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Toxic World for Chocolate Skin: Black Educator-Parents and the
Layers of Racism They Navigate

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Tanisha Lorraine Johnson

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Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Rita Kohli, Chairperson

Dr. Eddie Comeaux

Dr. Louie F. Rodríguez

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The Dissertation of Tanisha Lorraine Johnson is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my children. Marley and Ezekiel, you are my why to this work. I pray that I will be able to shield you for as long as I can from the harsh realities of this world, but I know that you are covered and prayed for by your family and community.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Toxic World for Chocolate Skin: Black Educator-Parents and the Layers of Racism They Navigate

by

Tanisha Lorraine Johnson

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Dr. Rita Kohli, Chairperson

There has been a consistent trend in the last twenty years where Black children “continue to lack equal access to a high-quality education and still lag far behind their white peers in reading and math proficiency, high school [graduation] rates, and college completion” (Obama, 2012). Also in the current state of education for Black children, we see disproportionate discipline and SPED identification levels. The perspectives of Black educator-parents are highlighted to answer the following: (a) What are the unique layers of racialization and racism that Black educator-parents navigate in the K–12 educational system? and (b) What are the strategies Black educator-parents employ to navigate and resist the racialized context of schools on behalf of their children? Through the use of Critical Race Theory to ground the study, the analysis shows that while Black educator-parents address racist ideologies and practices in their home communities and school, they can also resist and navigate these stressors in the schooling system. This study has

implications for teaching, teacher education, and schooling to benefit the trajectory of education for Black children.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

African American student achievement not only lags behind that of their domestic peers by an average of two grade levels, but also behind students in almost every other developed nation. Over a third of African American students do not graduate from high school on time with a regular high school diploma, and only four percent of African American high school graduates interested in college are college-ready across a range of subjects. An even greater number of African American males do not graduate with a regular high school diploma, and African American males also experience disparate rates of incarceration. (Obama, 2012)

On July 26, 2012, President Barack Obama issued this statement related to the Executive Order – White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans.¹ While Black² leaders like Carter G. Woodson (1933), W.E.B. Dubois (1903), and James Baldwin (1963) have been drawing attention to the gross educational disparities that Black students endure for almost a century, the statement was a rare institutional acknowledgement of this national issue. The president went on to argue that there is a generation of African American children who “continue to lack equal access to a high-quality education and still lag far behind their White peers in reading and math proficiency, high school [graduation] rates, and college completion” (Obama, 2012). As referenced in the title of this dissertation, the world has been toxic for Black students in our educational systems (Nwigwe, 2020).

¹ “The term African American refers to Americans of African ancestry” who also share a history of being enslaved and cultural practices (Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2015, p. 56; Dumas, 2016). This term will be capitalized and used in direct quotes.

² Black is used as a more inclusive term that includes those from the African Diaspora. In this study, the term Black is capitalized throughout the paper and will primarily be used throughout the paper.

As it stands nine years later, the state of education for Black children consists of racial disparities in college degree attainment, disproportional representation in special education services (SPED), and their over criminalization of in the Zero-Tolerance era of schooling. According to a 2020 report published by the National Center for Education Statistics, white³ public high school students (89%) graduate high school 10 percentage points higher than their Black peers (79%) in 2017–2018 (Hussar et al., 2020, p. 99). The gap in racial disparities in post-secondary education are consistent. For the past two decades (2000–2018), white students have sustained a higher college enrollment rate than that of their Black peers (Hussar et al., 2020). The percentage of whites completing a bachelor’s degree or higher is almost twice that of Blacks—43% of whites in comparison to 23% of Blacks (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The data overwhelmingly indicates that the idea of educational equity for Black students has not resulted in equal rates of high school attainment or the pursuit of higher education.

There is a body of literature that pathologizes Black children, blaming them and their families for these disparities (Bonilla Silva, 2017; Ridgeway & McGee, 2018). For example, Ogbu’s (1983) and Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) research on Black underachievement argues that African American students conflate academic achievement with “acting white,” and thus, to maintain a “kinship” with one’s Black culture, academic achievement must be vilified and avoided at all costs. Many scholars have critiqued this

³ The term white will not be capitalized throughout this work except to maintain the integrity of direct quotes. White and whiteness are social constructs not denoting shared kinship or common experiences. The historical existence of this term is merely a “negation of others” and denotes a trail of “colonization and terror” (Dumas, 2016, p. 13).

approach and other manifestations of deficit thinking of Black students in schools because it blames African Americans and their culture for their underachievement (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Walker, 2010). Delpit (2006) shows how the deficit perceptions of mostly white teachers leads to the othering and underachievement of Black students. Bonilla Silva (2017) extensively discusses the deficit frame that has been used to talk about Black students and people in general, which I review further in Chapter 2. These scholars, and others, have focused on the role of school structures, policies, and practices in exacerbating educational inequity.

Black Students and Special Education

Black students not only experience disparities in opportunities for educational advancement, they are also disproportionately represented in SPED. Nationally, while Black students make up only 15% of the public-school population, they make up 18% of public school students labeled with a disability (Office for Civil Rights, 2016). For all other listed racial groups, the figures of students receiving services are either closely comparable to the national enrollment average or lower.

This idea of academic inferiority bleeds into the overrepresentation of Black students receiving SPED services (Blanchett, 2014). Blanchett (2014) finds that Black students have a greater risk of being identified with a disability than white students and are in fact, “two times more likely to be identified and placed in special education for an intellectual disability” (p. 277). Teachers and other educational professionals who are not adequately prepared to service the needs of Black students in the classroom are making the decisions and referrals that have sustained a state of education in which Black

students are harshly disciplined, over diagnosed in SPED services, and experience disproportionate rates of academic attainment (Annamma, 2015; Blanchett, 2006; Tefera et al., 2014).

The Criminalization of Black Students

Additionally, the national data show that Black students are twice as likely to be criminalized by the public education system. Though making up 15% of the national student enrollment Black students comprised, 33% of students receiving one or more in-school suspensions, 41% of students getting one or more out-of-school suspensions, 46% of students receiving more than one out-of-school suspension, 31% of students referred to law enforcement, and 36% of those law enforcement referrals resulting in student arrest (Office for Civil Rights, 2016). In each area of discipline presented, Black student representation is more than two times their national numbers enrolled in public schools.

Annamma (2015) acknowledges that in addition to being failed academically, Black students are also over criminalized. The overcriminalization, or more specifically, the racial criminalization of Black students occurs through more severe punishment for behaviors typical to adolescence (Freeman et al., 2013). According to Rabaka (2010), racial criminalization is "Hypercriminaliz[ation] on the basis of one's race, or rather, the combined process(es) and/or predicament(s) of being simultaneously racialized and criminalized and the ongoing effects of simultaneous racialization and criminalization" (as cited in Annamma, 2015, p. 192). This hypercriminalization occurs over a period of time in school settings. Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) find that initial disciplining incidents involving Black students in schools stem from a preconceived stereotype. From

this first incident, subsequent encounters are measured from the stereotyped first. Thus, each additional incident escalates resulting in a “Black-escalation effect” (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015, p. 622) in instances where Black and white students behave in the same way but are responded to differently. Okonofua and Eberhardt believe “teacher responses may even help to drive racial differences in student behavior...[and] to some extent, may inspire repeated misbehavior by Black students” (pp. 622–623).

Though stereotyping and deep-seated biases plague the social fabric of the United States, government policy made the criminalization of Black students easier. According to Cauchon (1999), “Zero-tolerance policies started sweeping the country in 1994 after Congress required states to adopt laws that guaranteed one-year expulsions for any student who brought a firearm to school” (para. 24). In addition to these policies being enacted, all 50 states were also forced to adopt the laws if they wanted to receive federal funding (para. 24). These policies resulted in mandatory expulsion for bringing alcohol, drugs, and weapons into school or onto the school campus (para. 6). Black kids are disproportionately affected by these harsh discipline policies. Research has demonstrated that over disciplined Black students “are less likely to academically engage in classrooms, result[ing] in their being perceived as academically inferior” (Emdin, 2016, p. 10).

Black Students in California

The state of California is reflective of the national problem. A state known for its multiracial population, 54% of California public school students are Latinx (California Department of Education, Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Ethnicity, 2018). Despite

comprising just 6% of the student population, Black students have the highest suspension rate of all students, comprising 17% of students who received one or more in-school suspensions, 21% of students who have gotten more than one out of school suspension, 16% of students who have been referred to law enforcement, and 18% of students who have had school discipline encounters resulting in an arrest (Office for Civil Rights, 2016). Black students in California are two to three times more likely to be represented in disciplining practices resulting in missing classroom instruction and/or involving police interference (Losen & Martin, 2018). In their analysis of suspension trends in California, Losen and Martin (2018) find that during the 2016–2017 school year, “Black students in grades 7 and 8 lost 71 days of instruction per 100 enrolled (52 more days per 100 than the 19 per 100 lost by White students)” (p. 3). In elementary school, the gap is maintained: “13 additional lost days per 100 days for Black K-3 students and 30 more lost days in grades 4-6” (p. 3).

The state of education for Black children is more than a persistent coincidence that the educational system just cannot seem to get right. Since the inception of this country, Blacks have not only been fighting for the freedom of their bodies, but have also been in a constant battle for the control of the growth and enrichment of their minds. Critical race scholars would argue that this persistent state of discourse around Black education is not one of coincidence and complexity, but instead an issue of race and racism in schooling leading to persistent educational disparities for Black children.

There are those, like Senator Tim Scott from South Carolina who would argue that “America is not a racist country” and we are now living in an antiracist society

(Brown, 2021). While we are all allowed to have our opinions, there has been a historic and persistent disservice to Black children by the American education system throughout this country's history resulting in disproportionate access to and completion of school, higher diagnosis resulting in SPED services, and discipline two times the national and state enrollment of Black students in public schools.

As our public schooling institutions are not protecting Black children, a small but growing body of research has shown the role parents of Black children play in advocating for their children, as well as the barriers and racialization they face (Allen, 2017; Fields-Smith & Williams, 2008; Posey-Maddox et al., 2021; Powell & Coles, 2021). Another body of literature has shown how Black educators play a role in protecting and advocating for Black youth from racial harm (McKinney de Royston et al., 2020). But research also shows the racialized struggles with race-related stressors they experience at work when considering why they leave the teaching profession (Frank et al., 2021; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014). In this study, I explore how Black educators—broadly defined as those with connections to the education system, “staff, instructional, or otherwise who support children within schools” (McKinney de Royston et al., 2020, p. 100)—who are also parents, navigate the layers of race-related stressors that they and their children experience.

Given the current state of education for Black students in California, Black educator-parents could play a pivotal role in addressing persistent racial inequities in our school system. Thus, it is important to consider what they experience, how they navigate it, and what insights they can offer. The dissertation engages Critical Race Theory—a

theoretical lens supporting a historical and institutional analysis of racism—to explore the following questions: What are the unique layers of racialization and racism that Black educator-parents navigate in the K–12 educational system? And what are the strategies Black educator-parents employ to navigate and resist the racialized context of schools on behalf of their children? In Chapter 2, I present my chosen theoretical frameworks used to steer my study along with the literature review that further sets the context to which this study is done. In Chapter 3, I lay out my methodology. In Chapters 4 and 5, I present the findings of the study, followed by my conclusion and implications in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework & Literature Review

To understand the layers of racism that Black educator-parents endure, we must historicize the current conditions of K–12 schools. In this chapter, I first lay out my theoretical framework, Critical Race Theory (CRT). I then use these frameworks to review historical and empirical research on how schools have intentionally and unconsciously underserved Black students. I further show the ways in which the use of this framework, along with its conceptual tools, allow me to examine the manner in which race and racist practices affect Black educators and their children in and out of school.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In this dissertation, I use Critical Race Theory (CRT), with specific focus on micro- and macroaggressions, racial battle fatigue, and community cultural wealth to guide the study from the research question and literature review, through the collection and analysis of my data. I use CRT as a lens “to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly impact social structures, practices, and discourses” as it concerns the state of education for Black children (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). More specifically, using racial microaggressions as a “tool for identifying, disrupting, and dismantling the racism that marginalizes, subordinates and excludes,” on a micro level, allows me to precisely explain how Black educator-parents and their children not only encounter racialized harms in society, but that they are also mirrored within the K–12 school system interpersonally as well as structurally (Perez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 297). This framework, which I unpack here, guides the research design and makes sense

of the racial undertones that school districts, administration, and teachers ignore and/or address in their daily interactions with Black children.

What is Critical Race Theory?

One cannot explain what CRT is without first addressing what race is and its historical roots in formation of America and the American education system. Race is an ever-evolving method of human characterization. It is a social construct that changes as society's views on race change and evolve. To analyze race as just a color or a category to check off on a form, is to not do this social construct justice. Race carries so much more power and meaning than just the color of one's skin or the ability to claim ethnic affiliation to a country other than the United States (James, 2008; Kohli, 2008; Winant & Omi, 1994). According to Harris (1993), race and racism were social enterprises created to ensure the accumulation of wealth. To be white ensured that you could own human property as well as land, and be educated. Even to be poor and white allowed you to participate in the economy to work for wages, no matter how meager. More specifically, "the rationalized morality of the slavery system...depended upon [the distinctions between Blacks and Whites], which also worked to pacify poor Whites...with the relatively higher levels of status it bestowed upon them" (James, 2008, p. 33). As property, Blacks were not afforded the same privilege. Harris (1993) continues to insist that historically and presently, American laws are constructed to protect economic interests related to land and whiteness.

CRT emerged as a legal theory in the 1980s, offering a lens of analysis that acknowledges the effects of race and racism on American society and to explain why,

even after a national decree for racial equality such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, Black students are still not getting access to educational opportunities at a comparable rate as their white peers. As it stands, CRT is “an explanatory framework that accounts for the role of race and racism in education and works toward identifying and challenging racism as a larger goal of identifying and challenging all forms of subordination” (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 301). According to Critical Race Theorists (CRITs), race and racism exist in American society, as air exists in the atmosphere. We cannot necessarily always see the many ways in which we interact with air and it interacts with us, but its presence is certain. Race and racism exist in the same way. We may not always overtly experience it, but it is constantly present (Solórzano, 1997).

Scholars of education argue that CRT research must challenge dominant ideology. This theory “provides a theoretical platform to challenge dominant ideology serving to classify People of Color⁴ and the cultural capital they bring into the classroom as deficient to achieve academic success in the current structure of education” (Solórzano, 1997). The gap in educational achievement of Black and white students has been researched through a lens of what the Black community does not have to succeed in school (Fordham & Ogbu, 2008[1986]). CRT offers an alternate perspective of analysis:

shift[ing] the research lens away from a deficit view of Communities of Color as places full of cultural poverty disadvantages, and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged. (Yosso, 2005, p. 69)

⁴“The use of the term ‘of color,’ as in ‘students of color,’ refers to people who are Black, Latino/a, or Asian and have darker skin than those considered White” (Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2015, p. 56).

Through this alternate view, CRT illuminates' wealth where previous research has labeled deficient characteristics of a people keeping them away from academic success. CRT challenges the dominant narratives concerning the academic success of Black students that are deeply rooted in deficit thinking.

Applied to educational research, CRT asserts that to begin an analysis of the educational performance of students of color, the existence of racism must be acknowledged and interrogated. Solórzano's (1997) work builds upon Lorde (1992) and Marable (1992) to define racism. According to Solórzano (1997), "(1) one group believes itself to be superior; (2) the group which believes itself to be superior has the power to carry out the racist behavior; and (3) racism affects multiple racial/ethnic groups" (p. 8).

Racial Microaggressions

The experiences of racism Black parents and students encounter occur in the form of racial microaggressions that are both subtle and blatant (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). The term racial microaggression is on record of being first used by Dr. Chester Pierce, a Black psychiatrist, in 1970 in his work analyzing the psychiatric needs of the Black community having had to deal with consistent instances of racism in their daily lives. Racial microaggressions are the systemic and everyday racism experienced by People of Color in order to keep them in their place. These verbal and non-verbal assaults are layered, cumulative, and often subtle, automatic, or unconscious forms of racism that target People of Color (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). The examination of microaggressions experienced by Black parents and children through the lens of CRT "centers on the lived experiences of ... those targeted by microaggressions" (Perez Huber

& Solórzano, 2015, p. 301). These microaggressions are also indicative of the “larger problem of racist structures and ideological beliefs” impacting the everyday lives of Black educator-parents and their children (Perez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 302).

These “cumulative assaults ... take a psychological, physiological, and academic toll on People of Color” (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 298). They “foster doubt, produce anxiety, and can be exhausting” to Black educators who endure the draining impact of racism on a daily basis in their professions as they encounter and resist them (Pizarro & Kohli, 2020, p. 969). In addition to Black educators, Black people, in general, also experience harm because of these assaults. Black parents are not exempt from this and for Black educator-parents (Bailey-Fakhoury & Mitchell, 2018), they are not only experiencing racial microaggressions in their professions on themselves and the Black children they service, but they also encounter these racialized harms on behalf of their own children and families.

Racial Battle Fatigue

The exhaustion experienced by the Black community due to the daily insistent psychological and physiological damage leads to what Smith (2004) terms *racial battle fatigue* in his work analyzing the effects of racism on Black faculty in predominantly white institutions of higher education. Smith defines racial battle fatigue:

a response to the distressing mental/emotional conditions that result from facing racism daily (e.g., racial slights, recurrent indignities and irritations, unfair treatments, including contentious classrooms, and potential threats or dangers under tough to violent and even life-threatening conditions). (p. 180)

This response to daily experiences of trauma leave Black people “feeling mentally, emotionally, and physically drained” (Smith et al., 2011, p. 301). The physical

side effects of racial microaggressions are numerous and they can lead to Black educator-parents “losing confidence in themselves, questioning their life’s work or even their life’s worth” (Smith et al., 2011, p. 301). Black teachers are already disproportionately represented in the U.S. teaching force. With about 80% of the U.S. teaching force being white, Black educator-parents are highly vulnerable to being pushed out of the professions due to the extra stressors of racism at work. Constantly being forced to have one’s emergency stress-response system switched on to survive chronic racial microaggressions “can reduce one’s personal sense of control and elicit feelings of loss, ambiguity, strain frustration, and injustice” (Smith et al., 2011, p. 301).

Community Cultural Wealth

In addition to the centrality of racism and speaking back to dominant deficit framing of students of color, CRT scholars draw on the strengths of the lived experiences of these communities through storytelling, family history, biographies, scenarios, parables, chronicles, and narratives” (Solórzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005). In this study, CRT allows “for the incorporation of counterstorytelling as a methodological tool so that parent voice can be a focus of this study” (Howard & Reynolds, 2008, p. 80). When it comes to understanding the experiences of Black students and their education, so much scholarship and discourse is focused on best practices in a historical moment. CRT urges to explore the concerns and needs of Black students through historical legacies of structural racism. Despite claims of America not being a racist country, CRT validates the persistent societal and professional racism experienced by Black educators and I use this framework to center the Black educator-parents’ narratives of these occurrences.

The narratives of Black educator-parents counters dominant ideology about Black parents and Black educators while validating and centering their experiential knowledge about navigating the intersection of their identities. Within these narratives, a cultural wealth is uncovered in Black communities that enables them to navigate and sustain in a system of schooling not built for their success. Through the use and support of CRT, Yosso (2005) presents the case of community cultural wealth within communities of color which include aspects of aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capitals. *Aspirational capital* speaks to the maintained hopes and dreams for the future, despite all aspects of living life while a person of color seem to fight against success. *Linguistic capital* involves the intellectual and social skills possessed by those who have knowledge of and experience with more than one language and/or style of communication. *Familial capital* acknowledges the nurturing ability of family to provide “history, memory and cultural intuition...that model lessons of caring and coping...inform[ing] our emotional, moral, educational, and occupational consciousness.” *Social capital* refers to the “network of people and community resources” leaned on by communities of color to “provide instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions.” *Navigational capital* are the skills required to move through institutions not created with the success of people or communities of color in mind. *Resistant capital* speaks to the “knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (pp. 79–80). For the purpose of this work, navigational, social, and resistant capitals will be the source of focus for the discussion of the ways in which Black educator-parents resist and navigate

the racism they experience in their everyday lives and professionally as they support their own children in schooling.

Review of Related Literature

Understanding the racialized experiences of Black educator-parents and their children requires the historicization of the current conditions of K–12 schools. I use CRT, microaggressions, community cultural wealth, and racial battle fatigue as tools to make sense of historical and empirical research on how schools have intentionally and unconsciously underserved Black students as well as the manner in which race and racism affect Black educators and their children in and out of school.

The Struggle for Black Education in America (How K–12 schools have historically not served the needs of Black students)

Though California entered the Union in 1850 as a free state, it was not free from educational inequality for Blacks caused by segregation. The battle for equal educational opportunities had been waged in California long before the *Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education* decision in 1954. California’s first school for “colored children” was established on May 22, 1854 by San Francisco’s Board of Education in response to Black parents declaring the right to receive public schooling for their children (Wollenberg, 1978, p. 10). California was not legally obliged to provide schooling for Black children until 1864. The 1864 law stated that school districts had to provide accommodations for a separate school in communities with 10 or more children of color. For communities with 10 or less children of color, the districts could provide separate education for them in any

manner that the district deemed appropriate (Wollenberg, 1978, p. 14). African American parents argued that this policy was one of taxation without representation.

In 1874, California School code was amended to state that if school districts could not “provide separate schools for children of African descent, then such children must be admitted into the schools for White children” (Wollenberg, 1978, p. 24). It was not until 1880 that school legislation struck race from its language, but instead put in its place the following: “schools must be open for the admission of all children *excluding those of filthy or vicious habits, or children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases*” (p. 25, emphasis added).

Black students and their parents came to understand that equal was not the case. The very nature of schools being separated by race supported the conclusion that they were inherently unequal. Segregated schools, though separate, were deemed equal in the eyes of the law until 1954. The segregated Jim Crow schools served the interests of Whites who relied on “the pool of cheap, unskilled Black labor” (Irons, 2004, p. 31). These schools for Black children protected the economic interests related to land and Whiteness. Irons (2004) further states that these schools, “which taught their students only those skills needed for agricultural work and domestic service fit the needs of the White economy and society” (p. 31). In addition to the limited curriculum of segregated schools which were not equal to that of white students, funding disparities were present in schools in Jim Crow states from Delaware to Texas. In fact, these states spent “three times as much on each White student as they did on Blacks” (p. 33). The facilities of the schools were not close to being equal, with none of the secondary schools housing

adequately sourced labs to even conduct science classes that their Black teachers probably were not sufficiently trained to teach (p. 36). These teachers tried their best for their Black students, but could only do so much seeing that they were also a product of the same inadequate system not meant to educate the Black mind, but instead to form it to the liking of those who were in control (Dumas, 2016; Irons, 2004). Using CRT as a lens, the structure and very existence of these early schools were built on the social construct of race serving the economic interests of a racist country.

Segregation in public schools was deemed unconstitutional with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. The *Brown* case outlawed *de jure* segregation, but it had not accounted for *de facto* segregation, “happen chance” segregation occurring because of where someone lives or making the choice of sending a child to a private school; all of which happened in the aftermath of the *Brown* decision with *white flight*. Entire neighborhoods experienced a demographic shift during the 1950s and 1960s in which white families moved from the city centers out to the suburbs to get away from the influx of families of color (Rousseau, 2014). Today, schools are far more segregated than they were in 1970, and are now contending with “double segregation by race and poverty for African American and Latino students” (Orfield et al., 2016).

The case against the Board of Education by the *Brown* defendants came from this history of the systemic efforts to disenfranchise Blacks from the rights and freedoms to pursue life and liberty as citizens of America. These issues still remain today, but are instead shrouded by school district lines that have corralled poor people of color into urban school districts that are not performing at the same levels of their suburban and

more white counterparts (Ayscue & Orfield, 2016). Urban school districts contend with inadequate resources, facilities, funding, and years of teacher experience in the discussion of teacher attrition in these high need areas (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The race and racism exist in the same way as they once did during Jim Crow and slavery (Solórzano, 1997). Though the concept of antiblackness is not theorized and applied to the data in this work, this continued state of disproportionality and inequality indicates that “education policy is a site of antiblackness” as the struggle for educational opportunity is “a struggle against specific antiblack ideologies, discourses, [and] (mal)distribution of material resources” (Dumas, 2016, p. 16).

Dumas (2016) argues that the very nature of having to integrate schools posits Black children and families as a problem having to be contended with and tolerated as they encroach upon the educational system structured to educate whites to accumulate land and wealth. He further states that the need to even have school desegregation policies is proof of the antiblack sentiment that ran deep in the roots of America despite the appearance of antiracist progress.

Segregation and other forms of systemic and individualized discrimination continues to persist in K–12 schools, and manifests in various forms. Over the last 25 years, intensely segregated non-white schools—schools 0–10% white students—have increased from 5.7% in 1988 to 18.6% in 2013 of all public schools (Orfield et al., 2016, p. 3). For Black students specifically, California is #6 on the 2012–2013 list of intensely segregated non-white schools, with 47.9% of Black students attending schools in which 0 to 10% of the student population is white (Orfield et al., 2016, p. 3). According to CRT,

this new aged racism is just not overt, just instead present in districting, funding, and policy issues that target people of color, and for the purposes of this paper Black people (Dumas, 2015; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015).

How Schools Continue to Underserve Black Students

Added to the problem of disparate resources in segregated schools, are the demographics of the teaching force. There are 80% of teachers in U.S. public schools who are white (Taie & Goldring, 2018, p. 7). Those majority white and monolingual teachers have likely grown up in racially segregated neighborhoods, attended racially segregated schools, and have had less of a chance to gain “experiential . . . background that would prepare them for the growing diversity of their students” (Howard, 2006; Sleeter, 2001).

Teacher Bias Impacting How Black Students Are Treated

Research has shown that students of color are likely to suffer from the consequences of implicit racial bias even when teachers and administrators are not aware of these biases. Negative stereotypes and media coverage of Black youth continue to perpetuate an image of the Black child to White preservice teachers outside of the realms of any teacher education program or diversity course (Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2015). This historically pervasive belief of the “deviant Black person” who is uneducable, unworthy of education, and a threat to whiteness lingers despite scholarly work to counteract these racist ideologies, adding to discussion about education of Black children and the mannerisms in which they are taught and treated in the K–12 classroom (Carter et al., 2017, p. 212; Dumas, 2016). For example, Sealy-Ruiz and Greene (2015) explore “the

existing stereotypes about Black males and media representations of them” continuing to flood the airwaves and affecting the view of white preservice teachers of their Black students (p. 55). They address the feeding of this implicit bias and state, this skewed view is “a [masked] silent killer,” creating an “educational genocide” against the possibility of “an equitable education for Black students” (Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2015, p. 55).

With the majority of teachers in schools being white and segregated communities still abound, many teachers are entering the profession without having had experiences with any people of color (Carter et al., 2017). This lack of experience along with pervading stereotypical images of Black people, seep into the walls of the school house and show itself in teaching and disciplinary actions of classroom teachers (Carter et al., 2017; Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2014). According to Carter et al. (2017), these issues aren’t truly addressed or discussed within teaching because “they [would] force educators to reflect on their own views of and interactions with students” (p. 218). Not forcing educators to acknowledge deficit thinking and racist ideologies seep into all aspects of US society and schooling, is a disservice to Black children and their families who are on the receiving end of this everyday violence (Dumas, 2016; Yosso, 2005).

Research has presented the case that Black student behaviors are more harshly scrutinized and deemed as punishable or grounds for special education testing by white teachers (Annamma, 2015; Blanchett, 2014; Carter et al., 2017). The consequences of harsh school discipline policies permanently remove many students of color from the school system and into a high likelihood of poverty and prison (Carter et al., 2017). In traditional school settings, “students from communities of color experience the school

system as a funnel where they are outed from the schoolhouse doors to the doors of a prison” (Annamma, 2015, p. 192). The pipeline reflects how school systems prioritize the incarceration of students over their education (American Civil Liberties Union, 2008).

Bennett and Harris (1982) researched the causes of the higher numbers of Black males being suspended and expelled from school. Thirty-eight years later, the same discussion is being had in school disciplining measures for Black children in school. Three days into a new school year during the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic, the family of 12-year-old Isaiah Elliott found themselves on the receiving end of harsh disciplining rules negatively impacting the future education of a Black male. Isaiah was at home partaking in an art class when his teacher reported that he had brandished a firearm in the camera of his Zoom class meeting. The school resource officer was called in and reported to the young man’s home. Isaiah’s mom was terrified of what could happen with an officer reporting to her home with her Black husband and son present. The family “lashed out at the school, arguing that it was irresponsible to call police given the frequency of police violence against Black people” (Peiser, 2020). Isaiah was suspended for five days and the incident permanently put on his discipline record. His family decided to pull him out of his public school to enroll him into a charter school. The boys’ mother shares that though the school feels like they did the right thing, they actually put her son’s life in danger by having a police officer report to her home. She references that Tamir Rice, who was shot and killed by officers in 2014 was also 12 like her son. Fields-Smith and Williams (2009) refer to this hostile school environment in their article in which they share that Black families refer to these “institutional norms and

structures within schools [creating] destructive, rather than supportive learning environments for children of African descent” (p. 376). Rather than offering alternative measures to support their educational achievement, discipline policies continue to use suspension and expulsion as the only solution.

Black Parents and Schooling

Not only is the classroom environment important for the development of children in general, but for Black parents, school climate and the way that they are or are not welcomed on campus or at their district, plays a major role in the schooling of Black children (Posey-Maddox, 2017). Research on Black student experiences in schooling involving their parents often centers on the level of involvement of Black parents in the schooling of their children, however, an often overlooked piece of the story is “the ways in which racialized community-based experiences and interactions mirror [parental] relationships with institutional agents in their children’s schools” (Posey-Maddox, 2017, p. 2). Black parents experiences with racial microaggressions in their surrounding communities are “relived and reinforced in their children’s schools” (p. 2) resulting in Black parents supporting their children outside of school in other ways that are not traditionally counted by school teachers and administration as forms of active participation such as volunteering at school, attending parent-teacher conferences, or other school site events (Noguera, 2001). Posey-Maddox (2017) found that the Black parents in their study shared experiences of racial microaggressions that were placed in the following four categories: “hypervisibility and invisibility; presumed homogeneity; presumed criminality; and the rebuffing or dismissal of parents’ engagement efforts” (p.

13). Posey-Maddix (2017) shares that *hypervisibility* occurs when one's race is spotlighted or highlighted while *invisibility* occurs when ideas or suggestions are ignored in meetings or school settings. She goes on to explain that with *presumed homogeneity* Black families and students are lumped into a narrow group and the nuances of different views, life contexts, and experiences are ignored. *Presumed criminality* aligns with the assumption that Black parents and children are threatening and potentially partaking in criminal or miscreant behavior. With the last category, *dismissed or rebuffing of parents' efforts to engage*, parents report experiences where their participation and presence was not welcomed by the school, district, or by white parents at school meetings (Posey-Maddox, 2017). These instances of microaggressions at school, compounded with mirrored experiences in their daily lives, have a cumulative effect on Black parent engagement and sense of belonging in White spaces and institutional settings (p. 30).

Black Parents as Advocates for Black Children

Experiencing the compounded effects on racial harm on the schooling of their children, in their lived experiences, and also during interactions with school some Black parents migrate from public schools to charter, private, and home school options in search for a school that is the right fit for their Black child.

Charter school enrollment has increased from 1 million students in 2005 to 3.3 million in 2020, with about 70% of charter school students being students of color (National Alliance, 2021). A Harvard study finds that “Black charter school students are 6 months ahead” in learning gains compared to their district school peers (Wolfe, 2020). The authors' findings suggest “the biggest gains are for African Americans and for

students of low socioeconomic status attending charter schools” (Shakeel & Peterson, 2021, p. 1). While this data shows the benefits of the charter movement for Black families to be able to navigate the traditional school system, there is an additional layer of research that digs deeper into problematic effects of privatized charter schools. The opposing side of the charter school movement is that the introduction of a charter school into a community alters the dynamics of the traditional schools that remain and the teachers employed at either of the locations. Buras (2016) finds that charter school growth has led to the mass removal of veteran Black teachers in places such as New Orleans, where in 2004–2005, Black teachers constituted 75% of district teachers, but just 5 years later they constituted less than 50% of the teaching force.

Briscoe and Khalifa (2015) find that the community and the charter movement do not always agree with the way in which Black children should be educated and by whom. This study analyzed the conflict of the closing of “the only primarily black high school in a large urban city” (p. 739). Community members were more concerned with “identifying and alleviating oppression” while administrators concerned themselves with the technical aspects of failing scores and low graduation rates as to why the school should be closed further devaluing the community’s voice in the matter (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015, p. 757). All in all, according to Shakeel and Peterson (2021), charter schools have benefitted Black students and communities, but juxtaposed to the academic successes, the effects on the surrounding community and traditional public schools still attended by children of color need to be addressed and acknowledged.

In the context of home schooling as an alternative schooling choice for Black

parents, Fields-Smith and Williams (2008) find, “African American parents are more motivated to home school because of the negative stereotypes they perceive as perpetuated by more traditional school policies and procedures’ (p. 387). The majority (19 of 24) of the participants in their study state “their decisions to home school on perceptions of, or experiences with, inequities, prejudice, discrimination, or racism in public and private schools” (p. 376). The parents in the study were particularly concerned about the fate of their Black sons dealing with the school norms and structures that oftentimes work against Black children (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2008).

The previous researchers found race and racism being a reason for individual school transfer choices. However, Posey-Maddox et al. (2021) find that “race and antiblack racism are [absolutely] central to Black parents’ school choice decisions” across the board in all demographics (class, geography, parent educational background, etc.) because all Black parents negotiate this “racialized cost of school choice” (Allen, 2017, vi). Black parents are merely trying to find the ideal choice for their child at the time. This selection may change year to year or more frequently and Black parents constantly analyze and negotiate “teachers’ ideologies, disciplinary practices, teacher and student demographics, academic tracking, and the treatment of Black students and families” (Posey-Maddox et al., 2021, p. 39). All of these factors are considered and rationalized by Black parents whose choices are consistently within an educational system steeped in policies and ideologies against the success of their Black children.

The cultural wealth of the Black community to navigate these schooling systems of oppression are not through membership in a particular social class as Bourdieu (1977)

found in his work. Instead, Black parents have used the resources available to them through the school choice movement to keep their children safe. The use of this navigational capital provides Black parents an opportunity to opt out of systems of educational oppression so ingrained in the American schooling system. Yosso (2005) states that “navigational capital refers to the skills of maneuvering through social institutions” not historically created with the best interests of Communities of Color in mind (p. 80). This utilization of community cultural wealth is one that Black educator-parents are more privy to as they are on the inside of the system.

Black Educators as Advocates for Black Students

In the current state of our national education system and, more specifically, the education of Black children, Black educators play an imperative role in shaping the futures of Black children. When it comes to the topic of what kind of teacher is best suited to teach Black children, most of us will readily agree that a teacher who cares for the well-being of their pupils is a requirement. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of what type of teacher is the best fit for Black students. Whereas some are convinced that if teachers incorporate the experiences, challenges, and strengths of their Black students into their daily instruction, students should be able to learn (Ladson, 2009). Others maintain that “close relationships with their pupils based on empathy with the individual child and an intimate knowledge of the black community” (Fairclough, 2004, p. 44) enable teachers who ethnically match (Easton-Brooks, 2014) their Black students to be able to motivate them while being “mentor, role model, and disciplinarian” (Fairclough, 2004, p. 44).

Before integration, the preparedness of Black teachers to understand the experiences, challenges and strengths of their Black students was not a deterrent to the academic success of Black students (Fairclough, 2004). According to memoirs of Black adults who had attended segregated schools before the *Brown* decision, their Black teachers were committed and skilled in the classrooms, unlike *Brown* lawyers who painted a picture of segregated schools creating feelings of inferiority in Black children (Fairclough, 2004).

Fairclough (2004) addresses the historic ramifications of integrated schools on Black teachers and students while Easton-Brooks (2014) continues this argument in his work *Ethnic-Matching in Urban Schools*. His research presents the case that “17% of the difference in academic outcomes of ethnic minority students... can be explained if students are in schools with teachers of their same ethnicity” (p. 97). Likened to the work of Fairclough (2004), Easton-Brooks supports the connection between culture and knowledge that ethnic minority teachers have over white teachers in instructing students of color. Because of their ethnicity, shared experiences with race, and belief in the ability of students to learn, ethnically matching teachers are better equipped to “bridge the gap between home and school cultures of students” (p. 107).

Protectors of Black Children

As Black parents drop their children off at school, they know that lower academic achievement, disproportionate disciplining rates, and high SPED diagnosis are issues that their children contend with while they are in the care of a school system that historically was not created with the wellbeing of Black children in mind. In addition to parents not

feeling safe with their children at school, Black children also perceive a threat to their own safety (Thapa et al., 2013). Black teachers have the potential to add a protective layer and “disrupt the racialized harm produced within schools” (McKinney de Royston et al., 2020, p. 68). McKinney de Royston et al. (2020) state that “Racialized harm refers to the perpetual racism Black children encounter as their Black bodies get racially perceived and interacted with in their day-to-day lives in and out of school (p. 70). This racialized harm spans from the physical interactions with law enforcement on campuses to policies and practices that disproportionately affect Black children. This racialized harm occurs because of the way that others view Black children; not as children, but instead as adults who need to be policed, controlled, disciplined, and held accountable to all measures regardless of age or situation.

The “adultification” of Black children, especially Black male children, occurs through the “institutional perceptions and engagement of Black [children] as adults” (Dancy, 2014, p. 49). Ladson-Billings (2011) offers a critical view of what society commonly identifies:

Black males as “problems” that our society must find ways to eradicate. We regularly determine them to be the root cause of most problems in school and society. We seem to hate their dress, their language, and their effect. We hate that they challenge authority and command so much social power (p. 9).

As early as Pre-K, Black children, especially Black males, experience a disappearance of their childlike cuteness and a critical weaponizing occurs of their Black skin. Childlike behaviors for Black males get scrutinized and judged with a different lens, as is apparent with the preschool school suspension statistics where Black children are still

disproportionately punished in comparison to their peers (Gilliam et al., 2016; Todd et al., 2016). According to the a report published by the U.S. Department of Education

Black public preschool children are suspended from school at high rates: Black preschool children are 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white preschool children. Black children represent 19% of preschool enrollment, but 47% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions. (Office for Civil Rights, 2016b)

Black parents and Black educators know this is the case in schools without having to read a study about it. Black educators offer a level of protection for the bodies and livelihood of Black children.

While the idea of having more Black teachers in the classrooms is appealing because of its successful track record in educating Black students, the reality is that the rate of Black teachers is not growing as fast to meet the demands of student enrollment (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017). Thus, it leaves one to deduce that the Black children have been left in classrooms without an adequate blanket of protection to the racialized harm they are subjected to at school.

CRT provides a lens to analyze the pervasive racialized life and schooling experiences of Black educator-parents and those of their children. Previous research has covered the implosion of Black education after integration on the structure of Black education in the United States, dissected the long lasting ramifications of Black students being invited into a school system not designed for their success, presented the ways in which Black educators add a protective layer in this dysfunctional system absent of widespread systematic change, and also laid out the navigational capital of Black parents to find “best fit” schooling options for the care and academic preparation of their Black

children. The research has studied Black children in school, Black families interactions in schools, and Black teachers in schools as separate entities. Based on their positionalities and experiences in multiple roles, Black educator-parents have unique insights to the layers of racism that the Black community experiences (and carries into) educational spaces. This research answers the following questions: What are the unique layers of racialization and racism that Black educator-parents navigate in the K–12 educational system? And what are the strategies Black educator-parents employ to navigate and resist the racialized context of schools on behalf of their children? The use of CRT situates the lived experiences of the Black educator-parents and provides a better understanding of how racist discourses and ideologies consistently influence professional and parenting choices despite Black educator-parents being on the inside of the system.

Chapter 3: Methodology & Study Design

The Spring of 2020 is one for the history books. On Wednesday, March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) Director announced that COVID-19 is officially a pandemic (Ghebreyesus, 2020). On March 13, 2020, two of the largest school districts in California, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), announced that they would be closing school doors effective Monday, March 16, 2020 (Haire, 2020). Following suit, numerous districts in California made the same choice, and many children and their parents found themselves suddenly at home on a pseudo lockdown from a virus that much was not known about in order to provide reassurance for public safety.

On May 25, Memorial Day, California had been on lockdown for two and a half months, teachers and students had transitioned to virtual/distance learning, and much of the nation had remained glued to their televisions for updates on whether the world was going to get better or worse. The news came in... George Floyd was a Black father who lived in Minneapolis and had gone to a convenience store to purchase a pack of cigarettes. On this simple journey, he was held down by three officers on the ground for more than seven minutes until he became unresponsive and died, and it was filmed for all to see. George Floyd's murder at the hands of the police was a further layer of trauma for Black people in America who had recently learned of the brutal deaths of Ahmaud Arbery (murdered on February 23, 2020; assailants arrested May 7, 2020) and Breonna Taylor (murdered on March 13, 2020; no charges have been filed against the police), amongst so many more before and after (Fausset, 2020; Oppel et al., 2020). Protests

ensued across the nation concerning the continued assault on and disregard of Black lives by not only common citizens but also by law enforcement tasked with keeping people safe. This climate of social unrest and global health pandemic is the backdrop to which this data is collected.

The Inland Empire (IE) is a Southern California community 50 miles east of Los Angeles known for orange groves, skinheads, and the famous Route 66. Over the past decade, many working-class families of color have left Los Angeles and moved to this region for its affordable housing. Comprising Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, during the 2020–2021 school year the IE services 820,433 public school students 66% of whom are Latinx, 17% white, 7% Black and 6% Asian American, Filipino, or Pacific Islander. Of the student enrollment, 68% of students receive Free & Reduced Price Meals, and 16% are designated as English Learners (California Department of Education, 2020c; California Department of Education, 2020d; California Department of Education, 2020e; California Department of Education, 2020f). During the 2018–2019 school year, 13% of IE public school students were enrolled in Special Education (California Department of Education, 2018a; California Department of Education, 2018b).

In Riverside County, Black students make up 6% of students, but represent 14% of those who received a suspension (California Department of Education, 2020a). In San Bernardino County, the same dismal story holds true. Black students make up less than 9% of the student population, but account for 21% of the suspensions (California Department of Education, 2020b). Black K–12 students in the Inland Empire are two

times more represented in disciplining practices that result in missing classroom instruction and involve police interference.

The current national racial climate and the state of education for Black students in California calls for this study to answer the following questions: What are the unique layers of racialization and racism that Black educator-parents navigate in the K–12 educational system? And what are the strategies they employ to navigate and resist this context on behalf of their children? Using qualitative approaches to research, the proposed study seeks to understand the racialized experiences of Black educator-parents and their children.

Methods

To “closely connect to the scene,” I have bounded my sample of participants to Black educator-parents living in the Inland Empire situated in counties serving a K–12 student population comparable to that of statewide figures for Black students and high disparities in Black achievement, discipline, and SPED (Freeman et al., 2007). Aligned to the framework chosen in this study, CRT, I decided to center the voices and experiences of Black educator-parents in this qualitative study. This specific population is essential in order to further understand the intersections between being a parent and educator while maneuvering the racialized experiences of being Black in America.

Positionality

In the spirit of being a reflexive researcher who understands that positionality affects the quality and depth of interviewing subjects, I reveal aspects of my person that have aided in the completion of this qualitative study. Specifically, “positionality refers to

how one is socially located or positioned in relation to others given background factors such as race, class, and gender” (Cooper, 2005, p. 175). During the time leading up to the 2020 presidential election, I experienced feelings of stress and fear. I am a Black woman with a Black husband and a Black child. I am afraid for them and myself. Leading up to the election, I have seen more pickup trucks on the roads with oversized American flags, Trump flags, and blue lives matter flags waving from the back. After I dropped off my mail in ballots, a feeling of release came over me. I am tense. I am physically tense as a Black person living in America who is a mother, a wife, and an educator. The reaction on my body and my psyche are some of the effects of macro and microaggressions that the Black community have been subjected to and violence experienced not only in the last year while on COVID-19 quarantine, but has been compounded for years as I have been and continue to be witness to the disregard of Black bodies in America.

In the following excerpt, I share a reflective field note:

On January 18, 2021, a nurse practitioner called me for a telephone appointment to share some exciting news with my husband and I. Over the 2020 Thanksgiving holiday, I discovered that I was pregnant with my second child. Despite the medical risks of being older (I am 38) and also getting pregnant during a global pandemic, my family unit made the decision to bring another life into this world. In January, my nurse practitioner shared with my husband and I that we would be having a son, and I was immediately elated and excited for this new venture to bring a young man into the world. My husband was beaming from ear to ear, you could see the excitement all over him. We called his sister, who has 3 boys herself to share the news. She said, “Whoa, you are having a boy!”

That one sentence hit me differently. In my head and heart, I heard “You are having a Black son!” My heart dropped and I wailed. I had 5 minutes of absolute unbridled joy. But then reality set in. I was having a Black son. Birthing a Black son in this society means so much more than worrying about my health and the baby's health with being over the age of 35, Black in America, and living through a global pandemic. I cried because I knew the burden of being the parent of a Black son. I cried because my son's life flashed before my eyes. I envisioned

having to have “The Talk” with him, having to engrain in him that there will be people threatened by him just because of the color of his skin and possibly also by his size. I did not have the same gut reaction with my daughter. My entire being told me with this boy, I would have to cover him with prayer and a different street knowledge that not every young man encounters in his rearing. The possibility that my son can encounter another person or an officer of the law who is afraid of him just because of who he is puts a deep hard fear in my heart as a mother.

I shared this experience on Facebook and got three categories of reactions from my friend group. I had those who completely understood how I felt because they were also mothers of Black sons, I had those who were friends of color who empathized with me because they have similar concerns for their children, and I had friends who had never known that this extra layer of stress was something that Black parents experience. (Author’s Journal)

I am a Black female in my late thirties who identifies as both African and Caribbean American. I grew up in New York City in a single-parent home and have been a public (charter and traditional) elementary and middle school teacher for the past fourteen years.

As a researcher, my positionality of being both a Black educator with a child who will eventually exit daycare puts me in a position of both researcher and student who is open and willing to learn from other Black educator-parents who have had and are currently having experiences with TK–12 schooling that I as a parent do not yet have. This “reciprocal vulnerability establish[es] collective and mutual trust” amongst research subjects and investigator (Kohli, 2014, p. 373) is criticized by some researchers to be tantamount to “faking of friendship and commodification of rapport” in order to gain access to my participants lives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 34). My close proximity to this subject matter by profession, parenthood, and race earns me the label of being an insider to the population being studied (D’silva et al., 2016). My “background, personal values, and experiences” all influence the way I see and interpret the collected data (p. 97). Through reflective research practices and humanizing theoretical frameworks, I

center the voices of the study participants while also minimally inserting my own narratives of racialized experiences in school as a Black educator-parent.

Participants

All twelve of participants in the study self-identified as Black or African American, working in some form with children grades TK–12, and living in the Inland Empire. Five of the participants were in the 30–39 age range and seven of them were 40 to 49 years old. The majority of the participants (10) identified themselves as female and 2 of them are male. I acknowledge that traditionally in research about school-aged children, the term educator is an assumed synonym for a classroom teacher that often does not get a footnoted explanation (Posey-Maddox, et al., 2021; Powell & Coles, 2018; Dumas, 2016; Cooper, 2005). In this study, the term educator-parent is being used to describe participants' various roles as teacher, school psychologist, education consultant, district coordinator, school board member, mentor to young girls in schools, and youth probation officer. Understandably, the inclusion of the youth probation officer can be controversial in a study as such where I highlight the overcriminalization of Black children in and out of schools, but regardless of her connection to law enforcement, she and her children have experienced racism in and out of school. Additionally, with roles in the education sector, these participants have a level of positional capital at their disposal that many/most Black parents do not have as they are navigating schooling (Posey-Maddox, et al., 2021; Powell & Coles, 2018; Cooper, 2005). The following table organizes their demographics.

Table 1

Interviewee Demographics

	Name	Age	Gender	Profession	Race/Ethnicity
1	Nia	40-49	Female	Elementary Teacher	Black
2	Kiara	40-49	Female	Special Education Teacher	Black
3	Joseph	30 - 39	Male	Education Consultant	Black (West Indian)
4	Charley	40 - 49	Female	Teacher	Black
5	Camila	30 - 39	Female	Teacher	Black
6	Cassidy	40 - 49	Female	Elementary Teacher	African American
7	Ricki	40 - 49	Female	Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Coordinator at School District	African American
8	Vince	30-39	Male	H.S. Teacher/ School Board Member	African American
9	Sapphire	40 - 49	Female	San Bernardino County Youth Probation Officer	African American
10	LaShawnda	40 - 49	Female	District Math Coach	Black
11	Toya	30 - 39	Female	School Psychologist	African American
12	Dee	30 - 39	Female	Mentor to African American girls in Schools	Black

Data Sources

The primary data sources for this study are digital participant interviews with Black educator-parents. Interviewing as a research method stems from the researcher’s “interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2013, p. 9). For this study, I interviewed Black

educator-parents and provided a space for them to share, in their own words, what it is like navigating the educational system as a Black parent and also an educator.

I contacted the Chief Academic Officer of Educational Services for the Riverside County Office of Education about conducting research with the African American Parent Advisory Council (AAPAC). This civic group consists of parents and educators in Riverside County committed to “support academic outcomes, to ensure a positive district and parental partnership for improvement and developing parent and community engagement resulting in academic, social and emotional well-being for African American students Pre-K–12” (Riverside Unified School District, n.d.). In addition to reaching out to this community, I advertised the study on my Facebook and Instagram feeds (See Appendix A) and again left it up to participants to self-identify and reach out to me if they were interested in completing the study.

Over the course of three months, interested participants contacted me expressing a desire to enter the study either through email or phone. I then contacted the interested participants with a Doodle link to schedule their interview times along with a DocuSign link to gain signatures to consent for the study, included in Appendix B. The semi-structured interviews lasted for approximately 45 to 90 minutes via password protected Zoom conferencing sessions and focused on uncovering what Black educator-parents feel about teacher caring, preparation, cultural responsiveness, their expectations for their child’s school, the racial climate at their child’s school and district, and lastly the ways in which they navigate schooling for their children. The process of the semi-structured interview sessions with the parents followed an interview guide, included in Appendix C

with questions arranged by topic and start with demographic questions leading into questions that allow for open ended answers. At the conclusion of the interview, in order to maintain anonymity, participants were asked to provide a preferred pseudonym.

Data Analysis

The data for this study was analyzed through the lens of CRT. At the conclusion of each Zoom recorded interview, they were transcribed via the use of Zoom transcription software and manually by myself. After transcription, the data was topically coded using predetermined and emergent themes drawn from the survey questions and participant responses (e.g., teacher caring, teacher preparation, cultural responsiveness, parent expectations, school/district climate, opinions of elementary disparities) that revealed unsuspected and emergent themes from the data (e.g., navigating racism) garnered through careful reading and thinking about the data in relation to codes (Lichtman, 2012; Maxwell, 2013). Leading into the next level of coding, I created a qualitative codebook (Creswell & Poth, 2016) of the major codes which were pulled from my theoretical frameworks and literature. The codebook had a definition for each code and the questions I assigned to each code. Using qualitative research software (MAXQDA2020), a more detailed level of coding was able to be used with predetermined themes drawn from my theoretical frameworks and literature. Handwritten field notes were also added to the coding segments in MAXQDA2020. The qualitative methodology methods reveal the layers of racism that Black educator-parents navigate both in and out of the schooling system with their children. In the next two chapters, I discuss the findings that came out of my analysis of Black educator-parents interviews.

Chapter 4: Layers of Racism that Black Educator-Parents Experience

This chapter aims to answer the research question #1, “What are the unique layers of racialization and racism that Black educator-parents navigate in the K–12 educational system?” Using the lens of CRT, I present findings that show the racism that Black educator-parents are navigating, and also how this confirms the pervasive racism ingrained in the system of schooling. In a profession dealing with the livelihood of children in the Inland Empire every day, I found that the careers of Black educator-parents do not shield them nor their children from daily instances of racism. In the times of a global pandemic and national racial revolution, Black educators are not only tasked with continuing to provide services to the kids they interact with at their jobs, but also to parent and provide comfort and a safe space to their own Black children, all while feeling scared for them at the same time. It is within this layered context, I explore the experiences of Black educators who are also parents, tasked with interacting with children and parenting amidst rampant racism against Black people and a movement for Black lives. In this chapter, I show how these Black educator-parents uniquely experience and navigate layers of racism and its cumulative toll.

Blatant Racism in Communities that they Live

Scholarship on the racism that Black educators face is primarily focused on their professional experiences (Dumas, 2016; Dumas & ross, 2016; Frank et al., 2021; Lisle-Johnson & Kohli, 2020). However, being Black in the United States spans beyond the workplace. Being Black in the United States requires maintaining an existence in two worlds. To be a part of something, but yet still so far from it and excluded from the

country of your citizenship. This “veil” between you and the rest of the world creates these two existences, a “double-consciousness,” in which your everyday experienced reality is not reflected back to you by others who you constantly interact with (DuBois, 2020). James Baldwin (1961) puts it as, “To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time” (p. 205). If you are Black, living in America, and in tune with the racial events of the 2020 summer and consistent violence against Black bodies, you may very well also have feelings of exhaustion from this rage stemming from racial battle fatigue (Pizzaro & Kohli, 2020). In the Inland Empire, racism against the Black community is pervasive. Study participants have shared experiences with police being called on them because their neighbors believed they were squatters instead of the new home owners in San Jacinto to being racially profiled by police during a traffic stop with a child in a car seat in the suburbs of Moreno Valley. In this section, I focus on the layers of racism that Black educator-parents encounter in their personal everyday lives.

Kiara is a Special Education Teacher and a Black mother living in the San Jacinto area of the Inland Empire of Southern California (nestled between Los Angeles and Palm Springs, approximately 85 miles Southeast of Los Angeles). She has one child currently in the TK–12 school system, a Black son who is 10 and in the fifth grade. Kiara describes an encounter that she and her children experienced on a family night out to get some reprieve during the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2020.

A week ago, me and the kids went just to get some air. An elderly Caucasian male followed us off the road, approached my vehicle, and yelled into my car, “*fucking nigger.*” I was right out here in San Jacinto, two miles from my house. It is not like I touched him. It’s not like I said anything to him. It was obvious that was on

his heart and he took it upon himself to drive off the road, follow me, and approach my vehicle and say that to me. I have never been called that in 42 years of living. (Kiara - Special Education Teacher)

As a woman driving alone with her kids, experiencing a white man verbally attacking and physically threatening her and her children in the neighborhood that they live in was frightening and traumatic for her and her children. Additionally, being a homeowner in a community where her neighbors openly spew hate at her because she is Black was an experience that left Kiara feeling on edge, vulnerable, and unsafe. In addition to outright aggressive looks, stares, stopped conversations, and guarded purses, Kiara has also experienced more subtle forms of racism that let her know that she is unwanted in her neighborhood:

I can't move any further east because I've learned the pattern. The further away from the city, the more of these American flags are flying on these homes, the more NRA posters around here, the more these Trump supporters got their lawn all decorated...And when I see them I avoid them on the streets. I avoid them on these back roads because they're looking for an issue.

The flags, indirect symbols of racial violence, serve as racial microaggressions as she drives down the streets of her neighborhood. These less direct forms of racism layered onto the overt racism create a stressful climate that is hard to live within. However, that same neighborhood has affordable housing, a decent-paying job, and what Kiara felt were better academic choices than schools in many predominantly Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles. She describes a dilemma many Black families are faced with:

But see, here's the conundrum. Do I stay in the hood, where there is kind of like that melting pot thing, but then my son is under-educated and we have to fear different things? Or do I come out here, where he can have a yard [and] get a decent education? We got to deal with that.

This race-based stress from blatant racism to cumulative instances of racial microaggressions can take its toll. But Black families are often forced to make a choice white families are not confronted with. Do they stay in schools deeply impacted by structural racism as they are underfunded or overcrowded, or do they live in communities fraught with racialized violence? What would be less damaging to their and their children's lives, psyches, and stability? And many Black families make a choice to finally move:

My sister and I are planning on leaving CA. We're over it. I'm not going to have to choose between a white racist and giving my kids a real childhood, they should be able to go outside and play. They should be able... I mean, we own this house. We're the only Blacks on the block.

Kiara's decision to leave homeownership in a state in which she hoped her children would get a resource-rich childhood reveals the psychological impact of cumulative racism. The *hypervisibility* of Black parents who are presumed to be out of place in the communities in which they live and work and subjected to undue scrutiny, stress, anxiety, and isolation (Posey-Maddox, 2017) take a toll on parents, forcing them to make decisions between schooling and safety. Thus, the *presumed criminality* in the community in which Kiara owns property and numerous instances of being perceived as "threatening or potentially criminal" has left her continuing the legacy of white aggression forcing Black communities to make the positioned choices between upward mobility and the safety of their families (Posey-Maddox, 2017, p. 20).

Similar to Kiara, another participant contended with the choice of whether to abandon the school where her children attend because of the community in which she lives. Nia is an Elementary school teacher who lives in the "High Desert" of Victorville,

CA (nestled between Los Angeles and Las Vegas...approximately 85 miles Northeast of Los Angeles). She has twin sons who are 19 years old. She describes the community in which she and her sons reside: “There are still Confederate flags in yards and in front of houses.” Why stay in a community in which you walk around feeling like you are not wanted? Nia had gone through a divorce and didn’t want to uproot her boys from their “support system,” their familial capital. She further states:

I didn’t want to snatch them out of their church out [from] ...their friends, they had gone through enough change. So I didn’t want to uproot them. Because this is all that they knew. We’d lived here since they were two and a half. I feel like they would have felt like we lost everything.

Both Kiara and Nia are discussing the *positioned choices* they have to make on deciding whether to stay or go because they are politically situated in a space where they can be homeowners, their kids can remain in a place they have sowed roots, all while juxtaposed to the racial harms they are exposed to in the “greater society and educational structures” (Cooper, 2005, p. 175).

Sapphire, a Youth Probation officer for the city of San Bernardino, who also lives in the same community as Nia, further describes the drive she and her children experience every day on their way to and from school and on local trips to the grocery store:

Their [high] school is off of Main Street. Main Street turns into Phelan Road. And you drive onto Phelan, some people have Confederate flags flying in front of their house. Phelan is a small little town that is not very diverse...we’ll go to the grocery store that’s at the end of the block of their school and you can feel *it* in there. You know, they’re grabbing their purses, they’re looking at you, conversations stop.

The *it* that Sapphire refers to are those non-verbal racial microaggressions that take an emotional and mental toll on Black people in their everyday lives. Similar to the experiences of Kiara, Sapphire also had to drive by the racially violent symbols in her neighborhood of Confederate flags on a daily basis. Those who openly wield these symbols of “patriotism” and “cultural pride,” are in fact intimidating and inflicting racialized harm on communities of color on a daily basis while hiding behind their touts of national pride.

The daily compounded lived experiences of these families is not one that is taken lightly. There is a conscious and calculated decision made on the part of Kiara, Nia, and Sapphire to continue to live in a racially hostile environment. Sapphire’s youth clients are based in the city of San Bernardino. She could have petitioned to have her children attend school in the city where she works, but because of the nature of her profession, she decided to have her children attend school in Phelan, closer to where she lives.

Cross burnings, pipe bombs thrown through windows, and constant harassing Black homeowners until they move out of the neighborhood are historic tactics used to keep the neighborhood white and maintain racial segregation. This is exactly the intended purpose of racial violence; to “reduce, dilute, atomize and encase the hapless into *his* place. The incessant lesson the black must hear is that he is insignificant and irrelevant” (Pierce, 1969, p. 303; as cited in Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 299). This white resistance to Black families has been historically documented especially in northern cities when Black families moved from the South in search of employment prospects and could now afford to be homeowners (Hirsh, 1995). Unfortunately, this trend not only continues

in California but has also been documented in the progressive New York City suburbs of Long Island where a Black mother of a 3-year-old was “racially harassed [for 3 years] by three next-door neighbors who she said threw feces and dead squirrels in her yard” (Griffith, 2020, para. 5). Black families should not have to be forced to make a choice of relocating because their neighbors are not comfortable with the color of their skin. These *positioned* choices should not be part of the fabric of being Black in America, but such has been the history of being Black in America (Cooper, 2005). This deep seeded racism against Black people denies a constitutional commitment to the general welfare and the blessings of liberty to all citizens. The reason that these incidents of racial harm have gone unchecked for as long as they have requires “a deeper understanding of the Black condition within a context of utter contempt for, and acceptance of violence against the Black” (Dumas, 2016, p. 13). The endless harassment, killing, police profiling, nervous stares in the grocery store, hypervisibility, and assumed criminality all stem from antiblackness. In the history of the United States, there has never been “a clear disruption of the technologies of violence—that is, the institutional structures and social processes—that maintain Black subjugation” (Dumas, 2016, p. 14). In essence, what is seen here is continuous racist behavior in a post-racial society that has never truly admitted that institutional racism was instilled in the first place because of the unspoken understanding of the inhumanity of Black people who cannot be human or other because Black people themselves are deemed other than human (Dumas, 2016).

The Burden to Protect Black Children from Racism

An additional layer of racialized burden that Black educators endure while also living in hostile communities, is equipping their children to navigate racist incidents while maintaining a positive ethnic identity. In the Black community, this racial socialization practice or “The Talk,” occurs when parents have to explain discrimination and racism to their children and prepare them for instances of racism, racist actions, or biases that may show up now that they are in a school community in which their parents and family cannot always initially keep them safe (black-ish, 2018; Hawkins, 2018; Hughes et al., 2006). This discussion that is likened to “a Black tradition and a rite of passage” (DiAquoi, 2017, p. 513), is a form of racial socialization in which “parents transmit information, values, and perspectives about ethnicity and race to their children” (Hughes et al., 2006, p. 747). While, the emotional toll on Black parents knowing that this talk is critical to the physical and mental survival of their children is “emotionally and psychologically draining,” the benefits are that the ethnic identity that is built into their children provides a buffer from the negative psychological consequences that come along with daily instances of ethnic prejudice, discrimination, and general daily stressors (Shelton et al., 2005, p. 96). This discussion with their children helps to mitigate the racial battle fatigue that is to come from incessant racial microaggression encounters Black educator-parents know their children will have to face in years to come. For the Black educator-parents in this study, not only is this a burden carried by being a parent of your own children but it is also carried as these teachers also carry the burden to be

protectors of Black students at their site or district and protect them from racialized harm (McKinney de Royston et al., 2020).

Toya is a Black school psychologist who works for the Pomona Unified School District. She has 2 Black sons ages 5 and 3. During her interview with me, she expressed her concerns in a conversation that she had with her son after an issue with his behavior on the playground in their neighborhood:

“You don’t understand.” I said, “You have no idea. I know that you’re five but you don’t get it, you don’t get it. I said you cannot be them and said, You have to be better than them. So you cannot say what they say. You can do what they do. They will tell on you, they will see you differently. You cannot, you have to be better. Your life depends on it. I said I don’t think you understand your life depends on you following the rules. You have to follow the rules and even if you do.....” And I just broke down crying. You’re trying to get him to understand what this reality is, but he’s five. He doesn’t get that. And he’s just a kid. He’s a baby.

The *they* and *them* that Toya is referring to is her son’s white friend who told her what mischief her son had engaged in as soon as Toya showed up to the playground. Now Toya did not believe that her son was innocent in what he did on the playground, the problem that she had was that in the account of the story she received from the other child was that her son was the only child to blame in the incident. Her son was the only one implicated. At the age of 5 and being at home, this incident did not go farther than the neighborhood playground, but what had Toya break down crying is knowing that as her son gets older and believed that he could do what his white friends were doing, he could be the only one implicated in their recounting of the events. He and only he would be at blame. Her son is only 5. He will possibly be attending a dual language immersion program for kindergarten in her school district for the 2020–2021 school year after having attended a private Christian academy for early primary school with his brother. At

5 years old, “the talk” that Toya is having with her son is not about forgetting his lunch or how to make friends on the playground, but instead, it is a talk about how to save his life in the years to come and follow the rules even when his friends who are not Black may not be following those same exact rules. Toya further goes on to explain:

And so he goes into class and he can't be the kid that acts out. He can't be the kid that stands out, he has to be the kid that excels. The only way I want him to have attention is for him to be the best. And if he gets attention for anything else, he is a reflection of me, and we are a reflection of our race. I cannot justify the treatment that he receives because of his humanity because of his child-like stupidity. Those innocent mistakes an African American child makes become the justification for the mistreatment that they receive the rest of their lives. No other race experiences that...the generalization of their character.

The belief that a child is judged not only by their actions but also by the biased beliefs of teachers and administrators is not a singular feeling by only a few of the study participants. Black educator-parents understand that the system and implicit teacher bias will label her son as a problem needing to be eradicated and the root cause of most problems in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2011). It is a feeling felt by every Black person whose life now depends on the biased beliefs of a teacher, administrator, police officer, or politician who is entrusted to make decisions that can negatively impact the livelihood of the Black person on the receiving end of reprimand, policy decision, traffic stop, or legislation. Dante Wright was a 20-year-old whose mistake was to run away from being apprehended by police for a traffic stop (CNNWire, 2021), Ma'Khia Bryant left her home to fight her foster sisters after calling the cops to her home (Carroll, 2021), Kalief Browder spent 3 traumatizing years in jail as a 16-year-old awaiting trial for a robbery he never committed (Gonnerman, 2015), 18-year-old Michael Brown was killed for not walking on the sidewalk instead of in the street (History.com, 2020), Tamir Rice was

killed for carrying a toy gun (Dewan & Oppel, 2015), and Trayvon Martin wore a hoodie and looked suspicious and out of place in a neighborhood (CNN Editorial Research, 2021). The list continues to grow exponentially of Black children not given the chance to live their lives after mistakes made in adolescence (Gray & Parker, 2020; Hall et al., 2016; Martinot, 2014). Toya's concern for the child-like stupidity of her children is a real one with dire consequences for Black children. Having to carry this fear for your children is a burden that is inflicted because of how Black people are racialized within the US.

Dee is a mentor to African American girls in the San Bernardino Unified School District and has 2 children; a 10-year-old girl and a 12-year-old boy. She shares with me her concerns about her son concerning the teacher he had during his fifth-grade year who, in her opinion, *adultified* her son (Dancy, 2014):

But this one teacher, my son started the school year off looking at her in her eyes, and by the end of the school year, he was a little bit taller than her. So you can just tell all the aggression, she just didn't see him as a kid. She didn't see him as a young boy becoming who he was going to be. She saw him, for lack of a better word, as a threat. And every chance she got to try and pull him down, she did.

For Dee, "The Talk" with her son happened much later than Toya's son as it was in response to treatment that he was getting from his 5th grade teacher at school, who Dee believes thought of her 12-year-old son as a threat. Dee needed to add a layer of protection for her son with his talk because of the racialized harm his teacher threatened to impose on him through her reactionary behavior to want to police, control, discipline, and hold her son accountable to all measures regardless of his age or the situation (Dancy, 2014). Dee continues in her description of that experience with her son:

My worst experience was that one year with my son, but what it did was, remind me that at the end of the day, I'm their first teacher, and he just got a really good

idea of what it was going to be like, you know, in his life. He's big for [his age]. He's a Black male, you're going to have people that unjustly treat [you] differently for no reason at all. So it just served as a catalyst for me to have that conversation with him earlier than I probably would have liked to. But nonetheless, it was going to happen.

The Talk occurs in Black households as Black parents are, according to Dee, "their first teacher." Due to their own experiences of racism and racialized harms, in addition to the history of racism and racist ideologies in the US, Black parents know that they have to send their children out into the world with an extra layer of protection to maintain their child's self-worth in a harsh society that will find any way to cut them down and dehumanize them to the color of their skin (Hughes et al., 2006). This navigational strategy is passed down as a "rite of passage" through the racial socialization of Black children before but usually right after they have experienced their first encounter with racism.

Ricki is a 17-year veteran teacher on special assignment at her school district in Riverside County. Ricki is also an active member of the Riverside chapter of AAPAC. She currently has a daughter in the fourth grade in her school district and describes "The Talk" she had with her then 9-year-old daughter:

There was an incident that happened with my daughter when she was nine years old, she's 10 now. I was five when I was first called the N word. So I knew for my daughter it wasn't a matter of ...if, it was when, when was it going to happen. So I really tried to educate her. I really tried to educate her on what this word meant, where it came from beforehand. She is biracial, so my husband is white. And we always told her... the world is going to see you one way, although you have parents who [are Black and white]. You have to understand that and be aware of that. And so I wanted her to be comfortable in her Black skin.

Regardless of the age that it happens, "The Talk," occurs as a form of preservation of Black children's sense of self-worth and, in extreme cases, their lives. Toya states:

As a Black mother, I cannot expect my child's non-Black teacher to teach them how to be a Black man. It's not fair to them. They're at a disadvantage from jump. I need [the school] to teach them how to read, how to count, how to do math. How to understand science and how it works and how to interact with other people on a humanity level. Anything other than that is my job as a parent, my responsibility. Because they are going to let me down and they are going to fail because they don't know what the hell they're doing.

Recent events in racial unrest and contention (Summer 2020 racial protests) have thrust “The Talk” into the national spotlight and have revealed to non-Black people the level of preparation that occurs in a Black household to confront the racism experienced on a daily basis (DiAquoi, 2017). Though that “inside talk” has now been introduced to outside folk and spotlighted in the media, Toya, Dee, and Ricki still see the responsibility and burden to teach their own children resilience to be on the onus of the Black parent because the school system will “let me down...and fail because they don't know what the hell they're doing.” This emotional weight to protect the Black lives of their children and their students is insurmountable for Black parent-educators. The mental and physical health of these professionals is at risk according to research on the psychological and physiological effects of racial macro-/microaggressions and institutional racism on the Black community (Pierce, 1969). Researchers have shown that the cumulative toll of these racialized harms formulate a Black group stress and are “a major contributor to the continuing traumatic stress suffered by blacks as individuals and as a group” (Profit et al., 2000, pp. 327 – 328; as cited in Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 300). CRT allows an analysis that centers these lived experiences of the current participants in this study in addition to acknowledging the permanence of racial conflict and bias in American society as an entity that needs to be specifically taught to Black children in order for them to

survive, just as parents must teach their child to look both ways before crossing the street (Bell, 2018). The cornerstone of CRT is that racism is ordinary and permeates all aspects of American life and that is what Black parents are preparing their children for with the talk through their use of familial capital (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

As a Black parent and educator, not only are they constantly carrying a burden about your own child, but that burden also continues into the classroom when they are interacting with Black students and parents. As a Black educator myself, I have had very different and candid conversations with the kids and parents of my Black students during parent-teacher conferences. I recall two distinct recent conferences where I had to share with my Black male fifth grade students the same sentiment of Toya's conversation with her son. You cannot do what your friends do. You have to be better than them. Because when it comes down to it, you will definitely get in trouble and that trouble can follow you in a different way throughout your academic career than your friends. I say this, knowing that I may be stepping over a boundary between what it means to be a parent and just a teacher. However, as I speak and look over to the Black parent for their reaction, I get a head nod and "she is right." As protectors of Black children, Black educator-parents are not only responsible for the racial socialization of their own children, but they also perform those duties as they work with other Black children in their profession (McKinney de Royston et al., 2020). This is a burden that Black educator-parents are carrying throughout their everyday lives. It's not just that they have these discussions with Black children at work and their own children, it's that they carry the weight of *needing* to do it. This is a layer of their burden.

Black Educator-Parent Positionality does not Mitigate the Racism their Children

Face in Schools

The racist practices experienced in the communities in which Black educator-parents live are not isolated, nonexistent, or forgotten once they pass the front gates of a school campus. As educators and parents who have school-aged children, in addition to the racism they are experiencing in their everyday lives, participants also expressed navigating racism as parents with their own children in schools. Research on Black parents experiences in schools have shown that despite the level of educational knowledge of schooling, “understanding of the educational process, of the education system and parental rights and of pedagogical issues,” Black parents experience distrust in teachers’ decisions and the educational the system at large (Crozier, 1996, p. 253). In the study of examining the motivation of Black parents to homeschool their children, families pointed to the “destructive and unsupportive institutional norms and structures” for Black kids as being a primary reason to withdraw their children from public and private schooling (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009, p. 376). In addition, the participants stated those “experiences with, inequities, prejudice, discrimination, or racism in public and private schools” left them fearful for their Black children (p. 376). The findings here echo that research for educator-parents, demonstrating that being an educator does not protect themselves or their kids from the microaggressions and racial harms of schooling.

Layered onto the blatant racism that are described at the start of the chapter, racism also happens on a micro level in daily interactions within schools. As an employee in the district office rather than a teacher assigned to a specific school, Ricki has a bird’s

eye view of the manner in which smaller local, school site, decisions have a ripple effect on race relations in the rest of the district and also sheds a light on racial tensions at the district level. Ricki's 9-year-old daughter experienced her first racial microaggression during recess while she was making comics with her group of friends:

This one boy (white, prominent parents, mother is an assistant District Attorney and father is an attorney. We all went to school together. That's what happens when you live in Riverside, no one leaves and you know everybody.) comes with this character and basically says, "This is my character. He's Black. He has no friends. He's homeless. No one likes him." Just all these derogatory characteristics. And it completely broke my daughter's heart. She was crying.

Ricki tells me in her interview that her daughter's friends (all non-Black) stood up for her on the playground during the incident. However, when the kids came back from recess and let the teacher know what had happened, she responded with "I don't think he meant it that way." As a Black mother and educator, Ricki knew that this teacher's response silenced and invalidated her daughter's experience while "giving an out" to the other student who said, "I knew you were gonna blow this out of proportion and take it the wrong way." While the aggressor in this racial microaggression is just a child himself, he knew that his choice of comic book character and traits would elicit a negative response from his Black classmate and he proceeded to present it to everyone regardless of what he believed would happen. This verbal assault by a white classmate was tailored to target Ricki's daughter and designed to keep her in her place (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). This racial microaggression shines a light onto the larger social ramifications of this white student's choice to act in a way in which he knew that he would be hurting someone's feelings. The "institutional racism and ideologies of white supremacy" provided a sense of protection for this white child to feel justified to engage in a

racialized harm of his classmate and emboldened him to proceed to share the character he created despite knowing ahead of time that his actions were offensive (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 305). The perpetrator knew that what he was doing would in some way hurt the feelings of Ricki's daughter and he proceeded to share something that he knew would harm another. Ricki's position at her district office, her proximity to the superintendent, and the close relationships she had built with influential community members over the course of being born, raised, and now working in Riverside does not protect her Black child from the racist behaviors of classmates or oppressive responses of teachers.

Though in some circumstances, your position as a Black employee may feel limiting, in other cases, that positionality and social capital has worked in favor of the employee and the Black community served by the school district. The positionality and proximity to power affords you certain benefits not available to the regular Black family.

Ricki expresses:

Like if my daughter probably got in trouble. I [would] probably get a phone call before they say, "We're going to go ahead and suspend"... It would be like a courtesy because my proximity to my superintendent is close. I posted about the incident that happened to my daughter and he responded directly to it. I would be talked to first. I don't think other parents get that opportunity. I think it's also that I understand the system.

Ricki's educational knowledge of schooling acts as a layer of protection in some instances, but not on all levels as evidenced by her daughter's recount of the playground events. Black educator-parents' educational knowledge, social networks, and physical proximity to those in power at school districts do not shield them from teacher, student,

and administrative biases, acts of discrimination, and racialized harm (McKinney de Royston et al., 2020).

In addition to the harms doled out to their children at school, Black parents also are the target of racialized harms that leave them distanced from the school community. In the case of Black educator-parents, their positions as people who are employed by or work closely with schools and districts also does not shield themselves from abusive behavior. In the following excerpt, LaShawnda tells me of her husband's experience as a Black man who is married to a teacher who works on the campus their daughter attends, but still gets treated as an outsider:

Now at my daughter's [elementary school where I work], my husband feels they are not welcoming at all. I don't know if it's because I'm using my maiden name while I'm working. But when he came to pick her up, they asked him who he was and told him that they didn't have a teacher working there [under my married name]. He said they were just rude. Now he says that he will not go into the office to pick her up, "Just meet me outside." He'll go to her awards and stuff, but walking onto campus, they're not welcoming to him at all. (LaShawnda, District Math Coach)

Being made to not feel welcomed in a space because of the color of your skin, is a long-standing effect of racist practices utilized to keep people of color in their place (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). LaShawnda's husband's attempt to engage and interact with his child's schooling were dismissed by school staff and the courtesy of a sense of belonging extended to his Black wife, did not extend to him (Posey-Maddox, 2017). This racialized experience directly affected the way in which he will choose to engage with the school in the future. Deciding to just engage with schooling at home is not something that teachers can see and is often not used as a traditional measure of engagement in schools (Noguera, 2001). Of the parents that I interviewed, they are all involved at their child's

school site not only as a way to stay abreast of their child's academic progress, but also a means to ensure that an adult face is attached to the brown skinned child that is sitting in the chair of a classroom with a teacher that they don't fully trust has their child's best interests at heart. Lashawnda is a school site math coach and works at the elementary school that her daughter attends, but that proximity to her daughter did not protect her husband from feeling ostracized to the point of no return to his daughter's school. Situations like this, in addition to the everyday blatant and micro acts of racism that Black people encounter, isolate them from spaces that could very well benefit them. As a mother, Sapphire also felt ostracized and dismissed while at the school office of her daughter's school. She says:

And it was even in the office. When I would go into the office, it was very cut and dry. But if I showed up in my uniform [probation officer], say I was coming from work or whatever, all the respect in the world...they wanted to talk to me.

LaShawnda's husband did not have a police officer's uniform to make the office staff acknowledge his presence as a father and a member of the team in his daughter's education. Sapphire knew that the only reason she was acknowledged and respected while interacting with staff at her daughter's school was because she had on a uniform that made people look at her in a different light.

The desire to have others see you and your child in a different light is the guiding force in Toya's communication with her child's school. For Toya, she believes part of her role of being a parent of Black boys is to be present, involved, visible. In Toya's words, parents who have a presence at school and in the classroom

tend to receive a greater level of communication and involvement from the teachers because they know this parent is going to hold them accountable,

because they see them all the time. The absent parents tend to have children who are not given those additional concessions, because there's no accountability.

The additional labor that Toya does as a Black parent is performed because of the need to “monitor [her] child’s schooling for potential racial bias,” but also to mold and cultivate a positive teacher and school disposition toward her children despite the racial microaggressions in family-school relationships (Posey-Maddox, 2017, p. 29). Despite instances of both blatant and subtle racist acts in both school and the community at large, Black educator-parents push through using their resistant capital to combat the invisibility they experience at their children’s schools (Posey-Maddox, 2017).

Being an educator while Black, having knowledge and “insider” status within a school system, does not fully shield you or your child from experiencing racial microaggressions. These forms of “systemic, everyday racism [are] used to keep those at the racial margins in their place” (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 298). Pérez Huber and Solórzano (2015) write that these racial microaggressions include “verbal and non-verbal assaults directed toward People of Color, often carried out in subtle, automatic or unconscious forms” (p. 298). These subtle assaults were what Kiara talked about in her interview discussing her experiences at her son’s school:

I just kept feeling it, when I did the walkthrough, when I went for back to school night, when I went to the school events. I just kept feeling like ...I was in a cave and all these people were watching me. It’s like we’re in the fishbowl again. Everybody’s staring at us. [For instance,] when I dropped them off in the morning, everybody’s reviewing the rules with me repeatedly. To the point where I’m like, “Did I break a rule?” And I’m watching the other parents come [and go]. The other parents are touching the gas, pushing the kid out of the car essentially, and they keep going. Why every time I come in here, you keep going through the rules with me? Why, when I signed him up, you keep talking about did you see the price sheet? I pay you every month in advance for everything. Why do you keep asking me this?

These subtle offenses experienced by Kiara were at first confusing. On her own, she knew what she felt she was experiencing, but still had to bring her sister in for confirmation that she was not blowing her response out of proportion. Kiara states, “Me and my sister, we left. And she was like, yep, I see it. And I said, see, I didn't want to say anything because I want to make sure that I wasn't feeling some kind of way.” The reason that her experiences are microaggressions are because any one of those instances where she felt slighted at the school weren't enough to cause alarm, but the compounded effect of being repeatedly reminded about the tuition price and the rules of the school, were not common behavior she noticed occurred during interactions with other white parents at this school her son attended.

Dee is not on staff at a school site but works in schools as a mentor to African American girls in the San Bernardino City School District. She shares about her positive experiences at her kids schools:

I always felt pretty great. But I think that's a combination of I am that parent that is just extremely involved and present, not to say that made the staff or the teachers treat me different, but there's a huge difference in how you're treated or the way they greeted the parent that was in their face all the time and how they greeted the ones who they didn't know whose child they even belong to. So me just being the parent I've always been, I've always been able to control my schedule. So that's allowed me to be in teachers' spaces. So I've always felt extremely welcomed. Even when there was a difficult conversation and I wanted to talk to the principal about something, it was still good because I was just always there. I'm also the same parent that gets everybody holiday gifts and donated. It was a good balance. I wasn't just “Oh, what are you doing for my kid.” I definitely was all around. I felt very welcomed.

Having the ability to be around has translated into Toya and Dee brokering positive experiences for their children's academic experiences. Part of the job that Black educator-parents have taken on to further ensure their child's wellbeing is maintaining a

physical presence. Toya herself says that “absent parents tend to have children who are not given those additional concessions, because there’s no accountability.” There are two layers of interaction occurring with Black educator-parents and the schooling of their children. The first layer is that despite their level of influence or position as an educator, Black educator-parents are experiencing assaults on their competency and parenting.

The unique layers of racialization and racism Black educator-parents navigate in their lives, as parents, as educators in structural, macro and blatant ways, as well as on the micro level in more subtle or interactional ways in the K–12 educational system affect their lives in and out of school. Your home is your castle and respite from the noise of life lived outside of it. This peace and rest is not available to Black educator-parents at no point in their daily lives. In addition to the racial microaggressions at home, Black educator-parents still contend with racially socializing their children to be able to also navigate racism while not in their direct care despite their positionality as employees at or within school districts. Previous research has shown how Black educators navigate racial harm in K–12 schools for other people’s children (McKinney et al., 2021). The data presented in this chapter shows that Black educators who are parents doubly navigate this racial harm not only for their Black students, as shown in previous literature, but also for their own children. Their positionality as being part of the system does not negate or mitigate the work of shielding themselves or their children from racist practices against Black people in society at large and in schooling. This prolonged sustaining of feelings of anxiety and stress for Black educator-parents take a “toll on the bodies, minds, and spirits of People of Color over time” (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015, p. 310).

Despite the disheartening data presented in this chapter of Black educator-parents enduring racist practices and ideologies, in the next chapter, I discuss more in-depth the agency of Black educator-parents are able to use as they navigate schooling in the Inland Empire.

Chapter 5: Black Educator-Parents Navigate the Layers of Racism

In Chapter 4, I outlined the layers of racism that Black educator-parents endure in their daily lives, in their homes to prepare their children to deal with racial macro and microaggressions, and with the structures of schooling in their roles as parents and as educators. In this chapter, I answer research question 2, “What are the strategies Black educator-parents employ to navigate and resist the racialized context of schools on behalf of their children?” This chapter presents the study’s findings displaying the empowered agency of Black educator-parents and how they navigate and confront racialized practices within the schools through community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Specifically, I highlight the strategies and capital Black educator-parents employ to navigate and resist racist ideologies, discourses, and policies. The strategies I present are not utilized by all participants as Black educator-parents do not operate as a monolith, but instead represent examples of resistant, navigational, and social capital exhibited by individuals as they transform the system of schooling to meet the needs of their children and Black children in their care. Again, I use Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework to highlight the use of social, navigational, and resistant capital Black educator-parents use to navigate and resist racialization and racism in schooling: (1) moving their own jobs, (2) using school-choice and taking their kids out of the traditional system, and (3) relying on their social capital and Black networks to situate Black children into a viable system that will benefit them.

Intentionally Relocating Professions to Navigate Racism

This strategy seen among the participants in my sample for whom the ability to change positions and schools presented itself, provided a handful of Black educator-parents the ability to change their positions professionally in order to either be at their child's school site or in the city of a preferred school district as a means to navigate racism in schooling. These participants were able to utilize their social capital—"networks of people and community resources"—to create professional movement beneficial to their own children (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Research about Black parents advocating for their Black children in schools has shown that "race and anti-Black racism are central to Black parents' educational decision-making around schooling" (Posey-Maddox et al., 2021, p. 38). Black parents are continually making positioned choices, trade-offs, calculating risk assessments, and constantly weighing all of these positions to determine where to have their children attend school (Cooper, 2005; Posey-Maddox et al., 2021). Previous research has shown Black parents moving to different areas to attain a better education for their children, but this research has found that Black educator-parents not only make this move as Black parents do, but they have an additional option of working at the schools or districts that their children attend (Posey-Maddox et al., 2021).

Black educator-parents have used their profession as a teacher to transfer their skill to schools and school districts in which they want their child to attend. These individual choices have helped Black educator parents to keep a watchful eye on their children to ensure their best interests are met. Kiara is one of the participants who used

her job as a special education teacher or her human capital, to create a pathway to educational attainment with reduced exposure to racialized harm. She is a transplant to the Inland Empire from Los Angeles County and says she intentionally left Los Angeles “to get a better education for my son without having to pay for the elementary years.” Prior to moving to and teaching in the Inland Empire, Kiara had worked in a private school setting, but ended up switching to “public school to reach black and brown children.” Though she worked in a public school setting that reached more Black students, she said, “When I had my son, there was no way I was going to allow him to go to public school in L.A.” The decision to move out to the Inland Empire also came with a career change for Kiara who “intentionally came down from high school, where [she] spent 10 years, to elementary school so that [she] could be at the school that [her] son was at.” Kiara is sure that working at the site that her son attended

had an effect, especially when it comes to the classified employees. Looking at him, as you know, just another brown face out at recess or lunch. It was more of, ‘this is Mrs. Kiara’s son.’ And that really worked in his favor. (Kiara, personal communication, May 28, 2020)

She was very clear that she believed, unless motivated by the school district to attend professional development on Black bodies, Blackness, intolerance, racism, and white privilege, classified employees (who hold campus supervision positions) have less of a chance of confronting their own racist ideologies that infect their work in schools (Dumas, 2016).

The moving of herself and her son, mirrors the “positioned” and “right fit” choices of Black parents in previous research (Posey-Maddox, et al., 2021; Posey-Maddox, 2017) who were also able to use their navigational capital to navigate a system

of schooling that was not created for them (Yosso, 2005). Throughout his elementary school years, Kiara has made yearly measured choices of placement for her son. In third grade, she “intentionally put him in a classroom with a nurturing teacher.” She believes that in third grade he “received preferential treatment because of who his mom was at school.” In fourth grade, she moved school districts and took her son with her. She states, “that was the first time that I didn't pull the teacher card and I told the Lord that I'm gonna let you do what you do.” As her son enters into the fifth grade, the conversation about middle school is at the forefront of her mind: “He's got to come out of public school for middle school. After fifth grade, he will be going to online schooling. I use my jobs to mirror my kids. I will be virtual when he goes to middle school.”

Similar to the actions of Kiara, Toya also uses her social capital as a school psychologist at her school district to maintain close proximity to her boys. However, Toya's proximity does not result with her being at the same school site as her sons, but instead at a high school in the district still allowing her to have access to her sons if needed. Toya and her two boys have about a two hour commute each day to and from home and school. She could very easily enroll her 4- and 5-year-old boys into the school district closer to their home leaving her to be the only one to do a daily commute. Enrolling her boys in school closer to home would mean that they “get sports, get dance class, get four o'clock we go to the park and have a snack, then go to dinner. We're getting home at seven o'clock at night because they are also commuters.” As a district employee, Toya knows that

The more involved, visible, and present parents tend to receive a greater level of communication and involvement from the teachers because they know this parent

is going to hold them accountable, because they see them all the time. The absent parents tend to have children who are not given those additional concessions, because there's no accountability. I need them to know that if they call me and they're in trouble, it's not going to be an hour because I show up. I also think as an African American mother, I also want to combat the stereotype that we are uninvolved, that we are absent, or disengaged, or preoccupied. (Toya, personal communication, May 29, 2020)

Toya is also making a *positioned school choice* as she believes that her position as a Black mother puts her and her boys “at a disadvantage in school and the educational marketplace” (Cooper, 2005, p. 180). Though her children are missing out on certain opportunities with going to school in their own school district, Toya makes a weighted decision that considers their emotional well-being as well as their academic achievement (Cooper, 2005). This choice is a forced choice that Black educator-parents make. They are Black parents who know and follow the statistics about the over disciplining of Black children in the classroom (Powell & Coles, 2020). As stated in the figures listed in the literature review, Black children are 2 to 3 times more likely to be severely disciplined in school. This reality and the reality of racism infecting the teaching of and interactions with Black children in schools are the reason why Toya and Kiara are forced to keep their children close.

Like Kiara and Toya, Cassidy worked in close proximity to her children while they attended elementary school. Cassidy, however, also reports using her social capital or “strong networks between and among teachers” ensuring the well-being of her children (Sanders et al. 2018, p. 6). Cassidy is an elementary school teacher and parent of 3 teenage boys, who recalls that her children never had any trouble while in elementary school because “they went to the school where I work, so those are all my friends.

They've gotten the love and support from my teacher friends." While working at the same school that her boys attended, Cassidy is able to maintain a level of accountability with her son's teachers to not *adultify* her sons and make decisions about their behavior and academic prowess that can detract from their academic success. However, once her sons went to middle and high school, the environment was different because she did not know some of the teachers there. Whereas she could depend on the relationships she had built with her teacher friends in elementary school, ensuring that extra care was taken with her boys, she did not have that same leverage in middle and high school. Beginning in middle school, continuous communication of academic concerns was not a given, and left Cassidy's oldest son with a lower math grade than she believed he was capable of.

Using their jobs to mirror that of her kids is a powerful revelation in the research on Black educator-parents who have to not only navigate racist school structures as an educator, but also having to navigate those same infested waters as a parent. While the dual role as parent and educator adds additional layers of stressful decision making, it also provides a semblance of control in a system that historically was not created to educate Black children (Dumas, 2016; Dumas & ross, 2015). In a system where Black children find themselves in a daily dilemma navigating a system of oppression valuing white middle class values, having a parent in close proximity is a comforting added benefit that adds a buffer between the children of Black educator-parents and the system of schooling.

Using School Choice to Navigate Racism

The next observed strategy used by Black educator-parents to keep their children safe in schools is moving their children from schools in which they are being exposed to trauma (Powell & Coles, 2020). This school movement also includes the discussion of school choice for Black parents as a means to navigate racialization and racism in schools. The Black educator-parents in this study have utilized their power of choice to make decisions that have moved their children to alternative traditional public schools, community led charter schools, private religious schools, and homeschool in response to racist school and classroom practices that have not supported the well-being and academic success of their children.

Cassidy shares a narrative of her high school son who she ended up transferring out of his high school because of his school counselor's lack of concern for his academic progress. She states

At the beginning of his junior year I had a meeting with his counselor and he's like, "Oh yeah, he's doing great. He's on track to graduate." But at that time he had like a 1.17, something like that doesn't spell great to me. At that point in his junior year, he had already done summer school twice. I ended up enrolling him into a continuation school. It fit his personality. The smaller classes and the teachers were extremely present. And they pushed him to do things, step out of his comfort zone, and participate in things that I know on his own, he wouldn't dare sign up for. (Cassidy, personal communication, June 4, 2020)

With Black student achievement continuously lagging behind their white peers to the point of concern that President Barack Obama issued an executive order is telling enough of the ramifications of this counselor's lack of urgency over Cassidy's son's grades (Obama, 2012). A grade point average (GPA) of 1.17 might have been enough at this high school in order for him to graduate, but what this counselor did not acknowledge

was Cassidy's plans and dreams for her son after high school graduation. The guidance counselor knows that "88 percent of Black 19-year-olds had a high school diploma" (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021, p. 6). This figure is amazing at face value and can have many California high schools congratulating themselves on a job well done, but it doesn't tell the story of these Black graduates afterwards. The deeper truth is that "60 percent of Black high school graduates are not prepared by their high schools to meet the A-G course requirements for admission to the UC and CSU" (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021, p. 7). A-G requirements are a mandatory set of classes that a high school student must take and pass with a grade of C or better in order to enroll directly in a four-year institution a CSU [California State University], a UC [University of California], or independent college (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021). Without meeting these requirements, Black students are then left with the option of private, community colleges, or for-profit institutions which cost more, especially without having qualified for many scholarships. Now in the case of community colleges, they can cost less, but in the case of Black students "Only one-third of Black community college students earn a certificate or degree, transfer to a four-year institution, or are transfer-prepared within six years" (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021, p. 7). The vast majority of Black community college students are not earning their Associate's degree within the recommended time frame of 2 years and continuing to accumulate college loan debt. The story behind 88 percent of Black students in California graduating high school is great, but in an attempt to address persistent rates of academic disparities, it is not enough. As a Black educator-parent, Cassidy is aware of this conundrum and

uses her navigational capital to move her son to a setting she believed was more supportive and fitting for his academic development.

There is a lack of foresight and urgency to ensure that Black students are leaving high school college ready. A 1.17 GPA may be enough to graduate and enough to attend community college, but that locks Black students onto a specific track to higher education and also limits their financial prospects as many college scholarships have higher GPA requirements. The guidance counselor is unknowingly participatory in a racializing system of academic oppression of Black students.

Similar to Cassidy, Charley's high school aged son had a similar experience at his high school with a guidance counselor who saw nothing wrong with his current academic progress, or lack thereof according to his mother. After also dealing with a lack of communication from teachers about her son's academic progress, Charley made the decision to use her agency and advocate for her son in a move to a private Catholic high school after feeling like the guidance counselor at his traditional public high school "was setting him up to fail." She states that after transferring to his new school the guidance counselor there said that "it didn't seem like she was trying to help him graduate." It was not until arriving at the new school that Charley and her son discovered he would not be meeting the A-G requirements needed to enter directly into a 4 year institution. Charley shares that "he had literally given up on me. He had quit. He had quit. If he would have stayed at his old school, I don't know that he would have made it, honestly." Though encountering a lackadaisical response from teachers and counselors towards the academic progress of their children, Cassidy and Charley navigated this situation with choosing to

take their children out of an environment that was failing them. With the statistics on Black academic achievement after high school being as troublesome as they are, having high school educators have honest discussions in professional development specifically about the historical trajectory of Black student achievement in California. Being satisfied with an 88 percent high school graduation rate is not enough to improve the academic trajectory of Black students in California.

These positioned choices continue throughout the K–12 continuum. Toya decided to transfer her sons from a private Christian school to a public school in her district because of the access to the dual language immersion program. California offers a program for students to simultaneously learn in English and Spanish throughout their K–12 educational career. Enrollment for the program begins in kindergarten and students remain in the program throughout their educational career. They usually cannot enter the program if they’ve missed the kindergarten enrollment cut-off. Despite the elation felt by a parent for their children having the opportunity to be enrolled in such a coveted program, Toya still has feelings of nervousness and apprehension. When asked how she feels about transferring her children from private to public school, she states:

I'm extremely nervous, being a public school educator and psychologist and knowing that my district is actually under review for disproportionality for African American students. I am very concerned. Yeah, because my district was flagged as having a higher rate of suspension and expulsion for African American males... district-wide. Particularly in high school, but higher level of Special Education identification and higher level of suspension and disciplinary [actions].

While at their private school, Toya felt that “it has given them a little level of grace that I fear that public school will not give them.” Despite the academic benefits of the program, Toya wrestled with whether

the dual language program is more beneficial than this nurturing setting that sees them as who they are. Should they be treated and given grace and nurtured? Or should they be equipped with another tool on their tool belt so they can go forward in life? Private school goes up to eighth grade. Money wise, we have to think about that part. But then I worry that if they are in this very sheltered environment will they be equipped for the world? Do they need to be mistreated, do they need to be discriminated against, so that they develop a thick skin and they don't think that everybody just loves Jesus? Do you throw them into the Lion's Den right now or do you wait until their ninth graders and then throw them in then?

Toya has weighed the potential risks against the benefits in her decision to enroll her children into a district that is currently under review for policies that have disproportionately impacted the Black students at her district to which her sons are now enrolled. Though Toya shares with me that having her boys enrolled at her school district to be convenient to attend events, drop off treats unannounced, and answer disciplinary communications immediately, there is an additional reason for moving her children closer to her. Being "involved in their education requires them to be near where I work" and provides an extra layer of protection to her children because as an employee of the district that they now enrolled, she can intervene on their behalf before they become a statistic.

The last subset of study participants advocated for their children by using their navigational capital to make the decision to move them from traditional public schools to grassroots community based charter schools. Grassroots community based charter schools in this study are those started by "neighborhood leaders who [were] discontented with the traditional school system" and two of the main focuses of the schools is Black culture and Black academic achievement (Henig et al., 2005, p. 493). Camilla is a high school English teacher in San Bernardino and at the time of the study had 3 children, 2 boys in

elementary school and one girl in preschool. Camilla’s school movement does not include a traditional public school, but instead she moved her sons from a predominantly white private Christian academy to a grassroots community-based charter school. Their new school is “predominately African American” and they “learn the Black anthem.”

Camilla further elucidated on the different experiences she has had at the two schools:

They learned stuff they didn't learn at a regular public school related to their culture and identity. Their last school was a Christian school. I think the only time they talked about Black culture was in February, Black History Month. So it was more, “We’re all equal and free here.” There was no intentionality behind [teaching to their Black selves]. It was more spiritual. There wasn’t a push for them to do better. It was more like they are doing well in one class...it wasn’t a push compared to the teacher now. I feel the teacher now can give you more detail about where they are, what they're learning, and what they need to improve on. (Camilla, personal communication, July 11, 2020)

With the school shift, Camilla now feels her son’s current teacher is more attentive to the details of their learning while continuing to push them to improve on specific content areas. In addition to the more attention to detail on their academic progress, Camilla’s sons are learning that Black history and culture is a daily lived experience rather than being solely contained to a month.

The Black educator-parents who choose to move their kids, are not necessarily bound to a particular school choice. Joseph and his wife have personal experience with private, public, and charter schools in their own educational history. With that personal experience, they have chosen to send their children to a charter to begin with but will “have a mix of public and private” for their boys. As his family prepared to make the school enrollment decision, Joseph shares “I definitely saw a distinct difference with the amount of time, energy, and focus you can give to kids at a charter school, particularly if

you're starting off at a charter school.” Sapphire shares similar sentiments about a charter school her children attended for middle school. She says:

I can definitely say that when they were under the umbrella of [that school], they felt the most cared for. I feel like there was more of a personal touch. The school wasn't perfect, but there was a personal touch where you kind of felt like you had a personal relationship with people there. It kind of felt like a village. (Sapphire, personal communication, June 16, 2020)

Her children attended school in San Bernardino, which was not close to where she lived in Victorville and approximately an hour commute with traffic each way. Seven days a week she would make the trek from Victorville to San Bernardino to send her kids to a charter school and go to work in San Bernardino. As a single parent who also worked night shifts, Sapphire divulges that she would “sometimes sleep in the car while they were in school or I would volunteer.” In nearby Riverside, Ricki shares that parents in her school districts “get frustrated, they put them in [a nearby charter school], because you just want to protect your child.”

Black Educator-Parents Advocacy for Black Students and Families

The group of participants in this study are not a monolith. They have different roles requiring their interaction with children on a daily basis. Each of those roles garner a different amount of capital that Black educator-parents are able to use to make individual changes for their own children in school as well as positions that can have a greater influence to advocate for all Black students and families within participants' school districts. However, regardless of position, all participants encountered some level of racist ideologies and practices in schooling that they have had to learn how to navigate in order for their children to receive a viable educational experience. In this section, I

discuss the ways in which some Black educator-parents are able to use their social capital and positionality to provide protection to their own K–12 children as well as Black families which they serve in their professional roles. One definition of social capital is:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (Bourdieu et al., 1986, pp. 248–249)

Bourdieu’s definition of social capital, however, was from a class-based deficit view of communities who did not have access to financial capital. An additional view of social capital via the work of Yosso (2005) defines social capital as “the networks of people and community resources...[able to provide] instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions (p. 79). The networks to which Black educator-parent belong to is the educator and school network, in addition to the Black community at large. Employment with the educational system, according to Bourdieu (1986), provides brokering leverage, or a sort of credit, for Black educator-parents. Depending on their position, “the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent” is different on a case by case basis (p. 249). In addition, “the size of the network of connections [that can be] effectively mobilized” by the agent and the “volume of the capital possessed...by each of those to whom he is connected” alters the amount of protection that Black educator-parents can provide their children while in school (p. 249).

Joseph is a Black educator-parent who uses his social capital and education networks to have influence over his children’s schooling trajectory. Joseph is an education consultant in the Inland Empire who has a non-profit organization that partners

with Inland Empire high schools and their Black student population. He has 2 school-aged sons ages 3 and 4. The youngest is in preschool and the oldest is now enrolled in kindergarten at an Inland Empire charter school. He discusses the thought process behind choosing a preschool for his youngest son:

I think some of this is because we have had some connection to education, we're really purposeful about who we select to educate our children, be around our children, influence our children and [provide care to our children]. So we have talked to a lot of our friends and family members ...and individuals that were looking for preschool. We wanted to make sure that there were certain things that they had which were good discipline, caring individuals, some basic promotion of reading and love for reading, and making sure they knew how to deal with African American boys and our culture. (Joseph, personal communication, June 1, 2020)

Although it may seem absurd to think that there is not a general innocence granted to all infants and kids, racism is not absent from early childhood institutions, teachers, and administrators (Gilliam et al., 2016). According to the Office for Civil Rights (2016b), "Black children represent 19% of preschool enrollment, but 47% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions." Gilliam et al. (2016) find that

when expecting challenging behaviors, teachers gazed longer at Black children, especially Black boys. Findings also suggested that implicit biases may differ depending on teacher race. Providing family background information resulted in lowered severity ratings when teacher and child race matched, but resulted in increased severity ratings when their race did not match. (p. 2)

Behaviors of non-Black children may be easily dismissed as age-appropriate behavior and/or not threatening to the classroom environment and the learning of other students. In fact, Todd et al. (2016) find "that youth may be insufficient to disarm the threat associated with Black men; implicit biases commonly observed for Black men appear to generalize even to young Black boys" (p. 391). Black educator-parents understand and

“acknowledge that [racism] infects educators’ work in schools, and serves as a form of (everyday) violence against Black children and their families” (Dumas, 2016). Joseph’s interviewing process of preschools is necessary to protect his Black sons from racialized harms.

In addition to Black educator-parents advocating on behalf of their children by way of interviewing future school choices, they also reach out to professional and social networks to aid in their school choice decisions. Joseph explains how he and his wife settled on enrolling his oldest son into a grassroots community charter school rather than a traditional public school by leaning on professional networks (Henig et al., 2005):

Through [my organization] and also just having friends that do a lot of service providing for our schools, you get to know who’s really about it. You know who’s seriously interested in the well-being of Black kids. (Joseph, personal communication, June 1, 2020)

With his role in the community, Joseph is able to call upon those who work in his school district for specific information about school sites and teachers to determine how well they would be a match for his children. In addition to professional contacts at school districts, Joseph also uses the feedback that he receives from concerned parents of children who his organization serves. In response to racist ideologies that affect school outcomes for Black children, Joseph “drew upon [his] school-based social networks and [his] understanding of the school system to respond to...and create opportunity for [his] sons” (Allen, 2013, p. 183).

Understanding the system—educational knowledge of schooling—in which you work is highly important to parents who advocate for their own children like Charley who is an elementary teacher in San Bernardino (Crozier, 1996). She has a 17-year-old son in

high school who she had to advocate for on many occasions with his classroom teachers.

Charley knew the system and made it a point to hold her son's teachers and school

accountable to what she knew they were supposed to provide to her son:

Oh Lord, here she comes. I think that they knew that I knew my stuff. And that I was going to hold them accountable to the best teaching practices. And it just [made] them uncomfortable, you know... I don't think that they usually had parents who would be questioning too much or who had that deep of a level of questioning [about] best teaching practices and things like that. I was able to ask them what I need and advocate for him the right way. And I know Ed code. And so I know what his rights are. I know what our rights are, you know, my rights as a parent, I know what they can do. (Charley, personal communication, June 8, 2020)

As such, racist ideologies held by teachers and administrators deemed Charley a nuisance when she came on campus to address her concerns with them about the education of her son. Her presence was a nuisance because her knowledge of and position in the system forced the teachers to confront their unfair practices for evaluating her son's academic progress. In spite of this, Charley used her positionality and social capital as an educator who is well aware of the California Education Codes, to challenge racist practices at her son's school in which his teachers and the administration were not supportive in his educational progress. Charley expressed that while in high school, her son did not always agree with the chosen curriculum or teaching strategies of the classroom teacher. When he did speak up about his concerns, she said that he was met with dismissive comments from teachers who did not feel the need to consider his point of view. Charley expressed her dismay when she found out her son was failing at "the last minute, so I mean just our experience has been that teachers...fail to communicate with parents." According to California Education Code 49067, the governing board of the school district shall

prescribe regulations regarding student achievement that includes “requiring a conference with, or a written report to, the parent of each pupil whenever it becomes evident to the teacher that the pupil is in danger of failing a course” (California Education Code 49067, 1976). Black children who do not acquiesce, often find themselves highly vilified if they do not “conform to perceived ‘white norms’” or participate in cultural practices in “opposition” to the accepted mode of behavior (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 59). Black educator-parents like Charley who are well aware of their legal educational rights as parents use that knowledge to challenge racist practices that would result in providing minimal opportunities for Black students to flourish academically.

Similar to Charley, LaShawnda also uses her positional influence and knowledge to advocate on behalf of her own children in school. LaShawnda is a district math coach in the city of Riverside, California. She has two children, a 24-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter. She has been able to use her positionality as a district employee to make significant changes to her daughter’s trajectory in school. She shares how she used her position as a math coach as currency to bargain a slot in the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program at the elementary school she was assigned:

She began the program, a little bit later than most, most of the kids began in kindergarten. She went in the last semester of first grade. Which wasn’t supposed to happen. They know they wasn’t really supposed to let her in, but because I work at the district and I’m working at the school site that she was a part of, her principal knew that I would stay at her school site forever if my daughter was allowed into the program. So she finagled her way to get her in. (LaShawnda, personal communication, May 25, 2020)

While research has shown that Black parents have advocated for the schooling of their Black children via school choice decisions, being a district employee, LaShawnda was

able to use her positionality to request admittance into a program for her child as a contingency of the services she could provide the school site (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2008). As a district employee assigned to a specific school site, LaShawnda has the opportunity to not only enroll her daughter in that same site, but, in her own words, “can say this is not happening. I can say she is not having this teacher. I can say, yes, you can discipline her. But this is why you shouldn’t discipline her that way.”

In direct comparison, LaShawnda’s experience with schooling for her first child was not as accommodating as it is now with her daughter. When visiting her son’s school, LaShawnda shares how she felt:

[I] didn’t feel welcomed at all until I showed my district badge. And then I gave a business card. Then they realized who I was. But I didn’t feel like they were welcoming at all at my son’s school. (LaShawnda, personal communication, May 25, 2020)

At the time that her son was enrolled in school, LaShawnda did not work at his school site. She says, “ That experience was different because mommy wasn’t there.” She was not physically present to broker a deal that would keep her son shielded from getting lost in the shuffle of conscious and unconscious racist practices while in school.

Ricki echoes this same sentiment as Charley, and LaShawnda in her continued discussion about the benefits of being a Black educator who knows the system and has connections in the district in which you work as she uses her positionality and social capital to advocate for her own child and other Black families in her district.

You know, people will play people who they think they can play or get away with. I think it also has to do not just with the fact that we’ve worked in the district office, but I think it’s also like our proximity to people on the board. Okay, you know, people on the board are longtime Riversiders, like myself, so I know them. The board is the hiring and firing. [I have the power to go] to a board

member who I know and say, “This is what’s going on with the school.’ So I think that’s why parents reach out to me when things happen is because they feel like, “I have somebody in the game to help me. Somebody who can guide me.” (Ricki, personal communication, May 26, 2020)

Getting lost in the shuffle of middle and high school classes, IEPs, state testing, Tier 1 and Tier 2 Response to Intervention (RTI) programs, and subjective report card grades that determine future class placement are all hoops that Black parents usually have to maneuver by themselves all while navigating racist practices of individual teachers, school administrators, and district-wide policies that unfairly punish or push out Black boys and girls in K–12 schools. There are initiatives in school districts in the Inland Empire to connect with Black students and families in their educational journey and help to curtail potential derailment of Black academic success. Ricki works closely the initiative at her school district and shares her sentiments about being one of the few Black employees at the district office who can be a voice for parents who need help navigating the racist channels of public education not designed for the success of Black children;

I am one of two people in the district office who was Black in a management position. Before me, there was no one. So now we have a chief academic officer starting July one, who will be African American. A lot of those come up, you know, we feel safe with our own sometimes, right. So if I'm helping and leading the work of AAPAC and somebody sees my face and here's my voice and knows my name, they're going to reach out to me when any sort of racial thing goes on. (Ricki, personal communication, May 26, 2020)

The African American Parent Advisory Council (AAPAC) “exists to support academic outcomes, to ensure a positive district and parental partnership for improvement and developing parent and community engagement resulting in academic, social and emotional well-being for African American students Pre-K-12” (Riverside Unified School District, 2021). There are chapters in school districts across California, in

addition to named variations which hold similar missions at their individual schools and districts.

In a like manner, Vince uses his positions as both a teacher and school board member to push effective change and challenge racist practices that have locked Black students in academic stagnation for years at his district. Vince works for a small school district on the southern outskirts of Riverside County with a student population of about 20,000 students. He has 3 sons, with two of his school aged children attending school in this same district. This small school district has a 12% Black student enrollment (2019–2020) and 9% Black teaching force (2018–2019). Effectively, Vince’s membership into the social groups of this district as teacher, board member, and parent afford him the ability to broker and leverage an educational system in which he feels comfortable sending his children. The intersectionality of his roles, provides him a pulse on the district’s Black community:

Well, I happen to have insight on how other African Americans in the community feel about the district. It’s almost like a tale of two cities, you got the district thinking one thing and that they’re parading about, but then you got the marginalized African American voices that ... don’t feel like they’re being heard. So as an African American... I’m bringing these things to their attention. And I have to shine a spotlight. I was like, are we looking at the African American suspension rates? Are [we] questioning why it’s so high? Are we looking at the A - G and wonder why there’s not a lot of African Americans fulfilling A–G. I pin it to the superintendent and I said, “You’re the leader and why have the achievement gaps been so large for so long? What progress have you implemented to improve the plight of African American students or else you’re just throwing them on a trajectory.” That’s part of the systemic racism. (Vince, personal communication, June 8, 2020)

As a board member, Vince can express what so many other parents in his district are feeling but don’t have the proximity to power to say and truly feel heard. As a parent of

Black children in the district, Vince is positioned to *actively represent* and advocate for the Black constituents in the district while also making decisions that will serve the interests of his own children as well (Stewart et al., 1989).

In the state of California, high school students who are planning on applying to state funded universities must complete what are called A–G requirements. There are 15 year-long courses that students must complete in high school with a C or better in order to meet the minimum requirements for entrance into these schools (University of California, 2019). Without these courses, students often choose to attend junior colleges for a period of time before they qualify to apply to the state universities. What has been found, however, is that during this time in order to earn the credits needed to qualify for entrance into the California state college or university systems:

barely one-third of Black students meet the Vision for Success definition of completion within six years of their initial enrollment: earning an associate degree, transferring to a four-year institution, or successfully completing 60 credits that can transfer to a UC or CSU campus with a GPA of 2.0 or higher. (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021)

The rate of completion has remained stagnant for Black students whereas in comparison, their white counterparts are achieving this definition of completion at 20 percentage points more (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021). As a Black parent, teacher, and board member, Vince’s questions are highly logical and pertinent for a school district that services such a high number of Black students in the Inland Empire.

Vince’s school district is an anomaly in the Inland Empire with its higher numbers of Black students and teachers. This school district should be a leading force for Black academic achievement in the Southern California area. However, racist ideology

has still left Black student achievement marginalized and disregarded had it not been for the concerns of Vince, the only Black board member for the school district. Since being elected to the school board, Vince has picked up a forgotten mantle and now feels like he bares this burden of giving voice to not only 12% of the student body of his school district, but also his own children. As a Black educator-parent, Vince adds a protective layer already at his school site for Black students to “disrupt the racialized harm produced within schools” (McKinney de Royston et al., 2020, p. 68). But as a board member, he has the social capital to be able to protect more Black students in the district by continuing to force discussions concerning issues pertaining to the Black student body that would otherwise be diminished in importance. Not only does Vince’s position allow him to add protection to Black students, but it also allows him to reveal that racial bias and racism are pervasive in the lack of policies and actions on behalf of the school board and district before his arrival. The continued unmet needs for the Black student population in this district, with higher percentages than state averages of Black students and teachers, echoes back to the premise that this racist structure “serves to reinforce the ideological and material ‘infrastructure’ of educational inequity” down to the “maldistribution of educational resources” (Dumas & ross, 2016, p. 432).

Despite their positions working with and within K–12 school districts and classrooms, there is still a need to “want to protect your child.” The revelation of this undercurrent of fear and reservation of Black educator-parents signals a lack of trust for the system they work within. This trepidation stems from the historic and present racist policies, practices, and lack of urgency to address the continued disproportionate

representation of Black children in higher education, being disciplined in school, and getting assessed and assigned SPED services. Schools are a perpetual source to re-inflicting racialized harms on Black children and Black parents as they attempt to find a good school to entrust the care and education of their children to. The infection of racism into educators' work in schools leads to guidance counselors who believe that a 1.17 GPA is enough to graduate. The infection leads to Black students who are not learning who they are and their full potential because they are not academically challenged to imagine more. The infection leads to parents who fear not being present in the classroom less their child becomes forgotten or adultified and overdisciplined. The infection of racism is present in the systems of American schooling, it's just not being called as such.

The data has shown that Black educator-parents are not exempt from making “trade-offs in the school choice process” and “constantly assessing the racialized risks of neighborhood and school environments, and are often forced to question whether they should stay or go” (Posey-Maddox et al., 2021, p. 56). However, this research has also shown that Black educator-parents have been able to use their social capital and positionality to navigate and resist a system not built with their best interests in mind. Despite facing the challenges of a system not historically designed for the edification of Black children and families, Black educator-parents have found the ability to use resources both in and out of the system to their advantage and effectively challenge the status quo.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results and Implications

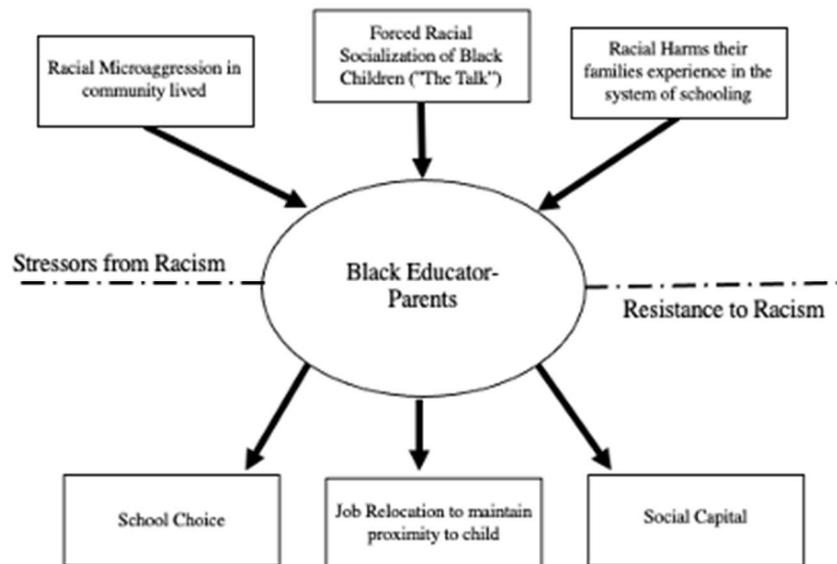
In this dissertation, I lay out the complex layers of racism that Black educator-parents experience as they navigate their personal and professional lives living and working in racially hostile spaces. These layers take a toll on their wellbeing and stability, and must be taken seriously as we consider issues of educational in/equity and in/justice. To overview, In Chapter 1, I lay out the state of education in which this research finds itself. There has been a consistent trend in the last twenty years where Black children “continue to lack equal access to a high-quality education and still lag far behind their White peers in reading and math proficiency, high school [graduation] rates, and college completion” (Obama, 2012). Also in the current state of education for Black children, we see disproportionate levels of discipline and SPED identification. Chapter 2 provides CRT as a theoretical lenses to view this context in while also giving a historical and contemporary empirical foundation to answer the following research questions:

What are the unique layers of racialization and racism that Black educator-parents navigate in the K–12 educational system? And what are the strategies Black educator-parents employ to navigate and resist the racialized context of schools on behalf of their children?

Chapter 3 shares the qualitative research and coding methods and their rationales used to examine the questions at hand. In Chapters 4 and 5, I show how the data shows the two worlds that Black educator-parents simultaneously straddle. As shown in Figure 1, Chapter 4 explicitly presents the stressors of racism Black educator-parents endure in experiencing both macro- and microaggressions in the communities in which they live, the forced racial socialization of Black children through “The Talk”, and the racial harms that they and their families experience in the system of schooling. Chapter 5 displays

evidence of Black educator-parents who resist and challenge practices in schooling through exercising their right to school choice, participating in job relocation to maintain proximity to their children, and using their social capital and positionality to resist and navigate racist ideologies and practices in schooling to advocate on behalf of their own children and Black families.

Figure 1
Stressors and Resistance of Black Educator-Parents



Note. This model shows that while Black Educator-Parents experience external stressors from racism and biases, they also simultaneously have ways in which they resist in their profession.

Figure 1. Stressors and resistance of Black educator-parents.

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the findings and a conclusion based on the data presented in my previous chapters. I provide recommendations to address Black racialized harms and practices in schooling and conclude with recommendations for future research. This dissertation does not claim to solve racism, but instead present ways in which Black educator-parents mitigate and disrupt layers of racialization to navigate in the K–12 educational system as well as the strategies they employ to navigate and resist

this racist context on behalf of their children. The research reveals that despite their positionality as people who work closely with and within schools and districts, Black educator-parents bear a burden of being both a Black parent and Black educator simultaneously. The history of racist ideologies and practices in America makes racism inherently ingrained into the structures and daily operations of this country particularly in the field of education.

During the 2018–2019 school year in the state of California, 4% of teachers identify as Black or African American in comparison to 61% of the teaching force being white (Education Data Partnership, 2021). The next school year, 2019–2020, the state of California sees 5% of the student enrollment identifying as Black or African American, 22% white, and 55% Hispanic or Latino (Data Reporting Office, 2020). These demographics lay out a few scenarios. The first is that, in the state of California, Black educators are working in an environment in which they are a minority and rarity in their districts and school sites. In the counties comprising the Inland Empire in the 2018–2019 school year, Riverside county had a 4.5% Black teaching force and San Bernardino came in at 5%. The majority of teachers in both of these counties are comparable to the state data with approximately two-thirds of teachers also being white. These numbers have greater implications to the work environment of the participants in this study. For the educators in this study, the low numbers of Black professionals at their districts and school sites, makes their positions working with children (especially Black children) all the more imperative to the success of Black students in their school districts and their own children.

The data reveal that Black educator-parents encounter blatant racism in the communities in which they live, carry a burden to protect their own children from racism, and their children still battle racism in and out of school despite their parents positions. The Inland Empire is the place that's supposed to be an affordable refuge from Los Angeles. Families are moving east, they're buying homes and finding a healthy job market. Despite the reasons drawing people out further to the Inland Empire, you have a growing Black population that is met with a racist resistance in the communities in which they are living and becoming homeowners. Though “blatant racist laws and government practices have been declared illegal,” Black people are still subject to a society that on surface says it represents all its citizens but vehemently is fighting the existence of Black people in that society (Dumas, 2016, p. 15). Black educator-parents have encountered hostile racist confrontations, police profiling, and presumed criminality by their neighbors and communities in which they live. They are not exempt from the vitriol racist rhetoric and behavior in their communities. Black educator-parents “are not only working to transform education for our children and communities, but simultaneously trying to thrive in a system that often doesn't even want to see our survival” (Carrión, 2021). Living in this dichotomy, leaves Black educator-parents having to make positioned choices in their personal and professional lives on the conditions they are willing to sustain in order to maintain a livelihood and find a school that meets the needs of their children (Cooper, 2005).

In order to navigate and resist the racism experienced in schooling, Black educator-parents use their social capital to negotiate safe spaces for their children,

intentionally change professions to protect their children, and use school choice options to position their children in the best learning environment possible. Black educator-parents leverage their relationships at work to procure favorable classroom placements for their children with teachers whom they believe will have their child's best interests at heart, demand change and action for school and district policies that meet the needs of Black students, and remain a constant presence at their child's school site to buffer and monitor the school's actions toward their child. Dumas (2016) states that it is imperative for educators to acknowledge that racism permeates the work of schools. This lack of acknowledgement, in what Senator Tim Scott believes is an antiracist society, is what Black educator-parents fear (Brown, 2021). Without acknowledgement that policies and behaviors leave Black students disproportionately disciplined, academically behind their white peers, and receiving SPED referrals, Black educator-parents make moves to ensure their children are protected and not become a statistic in the ways in which schooling continues to fail Black children.

What We Can Improve On

The data have shown the duality in which Black educator-parents find themselves on a daily basis: fighting racism at home and in school trying to provide the best educational opportunities for their children while protecting them from racialized harms. While societal racist rhetoric and behaviors seep into the everyday actions of schooling, there are some recommendations drawn from previous research that can address the ways in which Black children and in turn Black parents are exposed to these assaultive rhetoric, policies, and actions in schools. Though the subjects for this study were Black

educator-parents, the next section of recommendations are how to address racialized harms and racism in schools for students, which in turn would alleviate concerns for these parents for their children in schools.

Pedagogical Changes to Serve the Needs of Black Students

In the face of racism, there are some schools and teachers that are successfully serving the needs of Black children. Ladson-Billings' (1995b, 2009) work on teachers of Black children begins to name positive approaches. One suggestion she theorizes is *culturally relevant pedagogy*, which not only legitimizes and values the culture of Black students in the classroom, it in turn gets them to embrace school as they now have “a way ... to maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 476). This pedagogical approach requires “prospective teachers [to] understand culture (their own and others) and the ways it functions in education” (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 483). Participants in this study who chose to move their children to grassroots community charter schools mentioned the importance of their children learning who they are and flourishing in learning about Black culture.

Sharroky Hollie's (2017) recent work on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning (CLR) continues Ladson-Billings's (1995b) work started more than two decades ago. Hollie's piece provides the bridge between theory and practice for educators currently in the field. CLR focuses on four instructional areas: (a) classroom management, (b) academic vocabulary, (c) academic literacy, and (d) academic language. Hollie (2017) emphasizes that CLR is what teachers should do every day in the way that they talk to, teach, and build a rapport and relate to their students, requiring a total

mindset shift in the way that teachers see themselves in relation to their students. No longer is it the case of teachers versus students, but instead teachers are called upon to deeply reflect on their “mindsets and skillsets as they reflect on the content and how they can incorporate the ideas into their professional learning experiences” (Hollie, 2017, p. 11).

Extending the work of Hollie (2017) is the Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators (2015), focusing on the pedagogical approach of *Culturally Responsive Classroom Management* (CRCM) and encouraging educators to engage classrooms for all students in a culturally responsive way. CRCM’s goal is to commit to building a caring classroom community by continuously developing relationships with students (Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators, 2015). Teachers that use this approach understand and recognize their biases and how these can influence student behavior and expectations (Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators, 2015). CRCM goes beyond incorporating a culturally diverse curriculum by examining the social world in which students belong. Having a comprehensive classroom and school behavior management philosophy curtails the number of out of class referrals resulting in “lower academic achievement, lower graduation rates, and a worse overall school climate” (Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators, 2015, p. 6). Fix School Discipline (2015) insists that if schools have a definitive system of response in place for student behavior before it escalates to punitive punishments, there would be a decrease in “rates of suspension and up to a 50% reduction per year in office discipline referrals” (p. 9).

Howard (2016) additionally offers research on successful models of instruction

for Black students. This work suggests a complete reimagining of schools that are “supportive, caring, and nurturing spaces” for Black students (Howard, 2006, p. 106). The structure of the Children’s Defense Fund’s (CDF) Freedom Schools is offered as an option for school reformation for Black students. The CDF Freedom School is a 6-week summer program promoting literacy, self-esteem, and a love for learning. The summer program is run on an integrated curriculum and a “respectful, caring, affirming and nurturing treatment of scholars ...build[ing] on cultural knowledge and community literacies” (Howard, 2016, p. 107). Howard (2006) contends with the current state of violence in schools in America and school response to increase security measures. He expresses that though our country is experiencing a large number of school shootings in which students and parents want more school security present, for Black students, the promise of security has turned into surveillance (Howard, 2016). A heightened police presence in schools with high numbers of Black students stem from a shift in discipline occurring at the hands of school administration to those of school police officers who lack training in applying their policing preparation to dealing with children (Howard, 2016). CDF Freedom Schools are an alternative response, creating more of a nurturing space for students who feel outcast rather than a space of surveillance.

Paris (2012) offers us *culturally sustaining pedagogy* as an additional asset based pedagogical framework that continues the push for supporting Black students in a classroom taught predominantly by white women. Culturally relevant, appropriate, or responsive pedagogies “build bridges for students between ...knowledges of home, community, and school spaces” (p. 95). Culturally sustaining pedagogy calls to shift our

thinking to validating Black students' home languages and culture in the classroom for them to access the dominant school language and practices. Instead, Paris pushes this ideology to ensure the valuing, maintenance, and sustainability of “the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (p. 95). Culturally sustaining pedagogy supports students of color preserving their cultural essence (linguistic, literate, and cultural) all while navigating “the democratic project of schooling” (p. 95). This pedagogical approach tasks teachers with not only teaching to have students see themselves in the classroom, but to truly be themselves.

Paris and Alim (2014) resume this work two years later in a loving critique to asset based pedagogies that still work to assimilate students to dominant frameworks. They instead call for a cultural pedagogical network to embrace the full complexity of youth culture. On one hand, youth of color can engage in often contradicting and self-deprecating identities and cultural practices, while at the same time, they can exude counterhegemonic potential not measuring “how closely they can perform white middle-class norms” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 86). The sustainability of a students’ culture was what resonated with students who had Black teachers during segregation (Fairclough, 2004). They felt seen, loved, and believed that they mattered to their teachers. This validation spurred student motivation to succeed academically (Fairclough, 2004).

Teacher Education Program Changes to Serve the Needs of Black Students

In a study of white teachers who have been successful at teaching students of color, Schauer (2018) finds that these white teachers had childhood experiences with

Black children while growing up, leaving them “uniquely positioned to continue their critical explorations of race and class into the collegiate setting” (p. 6). This unique position, however, was not cultivated in these teachers’ teacher education programs (TEPs). The TEPs provided them “limited exposure to diverse teaching settings and [did] not challenge [them] to critically explore issues of race and class in schools and pedagogies of empowerment that might best serve minority students” (Schauer, 2018, p. 6). For those programs that did include some training, it was in the form of a course on diversity, while the rest of the program focused solely on instructional practices for delivery of curriculum rather than being flexible to the needs of their students. These white teachers also found that the philosophies of their master teachers did not coincide with the instructional practices occurring in their university classes. “Early exposure to diversity” (Schauer, 2018, p. 7) helped to counter the silence from and lack of support of their preparation programs regarding specifically teaching students of color.

Without prior experience in culturally, ethnically, and economically diverse K–12 schooling experiences, preservice teachers can experience a preparation program that does not squelch the preconceived stereotypical biases and “concerns about racial barriers surrounding their interactions with students inside the classroom,” supporting their decisions choosing not to teach in schools with high enrollments of students of color (Bauml et al., 2016, p. 11). These concerns span from not being able to sustain deeper relationships with students in the classroom despite differences in race and culture (Bauml et al., 2016). The effects of a failed system of K–12 public school education are

far reaching, deeply influencing the caliber of teachers available to teach and care for Black children.

A portion of the problem is looking at what preservice teachers are required to learn in their teacher education programs. Fuller (1992) found that 94% of 19 Midwest teacher education programs had white faculty and students. Of that group, a mere 56% required their preservice teachers to take a course on diversity with one university not offering any courses on diversity to their preservice teachers (Fuller, 1992). Fuller presents Contreas's (1987) view on the lack of multicultural education courses:

Teacher educators assume that teacher education students will pick up the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help them teach classes of socioculturally diverse students without any direct instruction and planned experiences. (p. 189)

In addition to only having roughly half of the institutions in the study requiring multicultural instruction, field experiences for teachers in these programs “reflected the pre-service teachers’ backgrounds...[and] educational environments reminiscent of their childhoods” (Fuller, 1992, p. 190). Decades later, research continues to tackle how best to structure the inclusion of diversity instruction in coursework along with meaningful field experiences.

Subject matter competence is still being touted as a leading factor to teachers being more confident with the delivery of material and being able to meet the needs of struggling students (Darling-Hammond, 2000, as cited in Howard & Milner, 2014, p. 202). In the No Child Left Behind era of schooling, it became a focus of schools to hire only highly qualified teachers to be on their staff. This push was in response to the high numbers of teachers teaching subjects outside the realm of their certifications (Howard &

Milner, 2014). This problem was rampant in high poverty communities of color suffering from high teacher turn over. As the intention for this push was to ensure that teachers had a command of content and were better able to serve low performing students, it did not address cultural competence (Howard & Milner, 2014). Merely having subject matter competence is not sufficient to be successful in urban schools and does not make up for being able to organically connect to students and build relationships which will in turn have the students be willing participants in their learning (Bauml et al., 2016; Haberman, 1995; Howard & Milner, 2014).

An alternative to contending with a teaching force that does not culturally match its student population is to instead focus on recruitment efforts of people of color to be in the classroom. Toshalis (2013) provides a window into a movement in teacher education that bypasses the statistics of who becomes teachers and picks up the baton of preparing K–12 teachers who are from the communities that they will serve. Grow Your Own (GYO) programs target four subsets of community members to become teachers: (a) middle or high school aged youth, (b) post-service military veterans, (c) paraprofessional educators, and (d) mid-career transitioning professionals (Toshalis, 2013). Focusing on the first group, Toshalis (2013) presents how identifying youth of color to become K–12 educators alleviates the downward trend of teacher attrition and desire to serve in high needs urban communities of color. GYO programs “prepare teachers to serve in the communities they most understand—their own” (Toshalis, 2013, p. 220).

Teacher Credentialing Programs

With 47.9% of Black students in California attending “intensely segregated nonwhite schools” (Orfield et al., 2016, p. 3), urban schools are plagued with less resources, higher teacher turnover, and less prepared teachers (Zeichner, 2010, as cited in Howard & Milner, 2014). But why are they underprepared? There are credential programs that primarily develop teachers to work in Title 1 schools—having a student base where at least 40% come from low-income families—yet are still not adequately preparing them to address the gross racialized inequities in those schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Supporting research states that for pre-service teachers to “address the range of needs students bring to school,” they need to “build knowledge about and be aware of the racial and cultural background of students” (Howard & Milner, 2014, p. 206). One of the first steps to building this knowledge base requires preservice teachers to be reflective on their own cultural belief systems that they bring into the classroom (Howard and Milner, 2014). In addition, preservice teachers must have “an awareness of the political economy in which urban schools operate,” understand the sociopolitical factors affecting the community in which they teach, be able to “facilitate difficult dialogue across racial and cultural differences” in which they themselves can and they can teach students to “critique injustices in the larger world” (Howard & Milner, 2014, p. 208).

In an extensive two-part literature review on a decade of teacher education research, Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) found that teacher education has limited inclusion of discussions of race, limited access to social foundations courses, and little room for

critical reflection. The researchers find that too many studies have done research on whether TEPs were influencing the beliefs, attitudes, and understandings of preservice teachers, however, there have been much less studies on whether these programs are changing the practice of preservice teachers through teaching them to do the actual tasks of teaching Black students (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015). In school contexts fraught with obstacles against Black youth, if teachers are not given space to develop their racial literacies, discuss social and racial inequities, or think about their role as agents of change in their TEP, they will not disrupt patterns of Black marginalization that we continue to see. For TEPs to confine the education of Black students in the classroom to one course in diversity (Ladson-Billings, 1995a) or to graduate teachers who think it is okay to dress in blackface for Halloween (Magness, 2018), is a direct “misrecognition of students and communities of color” is a disservice to all K–12 students (Dumas & ross, 2016, p. 432). This work shows that there is a dire need to prepare white, middle-class teacher candidates to specifically teach Black students (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015, p. 116).

One area of focus in the field of teacher education and preparation is looking at who the teacher educators are. One should be able to assume that if there are quality teacher educators in TEPs, they should be producing quality teachers (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013). As a K–12 teacher, there are state requirements mandated that you pass to prove that you are not only proficient in the content you will be teaching, but also that you have in some ways been prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. How does that same requirement translate to the realm of teacher educators? According to Merryfield (2000), of the 80 faculty that were used in this study, faculty of

color gained experiential knowledge about race and racism at an early age in life through their lived experiences. The white faculty in the study developed an awareness of their positionality in their travels outside of the U.S. This exemplar group of teacher educators skilled at “preparing teachers in both multicultural and global education” honed these skills outside of their teacher educator training or professional development (Merryfield, 2000, p. 429) . This situation does not hold true for all teacher educators instructing K–12 teachers who will have students of color in their classrooms. Unless there are more concerted efforts from institutions, there will continue to be a trend of teacher educators who themselves are not adequately prepared to nor interested in dismantling a system of education that never changed in its structure to honestly and adequately educate Black children.

The previous works are presented as beginning recommendations of where there exists room for improvement in teacher education and credentialing programs from addressing preservice teachers to addressing the teacher educators tasked to produce teachers who teach Black children. When diversity is the terminology used, it is in opposition to white, middle-class, suburban life experiences. A class in “diversity” to expose white teachers to connect with their future Black students does not provide a solution to racism in schooling, racial equity, and racial justice. Reviewing the syllabi of teacher educators to ensure that they have assignments on multicultural education does not ensure that Black children and families will no longer have to endure racist schooling practices.

Conclusion

This analysis of the racism experienced by Black educator-parents can be further enhanced through the lens of antiblackness. Though CRT addresses race and racism, antiblackness, theorized through BlackCrit, provides a lens for racism specific to the Black experience (Dumas & ross, 2016). Antiblackness gives language to the blatant assault, marginalization, and disregard of Black students and parents in the classroom and society at large (Dumas & ross, 2016). According to Dumas and ross (2016), “antiblackness serves to reinforce the ideological and material ‘infrastructure’ of educational inequity—the misrecognition of students and communities of color, and the (racialized) maldistribution of educational resources” (p. 432). The Black experience is a unique one that can be reduced in importance when grouped into the community of people of color, which CRT does (Costa Vargas, 2018). The “people of color framework locate White experiences and whiteness as the defining references” (p. 41). The Black experience is distinct from other groups of color as other groups have the ability to define themselves in opposition of Black people. Yancey (2003) states:

It is the rejection (alienation) of blacks that serves as the standard by which nonblack racial groups can find acceptance. Because nonblack racial groups can avoid the label of being ‘black,’ they can eventually be give a ‘white’ racial identity...It is in the social interest of all nonblack racial groups to keep [African Americans] at the bottom. (p. 15)

The additional use of antiblackness allows for the acknowledgment that “all racial minority groups are [not] in similar social positions in the United States” (p. 4).

Antiblackness theorizes the overwhelming overrepresentation of Black students receiving SPED services, not graduating from high school or attending college, and being caught in

the school discipline pipeline (Dumas & ross, 2016). According to Dumas and ross (2016), “where Black children’s bodies can represent the ultimate threat to authority, the disciplining of Black children can be understood as the definitive reinforcement of security and order” (p. 434). In the authors’ view, “this ‘discriminatory disciplining’ mirrors racialized state repression within the larger society” (p. 434).

One must only look to the comments to the previous Commander in Chief, Donald J. Trump, for insight on state repression within the larger society. In a debate question on whether voters should trust Donald Trump over Joe Biden with how to deal with race, Donald Trump repeatedly refers to law in order and the support of military and police departments in his responses referring to the protests following the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd (USA Today Staff, 2020). In lock step with President Trump’s response to crimes against Black people, there are recent news trends of the policing of young Black bodies have resulted in Black children being killed while interacting with police officers, being body slammed in class, or outside of a pool party (Carroll, 2021; Phillips, 2017; Stelloh & Connor, 2015; Vera & Holcombe, 2021).

This study is also limited in participant representation in that the subjects were only chosen from one region in Southern California and their access to financial capital to sustain their navigational abilities was not questioned. Future research should garner a sense of response for Black educator-parents nationally and to include demographics information on participant access to financial means to sustain or not sustain their ability to be mobile. In addition, studying the toll of sustaining the duality of roles on Black

educator-parents and their families is imperative to the research of the effects of antiblackness on the Black family.

Parenting is already a hard job without having to negotiate and navigate antiblack structures that threaten the livelihood and sometimes lives of you and your family. Generally, a major role of parenting is to be able to protect your children from all forms of hurt or harm to the best of your ability. As a Black educator-parent, that role is magnified because not only are you protector of your own child, you may also serve the role of protector of Black children in your classroom, on your caseload, with your non-profit organization, or in your district. Trying to be a protector of a people brought to this country to never be protected but instead exploited for financial gain, can feel like trying to carry sand in a sieve. In this year of racial unrest and a global health pandemic, my findings demonstrate that for many Black educator-parents the potential for real substantial change is nonnegotiable for the future of their children and the profession of education.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Flyers/Materials



WHAT AFRICAN AMERICAN & BLACK PARENTS HAVE TO SAY

If you have a child in TK - 8th grade who has experienced disciplinary actions or academic disparities, you may be eligible to participate in a research study.

Study Title: Black Students in the Inland Empire:
What Parents are saying

You have been invited to participate in a study that will help to further understand the perspective of parents of Black children and the children themselves, on their experiences in school with other students, teachers, administration, and the institution of public education at large. Your participation in this study will enable us to provide education agencies within the Inland Empire with specific information concerning relationships between Black parents, students, teachers, administration, and the institution of public education at large.

Participants will receive:

- \$10 eGift Card to Parents who complete the interview



Tanisha Johnson, M. Ed
Doctoral Candidate
University of California - Riverside

Location

Participation in this study will involve going through an in-depth recorded interview about the history of your child's disciplinary and academic interactions. It is expected that your participation will last 30 to 90 minutes. This interview will be conducted via recorded video conference.

Are you eligible?

- Parent or Guardian 18 years or older, speaks English, with an African American/Black child in grades TK through 8

To express interest in participation, call/text or email principal researcher:

- Tanisha Johnson, M. Ed.
- Doctoral Candidate, University of California - Riverside
- tjohn017@ucr.edu
- 909-489-4762





Tanisha Johnson <tjohn017@ucr.edu>

Research Opportunity with RCAAAl

Tanisha Johnson <tjohn017@ucr.edu>
Draft To: Cynthia Woods <cwoods@rcoe.us>

Thu, May 7, 2020 at 2:08 AM

Hello,

I hope that this email finds you and your families well and safe during this global pandemic. My name is Tanisha Johnson and I am a doctoral candidate at University of California Riverside currently in the process of collecting data for my dissertation. The title of the research study is *Black Students in the IE: What the parents are saying*.

Participants who complete the interview will receive a \$10 eGift Card to Amazon or Instacart.

The data shows that Black/African American children, both nationally and locally, are over disciplined compared to their peers while in school. There is research explaining this occurrence from the point of view of teachers, for example, who may not be prepared to teach students of different races or cultural backgrounds. Or research says that the problem is centered on economic inequities. I want to conduct a local study of parents in the Inland Empire (IE) to tell the research community what an actual family's experiences have been in the classroom. Numbers are numbers, but your stories give weight to those numbers and I hope to continue to affect change for education in the Inland Empire for the better concerning Black and African American students.

I have attached my flier to this email for your consideration. I know that our lives have been more than turned upside down by Covid-19 and that everyone's time is more precious than ever. But if you are interested and able to, I want to invite you to contact me to share your story to be added to the larger conversation of the educational shift continuing to happen in the IE.

If you are interested in being a part of this research, please contact me at tjohn017@ucr.edu or call/text me at 909-489-4762.

Appendix B: Parent Informed Consent to Participate in Study

AAPAC PARENT PERMISSION FORM

Title of research study: Black Students in the Inland Empire: What Parents are saying

Investigator: Tanisha Johnson

Researcher:	Tanisha Lorraine Johnson, Doctoral Candidate Education, Society and Culture Program Graduate School of Education University of California, Riverside 909-489-4762; tjohn017@ucr.edu
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Faculty Advisor:	Dr. Rita Kohli, Associate Professor Education, Society and Culture Program Graduate School of Education University of California, Riverside 951- 827-5969; ritakoh@ucr.edu
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You have been invited to participate in a study that will help to further understand the perspective of the Black community on their disciplinary and academic experiences in school with teachers, administrative, and school-wide interactions. The study will be conducted by a doctoral candidate at the University of California - Riverside who is a certified multi-subject teacher, under the direction of professors in the Graduate School of Education. Your participation in this study will enable us to provide education institutions within the Inland Empire with specific information concerning relationships between Black parents, students, teachers, administration, and the institution of public education at large. Except for this purpose, the results of all surveys will be confidential, and reports of the study will not include the names of any parents or children.

This project has been approved by the Riverside County Office of Education.

Key Information about This Research Study

This section provides highlights of this research study to help you decide whether or not you should participate. Carefully consider this information and the more detailed information provided below the section. Please ask questions about any of the information you do not understand before you decide whether to participate.

- **Purpose:** This is a research study about the perspective of parents of Black children and the children themselves, on their experiences in school with teachers, administration, and the institution of public education at large.

- **Procedures:** Participation in this study will involve going through an in-depth recorded interview about your child's disciplinary interactions at your school district. It is expected that your participation will last 30 to 90 minutes. This interview will **be conducted via video conference using password protected Zoom sessions**. The researcher will make a recording of your conversation. After the interview, the researcher will create a transcription of what's on the recording and will remove any mention of names with use of pseudonyms. The recording will then be destroyed five years after the study has ended.
- **Risks:** Risks of this study are minimal. Some of the foreseeable risks or discomforts of your participation include having momentary discomfort if you decide to share reflections from your own and/or your child's educational career that were challenging or negative.
- **Benefits:** You will not directly benefit from this research. Some of the benefits that may be expected include being able to inform Inland Empire education agencies on methods to improve policy and programs to better serve Black students in both Riverside and San Bernardino counties.
- **Alternatives:** Your alternative to participating in this research study is to not participate.
- **Compensation:** You will be paid a \$10 eGift card for your participation. If participants decide to withdraw from the interview while in the midst of said 1 on 1 interview, they will not receive the compensation.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can decide to participate or not to participate, or to withdraw from it at any point without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled to or already have.

The remainder of this form contains a more complete description of this study.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Information collected for this research will be stored on a password protected computer. After the interview, the recorded video and audio will be saved on my password protected computer, I will remove identifying information, which will be replaced with pseudonyms, and have it transcribed by myself using a transcription software. The transcripts will then be coded and re-coded for emergent themes and themes related to the research goals. Transcripts will be sent to participants for their approval. If any quotations are used for publication or presentation, participants will be contacted again. The data will be destroyed five years after the study has ended. I will be the only person with access to the identifying information and it will only be used to manage the data, it will not be shared with anyone.

Identifiers might be removed from the identifiable private information. After such removal, the information could be used for future research studies or distributed to other investigators for future research studies without additional informed consent from the subject or the legally authorized representative.

The researcher will be collecting names, telephone numbers, and home or e-mail addresses in order to follow up with interview scheduling and for transcription verification.

Will information about me be kept private?

We will do our best to make sure that the personal information gathered for this study is kept private. However, we cannot guarantee total privacy and if required by the law, your personal information may be disclosed. If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your name and other personal information will not be used. Authorized representatives from the following organizations may review your research data for the purpose of monitoring or managing the conduct of this study:

- The Institutional Review Board (IRB) that reviewed this research
- Representatives of the University of California

Can I stop being in the study at any time?

You can stop taking part in the study at any time. If you would like to stop, please either contact the researcher, or let the researcher know about your desire to withdraw at any time during the interview session. If participants decide to withdraw from the interview while in the midst of said 1 on 1 interview, they will not receive the compensation

Will I receive payment for being in this study?

If you agree to take part in this research study, we will compensate you with a \$10 eGift card for your time and effort after completion of the interview. If participants decide to withdraw from the interview while in the midst of said 1 on 1 interview, they will not receive the compensation.

The results of this study may have commercial value to the sponsors, UC Riverside, and/or the researchers. Please know that you will have no legal or financial interest in any commercial development resulting from the research or from the information or materials collected.

What else do I need to know?

As the researcher is conducting data analysis, they may be contacted in the future to validate/clarify segments of their interview. If you are interested in receiving the research results following completion of the study, please contact the researcher via tjohn017@ucr.edu.

Whom can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at tjohn017@ucr.edu.

If you have questions about your rights or complaints as a research subject, please contact the IRB Chairperson at (951) 827 - 4802 during business hours, or to contact them by email at irb@ucr.edu.

CONSENT

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participation in research is voluntary. The decision to participate, or not participate, is solely up to you. You have the right to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled to or already have.

If you wish to participate in this study, you should sign below if you would like to proceed with participation.

_____ Date _____ Participant's Name (Print)

_____ Participant's Signature for Consent

As the research study includes digital recordings, please specify below that you consent to be recorded.

___ Yes, I consent to be Video/Audio recorded

Phone Number _____ **Email:** _____

Grades & Ages of your School Aged Children: _____

Preferred Interview Date & Time: _____

Gift Card Preference (*check one*): _____ Amazon

_____ InstaCart (*Must already have your own account*)

_____ (*Email address associated with account*)

Appendix C: African American/Black Parent/Student School/District Satisfaction

Interview Protocol

1. What is your race/ethnic group? (*May choose more than one choice*)

Black/African-American white/Caucasian Hispanic Asian American
Indian/Alaska Native
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Other

2. What is the race/ethnic group of your child(ren)? (*May choose more than one choice*)

Black/African-American white/Caucasian Hispanic Asian American
Indian/Alaska Native
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Other

3. Age of Child(ren) - (*Ages 4 - 15*)

4. Grade level of child(ren) - (*grades TK - 8*)

5. Your age

19 & younger 20 – 29 30 – 39 40 – 49 50 – 59 60 +

6. In what ways do you feel that your child’s teachers have shown or not shown care about your child as an individual? **Can you give an example**

7. In what ways do you feel your child’s teachers and school have been prepared or not prepared to teach your Black/African American child(ren)? **Can you give an example**

8. What are some of the things that your child’s school is doing well or could do better with concerning addressing your culture in the classroom or school community?

9. What are your expectations for the teachers and administration at your school?

10. How do you feel each time you enter your child’s school? Can you tell me about any incidents at your school or district in which you feel like you/your child might have been treated differently than other students who have done the same thing?

11. Once children are in high school, research is showing that Black youth experience racial disparities in college degree attainment, disproportional representation in special education services (SPED), and are over criminalized. What sorts of things do you think are contributing to this at the elementary level?

- 12.** Thank you for taking the time to complete this interview. Do you have any additional comments about your experiences as a parent of a Black/African American student in this school district.
- 13.** How would you prefer to be contacted to verify the transcription of this interview? Can you provide that information to me at this time?
- 14.** What is your preferred pseudonym?