before we started that initiative, and we had probably an average

of two in the AP classes. So that has been huge. Because now they are word of

mouth. [I]t's not a big deal now [for kids] to go and say, I'm going to take an AP

class. And that was just unheard of.

She advocated for the opportunity for future students of color to take AP courses, by giving a directive (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Reynolds, 2009) and starting a trend. AP courses served as a potential gatekeeper in colleges and universities. These classes were considered rigorous and students in those classes were presumed to be ready for entry into higher education institutions. With this knowledge, Mama Davis wanted students of color to be eligible and prepared for those institutions. Despite the original opposition to the idea of putting more Black students in the AP course, Mama Davis pushed. She states,

> And I mean, there was some resistance there. And people saying, 'you're setting them up for failure. They're not ready.' I'm like, well, we don't know if some White kids are ready, but we're going to try and we'll see what we get. And if they don't do great, that's okay. That's important just being there. It will be an advantage to them when they get to college. So they're in there. They all succeeded; they were fine.

Mama Davis advocated for students by challenging deficit attitudes about students of color, and she protected students' educational opportunity to take advanced courses. By protecting student opportunities, she opened the door for many more of them to have the confidence to enroll in the courses. She continues,

> You know, it was just, we put the supports in place. The teachers who had them in their classes were very excited about them being there. And those two teachers have actually grown, I mean, it has spread out all over the school that those two teachers now, they're two English teachers, they kind of have started a partnership where one was getting them, kind of preparing them, and then they went on and

took AP. So they were with the junior teacher, all ready and everything, and then senior year they went into the senior class. Now a lot of them [Black students] are coming in, they don't even need that anymore, because it's just that confidence zone. Like I said, they're taking them in all the other departments now, too. And we make sure that we can schedule so that it's not one African American kid in the AP class. If there is any other African American kid that's taking that same AP class, we'll partner them together so there's not one in any class alone. And that is something I know that we will continue to do.

Mama Davis advocated for students by instituting preventative measures for dealing with issues of isolation that Black students could have experienced as the only Black student in the course. Mama Davis' push for Black students in AP courses was successful, but not without a struggle. She described the early years of frustration, and how it was not always easy. She stated,

I would go home really angry. You know, you had to go home and decompress. It's not right. I've never heard that argument for the White kids about AP [courses]. Oh, but, here it is for the Black kids. Okay. Alright. I just wanted to go off.

Mama Davis "watched out" for Black students around resistant White educators who did not look past traditions of exclusion. She experienced what MK called the battle. "We [the participants] often times have to go "well-beyond [navigating and negotiating for students of color]. We have to fight for them. It's not even just a negotiation; it's a battle sometimes. We become warriors of it [equity]." Mama Davis experienced a battle and was a warrior for getting more Black students into AP courses. Even though times were "better," and some White

educators stopped her in the hallway to talk about a student that they thought should be in an AP course, there was still work to do, but as Mama Davis described, the school had come "a long way."

While Mama Davis shared her story, I found myself thinking about how sad it was that in the year 2014, we were excited that over 50 students had taken an AP courses. Were we really still living in a time like this? And at the same time, I was happy that she had cultivated an atmosphere where students felt that it was okay to take the course. I concluded with the idea that unfortunately, as much as things had changed, progress was slow. To me, this was a reminder of the mixed emotions around desegregation. For all that desegregation was supposed to accomplish, it had yet to reach equity for all.

Another example of navigating the racial academic space was the leading of cultural workshops for faculty and staff. MK and Coretta conducted staff development workshops on cultural differences and cultural relevancy. In their workshops, they challenged staff members to look at their teaching methods, consider how their practices were culturally biased, and to consider teaching practices more culturally relevant for all students. MK stated, "There are staff members that still discuss how powerful a workshop was and how it really helped [them] to realize what students of color experience and have to experience."

Additionally, these educators challenged staff members to make the curriculum more inclusive. Coretta described how the English department was going to make teaching *The narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass* (*Frederick Douglass*) optional for teachers during the unit covering persuasive techniques. She described,

I was like, 'yea, everyone does need to teach *Frederick Douglass*. It has nothing

but persuasive techniques.' One [White teacher] said, 'I can't find any

persuasion.' I was floored. She said, 'I was just letting them find the emotional

ones.' I was thinking, 'if you're just letting them find the emotional ones, then

they don't get the meaning behind the piece,' because they think it's purely for

sympathy and it's sooo not that. …. We all have a different take on it I guess, and

our [the teachers of color] take comes from a different place, and maybe they feel

that they can't. I don't know. And another [White female] teacher even said, 'I

just don't know if I can teach Douglass.'

In this example, Coretta advocated teaching *The narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass* and

suggested that many White teachers did not want to teach it because it dealt with slavery, race,

and racism. She continued by discussing the necessary burden of having to teach twice, to

students and to staff about culture, race, and racial implications. In this particular situation, she

continued illustrating the tragic and nerve-wracking irony in how everyone was "okay" with

teaching Patrick Henry's, "Give me liberty or give me death," but were not "okay" with

Frederick Douglass' autobiography, both essentially talking about freedom. She later discussed

how she would lend her book, which she marked with personal notes and commentary in the

margins, to the White female teacher, so that the teacher could see her highlighted examples of

persuasive techniques of ethical and logical appeals. Using advocacy techniques of negotiation,

Coretta, like the other educators, worked on behalf of students, and parents of color, behind the

scenes to link effective teaching practices and content related to critical racial content (Lynn,

1999). Challenging traditional White middle-class teaching practices, policies, and beliefs helped

to ameliorate some educational inequities.

Advocacy: Navigating and negotiating the racial space with students

While combating racism and prejudice on an administrative and staff level, these educators also taught students how to navigate those same "hostile spaces" in and out of schools. Educators used culturally relevant pedagogy, similar to Lynn's (1999) suggestion of critical race pedagogy, "which uses a broad interpretation of emancipatory pedagogical strategies and techniques that have proved to be successful with racially subordinated students" (Lynn, 1999, p. 615). Educators sought to affirm students' identity and culture to build students confidence in who they were individually and culturally. As mentioned earlier in the section for "affirming via cultural connection," educators (a) provided cultural opportunities and programs, (b) provided awards celebrations for program participants, and (c) discussed accomplishments and the beauty of their cultural heritage, as well as validated student experiences as persons of color. Additionally participants invited guest speakers to share their stories of how they had "made it." In these ways, educators aimed to build or fortify students' foundation for navigating the sometimes racially hostile landscape of school.

One example of helping students navigate and negotiate the racial space can be seen in a situation where Coretta where she validated a student's racial experience and helped her to address the issue. Coretta described an incident were a Latina student enrolled in a Spanish course, and on the first day of class, the White male teacher assumed that she spoke Spanish. The Spanish teacher told her, "Don't worry about it. If you get bored, you can go to the library." The student was furious and hurt. Coretta calmed her down, validated her experience and feelings, and asked her what she wanted to do, as opposed to telling her what to do. Together they devised an appropriate response where the student would talk to the teacher letting him know that she did

not know Spanish, and the assumption made her feel uncomfortable. Together, they rehearsed the conversation before meeting with the teacher, and to further connect with the student, Coretta shared personal experiences of racism as a student and as an adult. In this example, the White educator assumed the student spoke Spanish because of her brown skin. Although this may seem like a fair assumption, he probably would not assume a third generation German American spoke German, and if he did, he would probably ask as opposed to assuming. His comment was based off her skin color and name, and by doing so, he was relying on stereotypes and complacently going off his assumptions without getting to know the student. Like this example, these educators helped students with the emotional aspect of dealing with racial microaggressions— direct and more subtle forms of White racism and racial assumptions that lead to tension and mistrust (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solorzano, 2009). The mental and emotional aid provided by Coretta worked in tandem with the instructional aid to assist in the holistic wellbeing and development for students of color.

Influence on academic achievement

In researching the practices of these educators, the overarching theme of racial uplift also manifested through influencing students of color academic achievement. These educators pushed for academic excellence by serving as mentors and stressing the importance of getting good grades, taking AP courses, and getting involved in leadership activities. In addition to individual and group mentoring sessions, educators provided structural components to assist students in their academic endeavors, such as, tutoring sessions, student life workshops, college visits, and cultural fieldtrips.

When discussing their influence on academic achievement, each director spoke of tutoring opportunities that were provided in their programs or through connections made by the themselves. Mama Davis spoke of the program participants tutoring each other and acquiring outside tutors from local colleges. MK and Coretta's students tutored each other and also sought teacher volunteers. Jack set-up peer tutors, and Ida connected students with tutors via counselor referral.

Student life workshops were held on average once or twice a month given the time of year. These workshops included, but were not limited to, (a) how to write a resume, (b) how to talk with teachers, (c) how to prepare a 4-year plan to attend college, others included (c) race-related conversations discussing issues that may have come up at the school or in local or national news, or (d) guest speakers that "[told] their stories," explaining the process of arriving at their current state and giving tips for success.

College visits were a regular aspect of the programs. With all of the programs combined, these educators took over 1,000 students on college visits, local and away, and both Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and predominantly White institutions. It blew my mind that these five individuals had collectively taken over 1,000 students on college visits. I was actually a little jealous. I wish I went on an HBCU tour as a student—maybe I would have attended and graduated from an HBCU as opposed to my predominantly White institution. It also made me wonder how many more students could take college visits if schools were fully invested in students of color and helping them see possibilities.

One of the highlights for Jack and Mama Davis during their annual college tour was when one of the students who had applied to the school they were visiting found out during the

trip that she had been accepted to the university. The girl and the entire group of students celebrated her for her accomplishments and were excited to have witnessed the moment. One of Ida's fondest memories was when one of the students received a full scholarship during at a local college fair visit. One of Jack's fondest memories was when,

> the president of [an HBCU] walked through when we were touring. He said "Hi" to the kids and then said he had to go to a meeting. But later came back and found our group and walked the rest of the tour with us. At the end, when we got back to our school, he had sent us a letter inviting our students to attend Tennessee State, and stated that he would waive the out-of-state tuition.

Another memorable highlight for Jack occurred during the first trip they took with students. He stated, there was a "young lady who had a special school district services, and I remember her words, 'I didn't know college was for everyone. I thought it was just for a small group of people.'

The college visits were one of the biggest components of their programs and as illustrated by one of Jack's student's, it demonstrated that college was open to everyone. The college trips that students attended made clear what was possible and attainable. MK and Coretta also helped students see that college was for everyone. One of their proudest moments was helping undocumented students apply to and attend a local university. Lastly, a former student and program alum of the program directed by MK and Coretta gave their students the college visit tour. The alum was able to connect with students and tell them how the program and directors helped her get into college and that they should listen to the directors. This example brought the college trips full circle—an alum of the program, was able to speak back to the benefits of the

program and efforts of the directors. College visits for these educators was more than a fieldtrip. Instead, they were a way to give concrete concepts of college and serve as a catalyst for students to see college as a realistic option. Although not always supported in their efforts to take students on college trips, these educators stayed committed and continued the college visits.

Another aspect of academic influence was in the cultural fieldtrips. One of the biggest examples was when MK and Coretta took 20 of their students to the 2009 Presidential Inauguration of Barack Obama. This opportunity connected academics with the real world, by making it meaningful and tangible. Both MK and Coretta discussed how attending the event brought their group even closer, re-emphasized familial relationship, and showed them a world outside of their school district, city, and state. Additionally, students gained life skills by helping to raise the money to attend the inauguration, and making professional presentations to a major business that chose to partner with the program's efforts to fund the trip. The students also were able to create and plan a community service project as a way to give back to the community in collaboration with the business company. Overall, the experience was influential in inspiring the students to dream big and "reach for the stars."

These educators worked with and for students of color in addition to the students already on their caseload as a classroom teacher, counselor, or principal. This extra work invited additional demands via time, energy, and creativity. As they formed, maintained, and sustained relationships, created programmatic curriculum, researched guest speakers and local and national events and activities, tutored and facilitated tutoring programs, coordinated college and university tours, navigated and negotiated the racial space, and much more, the one question I

had was, while schools remained idle in their practices to help these groups of students, what were the complexities for these educators who were committed to them?

Complexities professional and personally

Being an educator, principal, counselor, or teacher, was a lot of work. Being a good educator required even more work. Educating was an ongoing process of modifying and adjusting due to the constant adaptation of the different needs of many different students. There was no prescription, and as MK stated, there was always something going on that one did not plan for during the school day and sometimes exceeded the regular school day. Given that educators already have a tough job, this notion of racial uplift through communal responsibility and influence on academics resonated with previous studies on Black educators in suburban schools (Mabokela & Madsen 2003a; 2003b; 2007; Madsen & Mabokela, 2000; Milner, 2002; Ramsey, 2008), especially for those who embodied multiple constructs of difference, race, class, gender, etc. These educators already had a full time job, which often required work outside of the school day. As a result, this section discusses the challenges and complexities that these educators face professionally and personally—which is similar to what Venzant Chambers & Huggins (2014) terms racial opportunity costs. Venzant Chambers and Huggins specifically used the term to discuss the price that students of color pay in pursuit of academic success; however, I am relating the term to the price Black educators pay as a result of their racial identity and the ways in which they work toward helping students of color find academic success.

Supporting Black student achievement came at a cost professionally. These educators incurred several professional costs that included (a) additional work, (b) lack of support, (c) professional attacks, and (d) job safety.

Additional workload. The additional workload occurred in three ways (a) building relationships with students of color, (b) influencing academic achievement, and (c) teaching twice. Because of the lack of significant relationships built between White educators and students of color, these participants felt obligated to be the other "mother," "father," or protective "relative" for students of color. They built caring and nurturing relationships, which required time and energy. Like parents who cared for the social, emotional, physical, cultural, and academic needs of their children, these educators operated in a similar capacity for an entire group of students. These educators felt a large responsibility to make up for the lack of caring relationships these students experienced elsewhere in the building.

Another example of the additional work load was the influence of academic achievement. Again, participants felt the need to construct an alternate learning environment, an entire program, to adequately supplement the ways in which the schools were educating the students. In addition to their assigned duties with their full-time job as a classroom teacher, counselor, or principal, they mentored, created tutoring programs and life workshops, and arranged college and cultural fieldtrips. The schools did not provide the space for these ways of learning, so they went above the call of duty and created the learning environments the students needed.

In my field notes I wrote:

> So we have schools within schools? A desegregated school with segregated programs!? As a researcher it seemed interesting and made me wonder about the purpose of desegregation? But as a former high school participant of a similar program and director of a similar program, it made sense. As the former director

of a similar program, it was what I had to do to help students of color. I guess this is again the mixed emotions of desegregation.

The additional workload also occurred when these educators had to teach faculty in groups or individually about racial and cultural issues. Coretta described the work load when she talked about the exchange she experienced with a White colleague who did not know about Black hair products. Coretta stated,

> We understand their culture. We don't have to ask them about their hair. If I had a White child, I could raise her. I could do her hair, I could put her where she needs to be, and I can understand her culture, and I could tell her about her culture. But it's okay for a grown [White] woman, to [say to] me, "Well, I'm working with these" … She's working at some center with these disadvantaged kids, and she wants to know what kind of hair products to buy.

> There's an internet out there, [that can describe] Black hair products. (Laughter) This woman has a PhD and she's asking me! There was a part of me, years ago, that would have been like just, 'You know, walk on egg shells, tell em what they' … And a lot of that was from my rearing…to make it comfortable for them. It doesn't matter that you're keeping you down because that's the way I was raised. This is how you get through. This is how you get the nice things; how you get what they have. As I get older, I think, 'Hey, fuck that! I don't want to do that anymore!'

[Getting back to her story] I said, "It's amazing. You've been in this world longer than I have, but I don't have to ask you about your hair. I know the products you use for your hair, and I don't have to look it up on the internet." I said, "We still live in a world where I must know about your culture."

She says, "I understand that I was privileged and I did an institute on social justice." I wanted to say, "Go back for another round." [She continues with the story.] I'm like, "Well I haven't done that program, but I'm Black." She said, 'Well you know, is it okay?' I said, "I'm going to tell you to ask, but there are some sisters, don't get it twisted, that no, you can't ask them about their hair." I said, "Nobody ever asks a woman." I said, "Really, I don't ever remember in my life asking a White woman, if that was her hair?" Or, "It's so straight or shiny or blonde, can I touch it?" I said, "I've never done that." I said, 'I don't know how to bridge that gap.' I said, 'Is that our fault or your fault or a fault of the system? There's a deficit there, and …still now, you don't have to know.'

Ending her story, Coretta stated, "You didn't research before you adopted? I did research before I adopted my dog!" Coretta's example illustrated the additional teaching that these Black educators accrued. They had to teach students and they had to teach their colleagues. In Coretta's example, she described the frustration she felt for having to teach White colleagues about Black culture. She still ended up teaching her colleague by challenging the White woman's ideologies and White privilege when she explained how Blacks "must know about [White] culture," and there are things no one ever asks White women. Despite the women participating in a social

justice program designed to help educators understand racism, power, and privilege, Coretta still had to "teach" her about her privilege.

Coretta used this example as analogous to White educators not researching to effectively reach and teach students of color. This connected to the idea of boundary heightening for the educators (Mabokela & Madsen 2003a; 2003b; 2007; Madsen & Mabokela, 2000), care for students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Walker, 2001; Tillman, 2004), and CRP's (Ladson-Billings, 2006) call for educators to connect with students by seeing them "as being filled with possibilities" (p. 35). When students can be seen with possibilities, an investment and an informed empathy can be made, and educators can build a sense of solidarity with the students (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Because Coretta and the other participants did not feel like their White colleagues were researching ways to help students of color, they were often aggravated and annoyed. During the focus group, the entire mood of the room was frustration, and they expressed concerns of being stressed, because though they were upset that they thought it was necessary and laborious to teach twice, but they felt as if they had to do so for the sake of their students. Despite the ethic of risk, or knowing that systems of oppression are not easily dismantled, (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002), they did the extra labor for their students.

In my field notes I wrote:

> I too have been frustrated with having to teach twice and feeling the annoyance of Whites having the privilege of not knowing. I was in agreement with Coretta when she discussed the fact that people of color have to know about White culture, but it is not the other way around. I've also continued to teach my White colleagues, because I knew it would be beneficial for students of color. I felt

trapped, because if I don't help them, then I am not helping students of color.

Simultaneously, by helping them, I am letting them off of the hook. I, too, was

frustrated.

Lack of Support. The first area that lack of support manifested was financial. The

educators often had to come out of their own pockets to conduct general program practices, such

as, but not limited to, providing snacks for meetings, acquiring small gifts for congratulatory

celebrations, and attending local and national events. School staff also did not show support. All

of the schools districts touted themselves on their commitments to diversity and closing the

academic achievement gap between students of color and White students; however, with each of

the programs, these directors worked in isolation with very few educators volunteering any of

their time to help with basic programmatic needs. For example, MK and Coretta asked teachers

at their school to volunteer to tutoring, and very few teachers, if any, participated. Consequently,

these two educators, both with English teaching backgrounds, become tutors for all subjects.

Another example of lack of support was when other teachers would use passive resistance

against the students in the program. For example, Ida discussed how she would send passes to

release students from the classroom to attend a program meeting, and teachers would

intentionally not give them to the students. Ida would either send a second pass, and/or go to the

class to physically get the student. In response, teachers would say that their classroom activities

were more important and they did not see why the student needed to miss class. CRP was useful

in this instance to illustrate the need to see students in social contexts while also preparing them

for traditional high school demands. Ladson Billings (2006) explained that educators using CRP

understood that schools serve as the "vehicle for social advancement and equity" (p. 32), which

included items that are not on the standardized tests such as creating a resume or a 4-year plan to

attend college. CRP called for educators to approach academic achievement by getting students to engage with learning to cultivate their intellectual lives for the long-term academic goals.

The second cost that these Black educators face came through professional attacks, similar to performance pressures (Mabokela & Madsen 2003a; 2003b; 2007; Madsen & Mabokela, 2000) from their colleagues. For example, "When the Black graduation rate was higher than the White graduation rate," Mama Davis continued,

> You should have heard the questioning, because it was almost like…. The questioning was almost like I had done something to the rates, I was like, 'Hell, I didn't have anything to do with the rates. Now I have taken some strategies and things before, but I don't have a thing to do with rates. Until you told me the graduation rate was higher, I didn't even know. [The entire time during the conversation with the colleague, Mama Davis was] praying to God that they [the rates] are right.' But that kind of thing [the constant questioning], 'What did you do? I need to do these numbers.' [She finished the conversation by telling her colleague] 'You can check those numbers over and over again, [and] here are the names.'

In this example, Mama Davis illustrated the erroneous attacks she received while working with Black students. CRP's notion of sociopolitical consciousness asked educators to understand issues of race, class, gender, and other forms of marginalization. In this instance, Harris' (1993) notion of "Whiteness as property," helped to illustrate how power and privilege operate along racial lines. In this example, White educators were assuming that the graduation rates could not be accurate because graduation is the "property of Whites," and as Cheryl Harris writes,

"Whiteness retains its value as a 'consolation prize': it does not mean that all Whites will win, but simply that they will not lose" (Harris, p. 1758). In this case, when the graduation rate of Blacks was higher than Whites, in the eyes of the White educators, Whites were seen as losing, because they were not on top.

In my field notes I wrote:

> When Mama Davis discussed this incident, I was dumbfounded at the audacity of the accusers. To, me, as a former administrator, that was the ultimate forms of disrespect. That was an attack on her integrity. I could feel my blood pressure rising. I was angry. I was angry because this is what some White people thought of Black administrators. I had to try to calm myself down by taking deep breaths, and as I did, Mama Davis, just shook her head and said, "Yep. That's the kind of stuff I have to deal with." It was here again, that I was reminded that racism is real.

Attacks also occurred when MK and Coretta facilitated staff development workshops on cultural differences and cultural relevancy. During the session they were accused of reverse racism and discrimination with their program, because it was for Black and Latina/o students, and White students were not included. MK stated,

> A mockery was made of our presentation, and also that whole thing is, we discriminated, or the idea of reverse discrimination. They said 'reverse discrimination.' It's reverse discrimination because you're focusing on just the

Black kids. Even though there was African Americans and Latinos, Blacks and

Latinos in our group, but it was, 'You're focusing on them.' They understand that.

As MK explained, the only thing that the White educators could understand was that the focus

was on Black students and not White students. Again, Harris' (1993) property of Whiteness

helped to understand CRP's call to see race, power, and privilege, and explain how Whites in

this situation saw an opportunity that was not afforded to them and therefore felt that they had

been slighted; however, the slight really was in the fact that students of color had suffered from

being underserved in the district, and this was an effort to help those students.

  Political navigation. Supporting Black student achievement came at a cost politically.

These educators had to strategically navigate their advocacy approach along racial lines. MK and

Coretta described having to be selective in which Black staff members they would allow to

represent the organization. They thought that someone too radical would not be accepted by

White colleagues and might bring too many issues to the organization and risk the life of the

program; however, they also could not have someone who was not critical of race-related issues

and operated under a colorblind mentality, because they would not help students of color face

issues of race and racism, and power and privilege.

  Similarly, Ida explained that as directors, they could not be too outspoken, and she

expressed feelings of being "enchained." She explained,

> Having to figure out how to get what I wanted to get accomplished, without being
>
> literally shot down. That was a challenge without having support, and without
>
> having any means of financial support. Not a quarter from anyone. We had to

really be pretty creative, even when talking about the trips and things like that,

and getting the permissions. … the Principal said to me that I was "creating a

White backlash."

She continued, "If we are too outspoken then we cut chances for our kids to get access to the

things that we desire for them to get access to." She continued with the question, "Are we in

collusion with the system, because we're almost enchained; we're forced to be. We can't speak

out. A custodian was over-passed because he was outspoken when he had opportunities to affect

us, and that's the custodial side!" When Ida described the example with the janitor, I thought of

how slaves used to be kept in fear. A slave who tried to go against the system was publically

punished as a way to show other slaves what could happen if they defied their master or overseer

(Douglass, 1995). It appeared as if little had changed.

Navigating the political aspect of advocacy in the high school could also be seen when

Ida and Mama Davis described how they had to make events held for the organization extremely

public. They sent invitations and/or made key educational leaders in the school a part of events

as a preemptive strike, so that the school leaders were in some way forced to speak positively

about the program. These political moves along racial lines were advocacy strategies to help get

students of color access to resources. These strategies could be related to sociopolitical

consciousness and illustrated again, how these educators understood how issues of power and

privilege worked along issues of race.

Job safety. Two of the five participants in this study conveyed concern about job safety

at one point or another during their tenure as an educator directing the program. Ida shared,

I literally almost got fired, because I found out how much money the
[desegregation] program was pouring into the district. I was kind of floating
around and didn't know. I trotted over to the superintendent and just kind of
talked about the programming [for Black students] and asked would it be possible
to get like a tenth of a percent of that [funding] (laughter). It was downhill after
that. Literally, downhill for my job. My job was threatened. It's that kind of thing
[that kept] going on. Trying to figure out how to still make it happen. I still
needed a job. I couldn't throw the job away.

Despite knowing the exact reason for their seeking to get her removed, Ida was certain that it was
in response to her finding out and requesting funding. She had already been targeted as having
created a "White backlash," because the program was fostering "reverse racism;" therefore this
was just one more thing that she was "doing." However, once Ida made it known that she was
going to go the media, because she "didn't do anything wrong, stuff stopped. …. [T]hat was the
only way I got them off of my back."

The concern of the job safety also came up during the process of collecting data for this
dissertation. While completing a member check with the participants in this study, by sharing
with each participant, the profiles I had written of them, Mama Davis asked, "Who will see the
finished dissertation? Who is the audience?" Although I had expressed in previous interviews
and in the focus group that participants would remain anonymous through the use of pseudonyms
and non-identifying demarcations, she was concerned about her job safety and any notes that
might identify her. She expressed that Black educational leaders were being targeted for their
"non-traditional" practices and were subsequently losing their jobs. Her concern was that if the

city could be identified, she might also be identifiable, because of the few numbers of Black

educators in the city that fit her description.

These educators, to me, represented an unspoken fear in their job safety for the type of

work that they performed, which is why they were careful in how they navigated and negotiated

the spaces. Although they recognized that they were doing something that schools said that they

wanted: ways of reaching students of color to close the academic achievement gap, they also

recognized that they challenged the status quo, and "buck[ed] the system," as Ida says, which

could inevitably get them fired. Ida continued, "You have to be at a comfortable place financially

to take risk[s]. … talking about [when] I was [about] to get fired … and trying to negotiate this

stuff…if you don't have a stash somewhere, then you can't say [or do certain things].

Personal complexities

Supporting student of color achievement came at a cost personally. These educators

incurred the personal costs of physical, mental, and emotional stress. William Smith's notion of

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) was useful to illustrate this idea. RBF refers to a theory that

explained the psychophysiological attrition people of color experience as a result of coping with

a fighting racism via racial insults, stereotypes, and discrimination (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano,

2006). Moreover, RBF explained how the social environment perpetuated race-related stressors

and negatively influenced the health and retention of people of color in these spaces. In previous

sections of this chapter, participants listed examples of RBF, such as but not limited to, the

constant self-questioning and anger suppression to avoid perpetuating racial stereotypes (Steele,

1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Consequently, these educators experienced RBF as they

navigated and negotiated the racial space of the high schools where they work. As Ida stated,

"Adult negotiations are not just about negotiating, advocating for the kids, the negotiations [were] for our very own survival."

Physical Stress. During the focus group, and while discussing the ways in which they each navigated and negotiated the racial academic space, it became evident that the educators were disturbed as they each shared memories of encountering racism in their schools. Ida verbally stated, "You just done hit a cord today. I done got a headache, and I been just as calm and cool. Some of these things I aint thought about in years," and the others laughed and agreed. Ida's headache and the each participant's visible and expressed tension demonstrated an example of RBF. Ida recalled an event where a Black woman applied for and did not get a position because it went to a less qualified White woman, and the others recalled similar events in their school districts. The frustration the educators felt was that the White educators did not have to see the individual nor systemic racism, and as MK stated, "It's the whole idea that we have arrived, we have a Black president now; we have arrived." Simply recalling the experiences in dealing with racism brought back the feelings and physiological symptoms associated with the events.

As a result of the visible agitation, I asked them to rate on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, their level of frustration based on the things discussed. The response from all but Jack, was an overwhelming 10 or higher, while Jack gave it a 7. MK stated, "It would top off because it's that whole constant reminder of how much work we've done, how much work we have to continue to do, and how much oppression that there has been out there, and continues to be so." Mama Davis added, "[and] how few people there are [doing this type of work]." In their

individual interviews, the women talked in detail about stress. Ida summed it up best when she
stated,

> Golly. Stress!? Uh uh, uh uh. Stress, because it's coming from every direction.
> And if you're feeling like you don't have any support. You know, maybe there's
> one or two people that you can count on. There's nobody that you can really talk
> to, not there, about that stuff.

The stress also manifested as a result of racial isolation due to the work that they perform. As
Ida mentioned, stress is coming from every direction, there was little to no support, so the work
rested on their shoulders, and finally, there was no one to talk to about the program.
Additionally, the isolation became evident, when all of the participants expressed their gratitude
for the opportunity to vent, share frustrations, and talk about their experiences at the focus group.
They thought that events similar to the focus group should happen more regularly. As MK stated,
"we're so busy fighting the fight in isolation it's difficult." Mama Davis illustrated the isolation
while joking about how she would always hear of Ida's name whenever she did program
activities. She would hear,

> 'Well, you should talk to, Ida, over at Central High School.' I'm not from this
> state [she would respond]…[so I thought] is Ida the only Black person here
> (laughter)! It was funny because everybody I talked to gave me the same name.
> "You should talk to, Ida, over at Central. I was like, okay, she must be the only
> Black person here and she must be doing a lot over there… it must be me, Jack,
> and her (laughter).

Directing programs in isolation and without supports was tough, especially when these educators had to be everything for the program, and the stress manifested in different forms such as, but not limited to, high blood pressure, neck and back pain, and anxiety. Although, participants could not say specifically that these issues were always race-related, they did express facing extra pressures as people of color and the strong possibility that some of their ailments could be race-related. Some of the pressures were feeling like they always had to be "on guard" and twice as good as their White counterparts, as well as carrying the weight of responsibility for Black and Latina/o children. Mama Davis described how she carried her stress in her shoulders and back and needed hour-long massages.

> When my stress is really, really high like that, I mean, my back is to the touch, it's sore—that's how stressed. So it is days like that, sometimes I have to tell myself, you know what? I got to get away. So I may take a half day to go and do me. But that's not, probably enough, I should. I need much more…. It's hard for me to step away from my job. So I have to really find that balance.

The problem was not simply that the programs were tough to operate, but it was all of the additional pressures of their full-time responsibilities, navigating and negotiating the racial space, running the program, and any additional tasks. Mama Davis, like the others, was also stressed due to the ineffective actions of others, inequity and the mistreatment of others, and putting "a lot into [her] kids," especially when she knew that situations were complicated.

From my field notes:

Wow. The anger, frustration, and stress is real! And the sad part is that they did

not even know how angry, frustrated, and stressed they were until they were able

to let it out, and share their frustrations with the others. They knew on one level

that they were stressed, but the fact that they were still visibly angry and

frustrated was powerful, carried a lot of weight, and showed that they had not

gotten over the issues. As a former administrator, I resonated with this feeling of

not really knowing how much weight and stress I was carrying. Like Mama

Davis, I knew I was stressed because I, too, had neck and back pain, and my hair

was even falling out! But it wasn't until I really let it out and shared my pain with

others that I saw the weight I was carrying.

If stress is one of the leading causes of death for people of color, how can we

alleviate some of this stress? Something must be done! My only thought is that

when schools make equity a priority, then might some of the stress be alleviated.

Mental Stress: "Navigating the min[d]fields." Supporting Black student achievement

also came with mental work and stress of having double-consciousness, or "navigating the

min[d]fields," as Ida said. W.E.B. Du Bois concept of double consciousness referred to "a

peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through

the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused

contempt and pity" (2004, 9). In Du Bois concept he illumined the sense of two-ness that Blacks

felt because of the pull between being Black and being American. It was a constant viewing of

self from both, the perception Whites have of Blacks, and the self-perception of being Black.

Double-consciousness was knowing how society worked and viewed the self, and knowing the

true concept of self, while balancing the two ideas. Consequently, these educators experienced

the mental work of double-consciousness when trying to navigate the school ground, or

"min[d]field," with both thoughts: what they knew about Black and Latina/o students, as well as

themselves, and what they knew about how society treated Black and Latina/o students, as well

as themselves. They navigated this min[d]field for themselves and taught their students how to

navigate the space as well. Ida described how the educators navigated the space.

> We always have to have a second thought, because the first thought is always
>
> what did he really mean? That's always the first thought. Now we push it back in
>
> our minds, but that's always the question in our minds. That to me is that double
>
> consciousness that we have to have to exist, which threatens our sanity, because
>
> you've got to balance that out so you don't go off, [so] that you're not
>
> misunderstanding. You always got to say, what do they really mean? Now, you
>
> have to interpret that individual's values and perspectives before you can really
>
> respond in a way that is "professional."

Ida's description illustrated one example of the burden of the mental work these educators face.

Due to stereotypical views of Blacks and their desire to be seen as professionals, these educators

then also interpreted their White counterparts' "values and perspectives" to determine an action

that would be deemed appropriate and "professional" to those same individuals. The constant

contemplation and strategizing to navigate the min[d]field or the racial space of the high school

was taxing and stressful in a way that threatened their sanity. This idea of threatening their sanity

related to James Baldwin's (1963) idea that Black students [and educators] run the risk of

becoming "schizophrenic" by learning and operating in spaces that were not designed for them.

Schools and society constantly sent messages of America as a place of opportunities, and that

Blacks were beneath Whites and have offered society little to nothing, with the exception of their

value being associated with their devotion to Whites. These ideas of threats to sanity and

schizophrenia were real in the sense that these Black educators battled, navigated, and negotiated

incoming messages with their own sense of consciousness, worth, and power as individuals.

In another example, Coretta described the frustration with navigating the space,

> I know that I wasn't, but it always felt like I was telling them [Black and Latina/o
> students] that that part of you, you have to stifle. You have to keep that quiet, and
> that when you're … when you're there, this is how you have to communicate with
> them ... and sometimes they would come to us because they knew, in the
> classroom, something wasn't right. I would say 'Here's the situation. Here is what
> you need to do. Here is the process. Here are the questions you need to ask.'

In this example Coretta felt she and students had to "stifle" parts of themselves in order to be

accepted and granted access to things and places of benefit. Although she, and her students, may

feel upset and/or angry about a situation and may want to react in a manner that shows their

discontent, Coretta taught her students how to proceed with that situation in a manner that would

be more acceptable. She taught them the "unspoken rules" of how to get their needs met, which

included leaving the parts of themselves that were less aligned with White norms and values, or

were considered negative stereotypes of people of color, out of the equation, and adding more

things that would garner White acceptance. According to Coretta, and the other participants,

performing in this way may not get them acceptance from Whites, but it would provide them

access to resources and opportunities.

MK added to Coretta's ideas, and stated,

> When you talk about modeling the behavior, that is absolutely true, but the other piece, to me, in listening to you is that we … not necessarily lose a part of ourselves, but we do have to make a sacrifice … in terms of what the goal is. Is it more important for me to go cuss this teacher out … (laughter) or to get this kid through the process. Many times the kids will say, "Mr. So and So is prejudiced." "Okay, you might be right, you might wrong, but regardless, what are you trying to accomplish? You've got to do this, this, and this to get there, regardless of whether you believe this person has those kinds of tendencies."

> Then we get into a position of having to question who we are as persons of color. Why does this happen continually, why do we still have to take a step back and not really say what's going on.

MK's added, "Blacks don't lose an aspect of themselves, but instead, they make a sacrifice." This is an example of Harris' (1993) "Whiteness as property." In order for people of color to gain access to what Whites have by the nature of White skin, i.e. opportunities, there had to be a self-inflicted sacrifice made, to diminish a part of their other-ness. MK continued, "Just to survive are we denying who we are? It's the whole, you can't even look me in the eye…. It's the same old thing…. You have to bow down to them just to make this achievable." MK's analysis offered the conundrum of survival and the double consciousness needed to survive similar to a time in the past when Blacks had to show deference to Whites by bowing the head and not looking them in the eyes. According to participants, in order to survive, or get ahead, Blacks and Latinas/os needed to understand how society viewed them in order to stay safe while positioning

themselves to achieve a "greater" goal. Additionally, double consciousness suggests the need for

people of color to have a strong enough foundation to understand what the world so as not to be

spiritually demolished by the two warring ideals, go crazy, or forsake the core of who they were

as individuals. Like Du Bois (2004) double consciousness, these educators simply wish to make

it possible for themselves and their students to be fully accepted. So these educators, as MK

described, "educate[d] [his] kids how to combat against that [isolation and other forms of racism]

and at the same time how to manipulate the system in order to be a part of [the system to gain

access to opportunities]. I don't know if one would necessarily use the term assimilation, but you

almost feel like you gag who you are."

As much as they wanted to affirm the students, their culture, and racial identity, these

educators constantly questioned their strategies and wondered if they were teaching acts of

collusion with macro and micro forms of oppression, which served to perpetuate the system of

oppression. Another aspect of the painful emotional cost was the feeling of their hands being

tied. Ida stated,

> If we are too outspoken then we cut chances for our kids to get access to the
>
> things that we desire for them to get access to. Are we in collusion with the
>
> system, because we're almost enchained; we're forced to be. We can't speak out.
>
> …. [We are] preparing them [students] for a world where they'll have to do that
>
> [navigate and negotiate the "min[d]field,"], which is the sad part… You do that
>
> for them in school, cause when you get into college you still have to do it. When
>
> you get into your career, they'll still have to do it.

While helping students navigate the min[d]field, these educators understood and were frustrated that to, a degree, they seemed complicit in the issue of racism.

This exchange was hard for me and one that I could relate to very easily. I have sometimes felt the same and wondered if I was complicit by teaching my students some of the tactics I used to navigate and negotiate. I sometimes asked myself why wasn't I more vocal in certain situations? Why wouldn't I show my anger and emotion? I often wondered what would it be like to be myself 100% in the presence of my White colleagues, even when I was upset and frustrated. While I understood my participants level of frustration, another idea is that these were some strategies which illustrate the complexity of equity work in schools that operate under colorblind ideologies.

Along the lines of what Du Bois (2004) and Baldwin (1963) suggested, participants were teaching students the truth—that they were powerful beyond measure, and in order for them to recognize and use their power, they must understand, decide, and know their worth. They taught students the value of self-worth, literal and figurative freedom, political power, critical thinking, and practical skills. They taught students to examine and challenge the ways of the world that were inequitable. They taught students to live and not be afraid, to maneuver, navigate, and understand their power in a world that challenged their worth. These educators, at some level of knowing, understood that as Baldwin explained about himself in relation to Whites. Baldwin stated, "So where we are now is that a whole country of people believe I'm a 'nigger,' and I don't, and the battle's on! Because if I am not what I've been told I am, then it means that you're not what you thought you were either!" These educators believed, like Baldwin, that the long held negative images about students of color were lies, and the "battle [was] on!" because they

intended to teach as well as leave their students with the charge to continue the fight for equity. Teaching students ways in which to finesse the system—which may have appeared as complicit in acts of oppression—was a strategy nonetheless. As Ladson-Billings (2006) writes,

> Teachers who foster cultural competence understand that they must work back and forth between the lives of their students and the life of the school. Teachers have an obligation to expose their students to the very culture that oppresses them. That may seem paradoxical, but without the skills the knowledge of the dominant culture, students are unlikely to be able to engage that culture to effect meaningful change. (p. 36)

By teaching students how to go back and forth between both worlds, they were in fact giving them the skills necessary to engage that culture to make meaningful change. As expressed by participants, this level of understanding was not the first thought they had had on the subject and it had given them an uncomfortable position due to their lens. They know that they were doing the right thing, yet on some levels, it still seemed to be a "sacrifice" or a "gag" to their own identities.

Emotional Stress. These educators experienced a great deal of emotional stress. Guilt was one example of emotional stress that they had expressed experiencing. While they have wanted to take other positions in their careers, they felt the burden of leaving their students behind. Similar to some participants in Ramsey's (2008) study on Black women who desegregated schools in Nashville, TN, these educators felt guilty because they did not know who would uphold the communal responsibility and "watch out for their kids." As Ida described, "When we leave, we are not replaced." Ida, Coretta, MK, and Jack were all prime examples of

this phenomenon. After they left the school, or discontinued the program, the program ended, and although Mama Davis has not experienced it, she agreed, "If I left today, this [program] would be done. This would be done." The women most directly illustrated the feeling of guilt associated with leaving and/or ending the program. Coretta described the consternation she experienced after she decided to end the program, and before and during her decision to ultimately leave the district. She explained,

> It was like, 'Do I leave?' I want to go and I felt so bad…. I'm leaving and a friend of mine who's Latina left too, and we were both a part of [the program]. We're leaving and we know who [racist practitioners, practices, and policies] we're leaving our kids back here with. And it's not that there aren't people [caring advocates for students of color] in the building; there's [a few] other people. But I know there's only a handful of them and they are fighting that battle all the way up hill, and I'm thinking about it as I leave. …. I'm even thinking about what they're [White teachers are] teaching them [Black and Latina/o students] in that classroom…?

> I mean, I saw what teachers tried to do when I left … these [Black and Latina/o] kids are going to suffer. I'm like, "You're getting more Black and Brown kids in our classes, and you're talking about teaching The Great Gatsby!?" I was working with a young White girl [teacher], progressive being outward, and she was like, "Coretta, I had to fight to get one dead White woman on that [syllabus]! It's all dead White men!" I just thought, "I'm doing my kids a disservice."

Mama Davis also described her thoughts on who would work with the program when she left, stating,

> [T]hat puts a, that puts a load on you, because when you do get to that time [when you want to obtain a different position], you are so guilt ridden …. I mean, I've even, when I was thinking about taking up positions, that was always in the back of my mind. If I leave here, what happens to my kids? And, you know, you don't want that. I've been blessed that I have been able to progress through the district and do what I need to do, but you never would like to think that that's something that's holding you back. But it does, because you feel that commitment and that connection with those kids. You just, you just don't want to walk away and feel like you're leaving them high and dry.

These examples exemplified the personal, yet professional tug of war occurring for these Black educators. Personally, both Coretta and Mama Davis, wanted to, or had thought about taking other positions; however, their personal experience and professional judgment as educators that protected and advocated for Black and Latina/o students' gave them insight to recognize and understand the arduous fight for equity for these students. The emotional stress was the guilt associated with the inability to ensure that the students of color would be cared for and protected.

I, too, have felt this guilt. When I left the classroom to pursue my Ph.D. my students threw me a huge party and expressed how sad they were to see me go. Some even expressed that they only came to school because of my class. It was hard leaving my students, because I knew who and what I was leaving my students with at the school. It hurt, because I wanted them to be okay, and because I worried that someone would mistreat them. It was hard to leave, but as I told

them, I was leaving to create a bigger influence on the education of students of color. Again, it was hard. But, thanks to social media, I still keep in touch with most of my students, and they still call/text/email me as if I am still their high school teacher. That has to alleviate feelings of guilt, but at times, I have wondered, who is helping current students of color?

Discussion

Culturally relevant pedagogy plus advocacy in predominantly White suburban high schools. Aligned with what Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) calls culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), educators in this study shared a particular ideology and had common behaviors that assisted in the "development of a relevant Black [and Latina/o] personality that allows African American [and Latin/oa] students to choose academic excellence yet still identify with African American [and Latina/o] culture" (p. 17) in a predominantly White suburban context. Similar to research on Black educators of the past (Anderson, 1988; Morris & Morris, 2002; Walker, 2000; 2003; Tillman, 2004; Ramsey, 2008), participants expressed a commitment to racial uplift for students of color and as CRP suggests, allowed a holistic educational approach. Through communal responsibility, they connected emotionally and culturally by affirming students' identities and culture, validating their knowledge, and advocating with and on behalf of students of color. Through their influence on academic achievement they connected academically and provided real life contexts and situations. For these educators, raising the academic achievement of students of color was not a job based off of limited state test scores and pre-scripted technical skills and strategies that could be picked up or put down. Instead, these educators considered it as their "responsibility and moral obligation" to help students reach their highest potential. For these educators, helping Black and Latina/o students find success was a way of life—a way of

seeing, being, and believing. They saw the genius in students of color; they did whatever was necessary and in the best interest of the students; they believed that they could make a difference; they knew that they played a positive force in their lives.

This way of seeing, being, and believing, connects to Ladson-Billings (2006) description of CRP as "rooted in how we think—about social contexts, about the students, about the curriculum, and about instruction" (p. 30). In suburban schools, these educators thought about the education of students of color in a holistic fashion— educator/student relationship, cultural affirmation, subject matter, equity, life skills, college visits, and cultural fieldtrips—and none were less important. Through a focus on equity, they went above and beyond the call of duty as an educator.

While previous studies (Lipman, 1997; Morris, 2001) discuss Black voices left out of discussions on the educational matriculation of Black students in integrated schools, this study also found these participants to be overlooked leaders that advocated for students of color. These advocates navigated and negotiated the academic, social, cultural, and racial playing field of school. One contribution of this study found that the additional advocacy approaches used by these Black educators in their predominantly White suburban schools was nuanced in ways that varied from users of CRP. The advocacy dimension provided by these educators went well beyond CRP's social justice component of sociopolitical consciousness, which suggests educators act as activists (Cochran-Smith, 2004) and challenge the status quo (Miller, 2013).

Participants recognized the ways that schools were disconnected from the needs of students of color, and took it upon themselves to advocate for students of color by standing in the gap and acting as middle-persons to navigate and negotiate between students of color and

schools. Through the programs that the participants directed, they were able to provide (a) a sense of community where care and trust were essential, (b) academic support through role models, guides, and mentors pushing for academic excellence, and (c) racial and cultural affirmation, celebration, and equity (Milner, 2010; Noguera, 2008). When participants worked with students, they helped them academically, socially, culturally, emotionally, and helped them develop critical perspectives.

Additionally, advocating on an institutional level, by working with faculty and staff, moved beyond the notion of CRP. This advocacy included protecting students of color on all fronts and from various forms of mistreatment, neglect, and macro and micro forms of racism in policies, curriculum, traditions, teacher/student and student/student relations. As described by MK, it was somebody at the school "watching out" for students of color, as a way to safeguard them from various forms of oppression, including colorblind ideologies or dysconsciousness (King, 1991)—failing to recognize the ways in which some students are privileged and others are disadvantaged at schools. Participants advocated for students as a way to provide educational opportunities and protect students' ability to attend school in an anti-racist environment.

Navigating and negotiating the racial academic space for and on behalf of students as well as teaching them how to manage those same spaces also went beyond CRP's sociopolitical consciousness. While CRP calls for educators to help students develop critical perspectives that recognize, examine, and challenge inequities in the classroom, the notion of helping students and faculty navigate and negotiate the day-to-day racial experiences takes challenging inequities one step further. In this way, these participants helped both educators and students to develop perspectives that challenge inequity. Participants worked with staff by breaking down barriers

for enrollment and matriculation in AP courses, led staff development or training sessions, insisted on inclusive curriculums, and helped one-on-one interactions. By working with faculty and staff, they advocated by deconstructing, constructing, and reconstructing (Shujaa, 1994) ideologies about educating students of color. Participants broke down knowledge about educating students of color, added new knowledge, took away misinformation, and created a more accurate and holistic picture.

Advocating for students of color in these ways was an integral part of how these educators added a new layer of advocacy to CRP and heightened sociopolitical consciousness in predominantly White suburban high schools. It was not enough to perform CRP in limited spaces, such as the classroom. Instead, they went above and beyond the classroom to advocate for students of color. Their pedagogical approach of CRP combined with advocacy practices represent a person that I have come to identify as an Educational Cultural Negotiator (ECN). The ECN is generally located within the school borders and is not limited to the classroom, uses a collaboration of educational advocacy approaches for students while using CRP. As seen in this study, ECNs facilitate academic success, by interpreting, translating, and navigating and negotiating the sociopolitical educational structure and culture of the students' for all parties. Furthermore, the ECNs center racial awareness and cultural resources, while encouraging students' academic achievement. More importantly, ECNs also challenge school policies and practices that have a deleterious impact on Black and Latina/o students. While there are other advocates in the schools that could work, very few are operating in these ways.

ECNs uphold the core values of success for all students, particularly students of color, and other marginalized groups, without conforming to racist practices or benign neglect of

students. The difference between the ECNs and other advocates and/or teachers who use CRP is that while ECNs use CRP in ways that promote student learning, they also use advocacy, negotiation, and other means to work with educators and school officials to change policies and practices. They also help students negotiate around teachers and administrators when need be; it is the role of advocacy and the process of negotiation that makes them different from advocates and educators who use CRP. Plus the role of an ECN is not limited to teachers or the classroom, but doctoral students, community members, or other persons connected and working in schools.

The Cost on Black Educators for Pursuing Equity. Looking at the work of these program directors and focusing on how we *think* about education reveals an equally important contribution to this study. The extra labor and stress for pursuing equity experienced by these Black educators captures the nature of the systematic issue of equity in predominantly White suburban schools: equity work to raise the educational outcomes of students of color is seen as a peripheral issue.

Equity work as a peripheral issues leaves educators with a choice to pursue more effective ways of operating, and it (a) demonstrates the negligence of the schools to challenge deficit ways of thinking, White middle school norms and values, and racist ideologies; (b) devalues the people, students and educators of color, and White students and educators in these spaces; and (c) places an additional weight of equity on educators of color who are simultaneously living it, fighting against it, and pursuing it for students of color. As a result, equity minded educators experience the extra labor to pick up the slack of what the school and faculty fail to address. The major contribution of this study confirms the need for all K-12

educators to develop their sociopolitical consciousness, as seen through the professional and personal costs of educators of color pursuing equity.

The participants in this study are living examples of the "challenges—and particularly the power dynamics—that marginalized students can expect to encounter in their lives" (Dallavis, 2011, p. 270). The ways in which these educators had to think and act to advocate for students of color is particularly troublesome, and at the same time being a mechanism for survival and sanity.

Participants in this study are also living examples of the challenges students face and will continue to face as people of color, as demonstrated in Jack's statement in the introduction of this chapter, "Whey they speak about *those* kids, they speak about us." As a result, these educators embodied CRP by investing in students' of color for the long-term and acted in ways to combat inequity, racism, and discrimination. As a result of seeking equity, these educators experienced the same inequity, racism, and discrimination that they were trying to help alleviate. Therefore, if these educators were experiencing this knowing how to advocate, navigate, and negotiate the racial space, the pressures and cost the students face were that much greater. MK described, "they feel it, but they don't know how to articulate that frustration they're having." Therefore, it is the professional responsibility of educators to help students understand and work through their experiences.

Additionally, developing sociopolitical consciousness also speaks to MK's statement describing the pursuit for equity as a "battle" and the participants in this study as warriors. MK stated, "they [the participants] often times have to go well-beyond [navigating and negotiating for students of color]. We have to fight for them. It's not even just a negotiation; it's a battle

sometimes. We become warriors of it [equity]." The image of the battle is troubling in the sense that these educators are seemingly fighting in isolation, which often causes the physical, mental, and emotional stress. Therefore, if we *think* of schools in terms of a team, a team for equity, it is no wonder that schools are not doing well. When only a few people are trying to do the work of many, the entire team suffers. Schools, faculty, and students are all suffering.

By developing a stronger sense of sociopolitical consciousness for faculty and staff, this helps to distribute the equity work, and educators can experience improved health and wellness, develop work-life balance, and make work a healthier experience. The healthier environment would also contribute to a physical, mental, and emotional healthier state of being for all individuals involved. These educators would also be able to utilize their talents in a broader manner. As long as their skills are concentrated on pursuing equity for students of color, their skills will always be under-utilized. By utilizing more effectively the skills of all educators, schools will benefit more in the long run.

The balance would also serve other educators as well. By allowing only a few educators in schools to take up equity work, schools are excusing educators from developing their sociopolitical consciousness and doing an injustice to their professional and personal growth process as educators, by (a) lowering the expectations for educators, (b) limiting their relationship with students and families of color, and (c) inadvertently contributing to the low achievement of students of color. The balance would work towards eliminating inequity, racism, and discrimination in the entire building.

Conclusion

Racial uplift for students of color and communal responsibility for students of color are long standing traditions in the Black community (Foster, 1997). The sense of communal responsibility allows for forming caring and connected relationships, affirming students' cultural backgrounds, and advocating for equitable schooling with and on behalf of students of color. These educators have also influenced the academics of students through encouragement, tutoring, student life workshops, college visits, and cultural fieldtrips. Through the use of CRP and advocacy, these ECNs have demonstrated the positive influence of a holistic approach to educating students of color. One complexity that participants faced was that there were only a few people in a school building or district with this mentality, and those guided by these ideologies experience additional complexities, pressures, and burdens which manifest in the form of mental, physical, and emotional stress as a result. These issues present the problem of sustainability for these educators and for their programs. To date, of the five programs, two are still in existence. Mama Davis is directing the program she started out with when she first became a teacher. Jack is currently directing the third program that he started; his second program no longer exists. The programs started by Ida, MK, and Coretta are no longer running. With those programs in mind, my question is, what can be done to enhance the sustainability of these educators and what suggestions might these educators have to offer schools and policy makers on ways to meet Asa Hilliard III's (1991, p. 34) challenge to "release the genius" in students of color and create a vision for holistic student enhancement?

Chapter 6

Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion

[T]his [effort] has got to be way bigger than what we're talking about, because all of the things that we talk about are band-aids, and not very good band-aids at that.

-Ida Jane, program director in this study

Participants of this study understood that their programs and the work that they did helped students in ways that they would never know; however, Ida's statement illustrates the underlying conclusion: to reach equity for all, it must be systematic.

This study asked, what are the characteristics, experiences, and complexities, of five Black educators working in predominantly White suburban school districts as program directors, and how can we sustain them as program directors? While in search of the answer to these questions, I found that there characteristics, experiences, and complexities told me more about the types of educators needed to pursue equity work and the nature of the schools that they worked. In answering the question regarding characteristics, I presented participants as having a spirit of racial uplift for students of color manifesting in communal responsibility and academic achievement.

The experiences and complexities that the educators experienced revealed the nature of the schools. If the predominantly White suburban schools are not safe and equitable for Black educators, expecting the space to be safe and equitable for students of color is farfetched. If schools want to achieve equity for all students, it must first start with equity for faculty of color. Good intentions are not enough; systems, policies, procedures, and practices are needed to

support faculty and students of color.

Implications

The implication for this research extends the CRP's sociopolitical consciousness by adding advocacy as a fundamental part in helping to better the educational outcomes of students of color. As demonstrated by what I have termed an ECN, students of color need educators who can: (a) provide the supports and resources to assist them achieve high expectations, as seen through the programs tutoring components; (b) empower them as collaborators in teaching and learning, as seen when Coretta helped the student deal with Spanish teacher; (c) respect and create conditions and opportunities for life lessons that facilitate positive student identity development, as seen through the programs use of speakers and life workshops; and (d) act as an activist teacher, as seen when the directors act on the behalf of students.

The notion of ECNs also has implications in the field of moral development in the ways that ECNs care for students of color. Similar to Mari Ann Roberts (2010) discussion of African American teachers on care for African American students, this study's illumination of the ways in which ECNs advocate for the whole student, including helping them and educators think about how information can be applied outside of the classroom, may add to the growing research on care as a part of pedagogical methods.

Recommendations

In this section, I offer the recommendations made by the participants for districts, schools, educational leaders, teachers, and policy makers on how to create equitable schools for students of color. Afterwards, I offer my recommendations and suggestions based on my

analyses of the data and my understanding of CRP's call to consider how we *think* about education and call to move beyond the classroom and consider the sociopolitical context of students, to look at the real world and real life application with all of the world's complexity.

All of the educators were consistent with the idea that discussions of race and the development of ways to achieve systematic equity needed to be at the forefront of all educational activities, because they often served as an undercurrents in educational outcomes. Additionally, participants suggested hiring more educators of color. In agreement with both suggestions, I recommend schools and districts complete an equity audit (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, and Nolly, 2004) which seeks systematic equity. Equity audits examine (a) teacher quality equity—which asks which students get the experienced and most credentialed teachers?; (b) programmatic equity—which asks what programs are students placed—special education, gifted and talented, bilingual education, and disciplinary system?; and (c) achievement equity—which asks, about high school completion, college-prep curriculum, college entrance exams, and advanced placement exams? To complete the audit districts can use the following steps outlined by Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, and Nolly (2004):

Step 1: Create a committee of relevant stakeholders.

Step 2: Present the data to the committee and have everyone graph the data.

Step 3: Discuss the meaning of the data, possible use of experts, led by a facilitator.

Step 4: Discuss potential solutions, possible use of experts, led by a facilitator.

Step 5: Implement solutions(s).

Step 6: Monitor and evaluate results.

Step 7: Celebrate if successful; if not successful, return to step 3 and repeat the process.

In keeping with the spirit of Ladson-Billings (2006) idea that the problem with reaching equity is rooted in how educators think about equity, I remind the reader that the "search for goodness," or the search for equity will not be found in a prescription. Instead, it will be found in dealing with complex and uncomfortable issues of power and oppression, race and racism, and other forms of marginalization. Too often, educators want to deal with surface issues—classroom management and activities—set a goal, and check it off the to-do list, as if that were possible to achieve educational equity. Pursuing equity is a life-long goal, and must be sought with a committed persistence and dedication, constantly learning and unlearning the nuanced and ever-evolving ways power and privilege manifest in *this* moment only to change the next. As the participants of this study—champions for equity—knew too well, pursuing equity is going against the traditional system and challenging the status quo. It requires understanding that there is no excellence without equity, and being courageous enough to continue the pursuit. With that understanding I provide examples of how educators might implement think about and implement equitable steps.

In conjunction with the recommended steps, participants and I both suggest districts and schools include sustained professional and staff development on issues of marginalization, power and privilege, where educators are required to engage in discussion on various topics such as, but not limited to race, gender, and sexual orientation, to discuss how it influences educators, students, and the community at large. These discussions must take place regularly and consistently. To begin, the process could include facilitated discussions on assigned book studies

such as *Privilege, Power and Difference* by Allan Johnson. As suggested by participants,

simultaneously, educators need to research their own cultural backgrounds and identities to begin

to learn about themselves, so that they can more effectively learn about others. In this way,

educators can look at their own forms of difference, power, and privilege to discuss how it might

influence educational outcomes. By learning about themselves—the complexity and humanity—

they can see the complexity and humanity in others and show informed compassion and

empathy.

Additionally, every educator, faculty and staff, should be required to address, at

minimum, two issues of difference—race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.—in their

classroom. Educators would use these issues as an integral part of the curriculum as opposed to a

detached add-on for the semester. The ways of addressing these issues could be completed in a

number of ways, such as, but not limited to, themed semester courses looking at one issue at a

time, examples weaved throughout the semester, or semester long research projects. Some

examples of the ways educators could address equity issues could include:

- Districts requiring a written statement about an applicant and current employee's

  understanding of race, and other forms of marginalization, and power and privilege to be

  reviewed for consideration to be hired. For current employees it would be a part of their

  review process.

- Districts assessing the local community to determine how the school could partner with

  the local community to provide integral educational opportunities and help change the

  community for the better. An example of this can be seen at Paul Quinn College in

  Dallas, Texas who partnered with PepsiCo's Food for Good Initiative and started a local

farm to address the food desert within the community. The college now provides fresh food for local community members, restaurants, and churches. Students work on the farm as a part of their biology and social entrepreneurship curricula.

- Administrators looking at the racial breakdown of the number of students with discipline and special education referrals, and honors placement and discuss how those numbers influence their student body and school at large, and come up with ways to address these issues.

- Educators, administrators and teachers serving as "homeroom family" educators for a number of students for their high school career. The purpose of these homeroom families would be to form significant relationships—caring and connecting, affirming, and advocating—for and with those students their entire four years. Homeroom families would meet once a week or twice a month to check in with students and get to know them as individuals. These homeroom families would be designed to take a break from traditional curriculum and offer students life lessons and discuss current event issues that have occurred, or problem solve to help students with issues that could be addressed in groups. Homeroom families could bring in speakers to discuss how they "made it." These homeroom families could also be the group basis for going on fieldtrips and college visits, which will be discussed later in this section.

- Educators using real life equity issues in their classrooms. For example,
  - Math and science educators could examine the numbers of men and women in the STEM field to illustrate the mathematical percentage and disproportionate under-representation of females in those courses and lead a discussion on why that may

be the case and what they might be able to do at the high school level to reverse this trend.

- o Family and consumer science educators and science educators could use the number of grocery stores or community gardens in one community versus another and what those numbers may say about how those things the influence communities.

- o English and history courses could look at local history and perform oral history projects looking at issues of difference and discuss the sociopolitical dynamics of the people interviewed.

- Requiring a freshmen and senior course discussing issues of marginalization, power, and privilege. The freshmen course would introduce the topics and provide language for some of the issues that they may have or will face, see, or hear about. The senior course could require students to create a capstone project on one or multiple topics looking at the issues of marginalization, power, and privilege.

- Principals and counselors having one section of the alphabet on their caseload. In this way educators could get to know families as opposed to multiple educators contacting one family for different siblings.

- The school offering mandatory scholar sessions twice a week, including, but not limited to, helping students complete and understand homework and class material, advance in their course work, or complete college related materials. These sessions could be offered during the regular school day.

- Counselors arranging college visits that would be required for all students as a part of their holistic education. The school would offer at least one field trip per year to a

different college each year. Students would be eligible to participate as long as they
attended the mandatory tutoring sessions offered by the school.

- Counselors arranging cultural fieldtrips offered at least once an academic school year.
  Students would be eligible to participate as long as they attended the mandatory tutoring
  sessions offered by the school.

- Clubs, with paid sponsors, offering multiple college visits and cultural fieldtrips.

The ways in which educators and schools could think about equity are limitless. Like developing

and planning anything new or old, it will require forethought, planning and rewiring how people

think about education by moving it into the context of real people and real communities,

discussing real issues, and challenging educators and students to "be the change" in the present.

In addition to the suggestions that could help districts and schools holistically, I want to

offer an intermediary suggestion that can help students and schools during the transition to

institutional change. Based off my analyses of the data and my understanding of how participants

in this study advocated for students of color, I suggest that schools create an equity office

dedicated to advocating for marginalized students on an institutional and individual level.

Similar to participants in this study, Educational Cultural Negotiators (ECN), would staff the

office and pursue, create, and facilitate equitable educational opportunities for students, faculty,

and even family members. The ECN position would be full-time jobs to adequately perform the

duties.

Conclusion

I am not interested in blame; I am interested in understanding and change. My purpose is

to say that educators and students of color have not been treated equitably. I present this study to

request that educational equity be made first on school agendas by instituting radical equity and asking educational leaders to deepen their sociopolitical consciousness and look at new ways to achieve equity for educators and students of color, because the cost is too high—Black educators are getting stressed out, programs supporting students of color are ending, and those students are being left behind. Educational leaders must recognize that the color of these educators and students of color will not change, and it is the system that must change by acknowledging and adjusting for the racial needs of these constituents. For far too long, educational leaders have tried to ignore race in school matters, and this study reveals that race is indeed a large factor for both educators and students. Making schools safe and equitable for educators of color will make it safe and equitable for the students of color. Educational leaders must spread the equity work throughout the school and with all educators; otherwise we will always get what we've paid for—slow progress and inequitable outcomes. It's got to be bigger.

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Appendix A

Interview Informed Consent (to be signed by each participant)

Date:

Dear Participant:

The Project
I am a doctoral student at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign in the department of the Educational Policy Studies Program. As a doctoral student, my work is supervised under the care of Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown, professor in the department of Educational Policy Studies. I am gathering information for a paper to be presented at the Annual Educational Research Association's annual meeting on the importance of after-school program directors as advocates for African American students. Research will be focused on the experiences and reflections of directors and staff members. By better understanding the experiences of the after-school program directors and staff members, administrators and researchers can consider the development of safe guards to prevent this type of advocacy burnout. Instead of schools seeking to replicate the persons, by studying these individuals involvement and practices, researchers and schools will have a greater sense of how to duplicate the process of creating and maintaining these programs, while diminishing the burnout rate of the individuals that run the programs. As a researcher I want to make known the wonderful impact these educators are having on the academic, social, and cultural lives of black students, while simultaneously understanding the cost it has on the lives of these advocates. As a dedicated educator who believes in the African proverb, "it takes a village," I am obligated to share a worthy and proven practice in helping black students find holistic success, while complicating the matter by identifying the difficulties the advocates face when helping these students.

The Proceedure:
In this study, I will be conducting three face-to-face or phone interviews with you which will last approximately 45minutes to an hour each. I will ask open ended questions regarding your personal experiences as they relate to the role of the director/staff member. I will also conduct two 2hour focus groups with other program directors and staff members. One focus group will be held prior to all interviews and the last focus group will be held after all completed interviews. With your permission, I will audio tape and later transcribe your responses for my data analysis. After our interview, I will code the information as a primary resource for us in my analysis. I may also present my findings at future academic conferences and build upon these themes in the future for article and book publication.

Important Information:
Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to participate or discontinue participation at any time during the interview and observation process. You may choose to decline to answer any question you do not wish to answer. You have been selected for inclusion in this study because of your affiliation with the after school program. Your name and identifiers will not be used in this study.

Riskys/Benefits:

There are no physical risks involved in this study. The consent form will specify that the participant may end the interview at any time, with no negative repercussions. Additionally, interviews will take place in a private space which may reduce discomfort.

To minimize risk, the researcher will share all data interpretations and written reports with subjects prior to completion for confirmation of intended statements, allowing subjects to edit or remove statements to decrease their risk and giving them final approval of their statements. If at any point before the completion of the project, the subject wishes to withdraw from the study, they may do so without repercussion.

All subjects can choose not to respond to any question for any reason without repercussion.

Questions/Contacts:
If you have any questions, comments, and/or concerns about this study, you may contact the following persons at any time:
Investigator: April M. Grice, Doctoral Student Educational Policy Studies, 351 Education Building, 1310 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, IL 61820 (314)-496-7951; agrice2@illinois.edu)
Responsible Principle Investigator: Dr. Ruth Brown, Professor of Educational Policy Studies, 351 Education Building, 1310 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, IL 61820 (217)-333-2990; rnbrown@illinois.edu)

You may also contact the Institutional Review Board office or the Bureau of Educational Research for information about the rights of human subjects in UIUC-approved research. You may call collect if you identify yourself as a research subject (217-333-2670; irb@illinois.edu) or 217-244-0538; ber@ed.illinois.edu)

Subjects will be given a copy of the consent form.

_____ Yes, I consent to the audio-taping of the interview

_____ No, I do not consent to the audio-taping of the interview

_____ Yes, I consent to the audio-taping of the focus group.

_____ No, I do not consent to the audio-taping of the focus group.
I have read the following consent form, discussed any concerns of questions I have with the investigator, and understood the projects's risks and benefits.

Signature   Date

_____   _____

(Printed name)

_____   _____

(Signature)

Appendix B

Recruiting Procedures (Sample e-mail/flyer for recruitment)

This project will interview after-school program directors and staff members in St. Louis, MO. Interviews and focus groups will take place with subjects that work directly with the programs. The interviews and focus groups will take place in locations with subjects at libraries, classrooms, offices, in the location of the subjects' personal residence, or over the phone. The researcher will invite this group of subjects to participate in voluntary oral interviews and focus groups using fowling email script:

Dear-------:

My name is April M. Grice and I am a doctoral student in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. I am gathering information for a study to be presented at the Annual Educational Research Association's annual meeting on after-school program directors and staff as advocates for African American students. Due to your involvement in these endeavors, I would like to invite you to participate in a voluntary interview and focus groups sharing and reflecting on your experiences with your program(s). If you are interested, I can provide you with additional information, consent materials, and schedule an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration. For questions, comments, and/or concerns please contact me via email, or phone 314-496-7951.

Sincerely,

April M. Grice

Appendix C

Interview Questions

WHO ARE THEY?

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself and what you do here at ___ high school?
2. How did you get involved with the program?
3. How do you describe your roles as a director?
    a. What do you do?
4. Why/how did you become the director?
    a. What compels you to do what you do?
    b. Why couldn't you do what you do in the program in your classroom or your
        i. counseling sessions?
5. Tell me about your educational process?
    a. Did you have anyone like yourself in your life?
    b. How did he/she help you matriculate through the educational process?
6. Describe a typical day in the life as a director.

SIGNIFICANCE TO BLACK and LATINO/A STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

1. Share with me the ways in which directors help student participants.
    a. Have you seen student grades and/or study habits improve since being apart of the program?
2. If yes, why and how do you think they improved? Do you think the directors helped in any way, if yes, how?
    a. If no, why don't you think they improved?
    b. Since being a part of the program have you seen student behavior change? In what
3. ways at school?
    a. Have you seen student outlook change about school and/or college?
    b. If so, how?
4. Is there a difference between the ways the directors assist students academically, socially, culturally versus the teachers?
    a. If yes, explain the difference between the ways in which directors and teachers assist with the students' academic assignments.
5. Share with me an example of how the directors help parents?
6. Share with me an example of how the directors help teachers?
    a. Please give a specific example of how the directors assist teachers with the academic progress of students.
    b. Do the directors speak to students' teachers about their academics? If yes, how often do you think they communicate with them—once a week, once a month, twice a month, once a semester or quarter?

     c.   Would you say, speaking to the teachers is a good thing or bad thing? Why?
7. Do you believe being in a program like this will help them in the future? How?
8. In what ways do you think you influence Black and Latino student achievement?
9. Do you think your role is critical to Black and Latino/a student achievement? If so, why?
10. On a scale of 1-4, 4 being the best, how would you describe the work of the directors? Explain.

EXPERIENCES

1. Describe a typical workshop day including prep time to finish.
2. What goes on during workshops/meetings?
3. How often do you all meet?
    a. If meetings are held during the day, how are students notified and allowed out of class?
4. What challenges do you face as director?
5. Are you ever stressed directing the program? If yes, explain.
    a. Explain the conflicts/tensions you may experience as directors.
    b. What are the professional and political pressures you face as the director of this program? Explain.
6. Describe the balance of your full-time job, directing the program, and your personal life?
7. On a scale of 1-4, 4 being the best, how satisfied are you with your performance being a director, or when you were a director? Explain.
8. Do you feel supported by the school district administrators, faculty/staff, parents, and students?
    a. Do you have enough support to run the program?
    b. How long do you think you can actually run the program under the current conditions?
9. What is the director experience like, mentally, physically, and emotionally?
10. Would you characterize your work as director easy, not complex, complex, or difficult?
    a. What do you need to make your life as a director better—easier, less stressful, and less complex?

POLICY

1. What insight has being a director brought into your classroom or counseling sessions?
2. Do you believe a program like this necessary? Explain.
3. What would be the ideal school system for a program like this?
4. Thinking about all that it takes to take care of you, your job, your director position, your professional and personal life, what would it take to sustain you as director?
5. How can we keep you as a director going strong?

Appendix D

Focus Group Questions

Introductions

State your name, provide a description of the program you direct.

WORKSHOP

1. Describe one of your most fondest moments directing the program.

2. Discuss the ways in which you advocate for students of color.

3. Describe one of the most challenging moments directing the program.

4. What suggestions might you offer

   a. Administrators to support ECNs

   b. Professional development leaders to help other educators

   c. Teacher education programs to help prepare future teachers

Conclusion

Final thoughts on directing your program.